

AN ANALYSIS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION  
(BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS SCHOOL 2007-2009)

by

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## Abstract

This research examines university students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education at the Birmingham Business School. The objectives of this study were to examine the effectiveness of the undergraduate and postgraduate entrepreneurship modules at the Business School based on students' perceptions. At present little research is available concerning the effects of the recession in 2009 on students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education so it was decided to examine this for this research. Thirdly differences and similarities between two undergraduate year groups were examined in order to identify any themes concerning the undergraduate entrepreneurship module. Finally the relationship between student satisfaction and the likelihood of students setting up a business was examined.

Three questionnaires were administered to undergraduate and postgraduate students who completed entrepreneurship modules at the Business School. Several telephone interviews were also conducted with undergraduate students to help expand on the questionnaire findings. The results show similarities between the two undergraduate years and it was recognised that the undergraduate module requires improvement. The recession impacted upon students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education and no relationship between student satisfaction with the undergraduate module and the likelihood of setting a business was found indicating other factors may influence students' intentions of setting up a business.

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### Research Ethics

It is my responsibility to ensure all data collected remains anonymous, strictly confidential and is not seen by anyone apart from my supervisors. All research participants will be informed that their participation is not compulsory and if they wish to participate they will provide the necessary verbal consent.

It should be noted that data used in this research is taken from a study conducted by the Birmingham Business School into enhanced teaching methodologies for postgraduate and undergraduate business modules in enterprise and SME development. Reference to the study will be made where necessary throughout this present study.

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## Chapter 1: Background

### 1.1: Introduction

In this chapter the meaning of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education will be discussed. The importance of entrepreneurship education will be considered, as this will help provide an understanding to the field and why it is an important area to be aware of. Another area, which is focused upon, is the recession in 2009 as this is a vital part of this study. Finally the reasons as to why this study was conducted will be discussed.

### 1.2: What is entrepreneurship?

In order to examine the relative importance of entrepreneurship education one should first look at entrepreneurship itself. It can be said that entrepreneurship is one of the main contributing factors to success in an economy as it provides economic growth and employment. There are many different definitions of entrepreneurship but the most fitting for this study is that of Bird (1984:4) who states “Entrepreneurship is the process of starting and/or growing a new profit-making business.” The setting up of small businesses has proved to be of more importance than that of large firms due to the employment opportunities and flexibility these small and medium enterprises bring to an economy (SMEs.) It should be noted that “small business (i.e. those with fewer than 500 employees) employ 53% of the private work force and account for 47% of sales and 51% of the private sector gross domestic product (GDP)” (Kuratko 2005:577). It should be

noted that there is no single recognised definition of SMEs. According to the BBC (2004) a survey conducted identified that entrepreneurship activity rose to 6.4% in 2003, up from 2002's figure of 5.4%.

### 1.3: What is entrepreneurship education?

Moving on from the definition of entrepreneurship one must now understand the meaning of entrepreneurship education. It can be seen as being two dimensional in the sense that it involves students developing a broad range of entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and behaviours whilst also developing knowledge about entrepreneurship ([www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)). It should also be noted that entrepreneurship education differs to the typical business education one is accustomed to learning about. According to Vesper and McMullen (1988:9) one of the main objectives of entrepreneurship education that differentiates it from standard business education is “to generate more quickly a greater variety of different ideas for how to exploit a business opportunity, and the ability to project a more extensive sequence of actions for entering business...” Furthermore Kyro (2003) states “Education is often focused on supporting the development of knowledge and the intellect, whereas entrepreneurship education concentrates on the human being as a whole (including his or her feelings, values and interests)” (Cited in Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006:84).



#### 1.4: The importance of entrepreneurship education

The area of entrepreneurship education has grown over the years and according to Adcroft et al. (2005) this is due to three main intellectual and policy trends. The first of these trends focuses on how the success of an economy links to education. This will be discussed later but for now it should be known that entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic prosperity. The second trend looks at the importance that management plays in globalisation whilst the final trend is more centred on government policy in making the image of the public sector similar to that of the private. This may be due to the private sector being more efficient than the public sector.

One significant advantage of entrepreneurship education is that it can provide students with the knowledge and skills required to set up an SME and contribute to the success of an economy. “Education in entrepreneurship increases the chances of start-ups and self employment and enhances individuals’ economic reward and satisfaction” (European Communities, 2006:4). Although it can be said not everyone in education will want to become an entrepreneur, promoting entrepreneurship education and understanding what students want from such programmes can help support the paradigm that “entrepreneurs are often made not born” (Garavan and O’Cinneide, 1994). Entrepreneurship can also contribute to the social cohesion for less developed countries and help provide work to disadvantaged people (European Communities, 2006:3).

Leading on from the previous quote is the importance of “self-employment.” The recession in 2009 has resulted in numerous job losses as well as many graduates failing to find employment. According to Shepherd (2009) graduate unemployment figures could rise by 22,000 in 2009. Consequently many graduates have decided to go into further study or take a “gap year” until the situation improves. However one significant advantage of entrepreneurship education is that one will possess the skills and knowledge to become self employed, providing they have the start up capital, and thus not have to rely on large firms to recruit them. Innovation is one of the most important skills to acquire when learning about entrepreneurship education because in order to successfully set up an SME one must ensure they have an innovative idea, which stands out from competitors. In today’s ever increasing competitive environment, a business with no unique competence will most likely have minimal success. Being responsive to the external environment and anticipating customer needs is vital to the success of an SME and are two significant skills one gains from the study of entrepreneurship. A US study indicated that small businesses create over 50% of all innovations and that contribution is still growing (OECD, 2002).

In order to fully understand the importance of entrepreneurship education one must consider its global presence. For example entrepreneurship is widely recognised in the U.S. Approximately 5.6 million Americans under the age 34 are attempting to start their own ventures. (Tulgan, 1999, Cited in Kuratko 2005:578-579). Another interesting fact is that “One third of new entrepreneurs is younger than age 30, more than 60% of 18-29

year olds say they want to start their own business, and nearly 80% of would-be entrepreneurs in the U.S. are between the ages 18 and 34!”  
(Tulgan, 1999, Cited in Kuratko 2005:578-579).

Although the facts stated above are for the U.S which helps show its large impact around the world, the U.K also focuses greatly on the role of entrepreneurship in today’s society. According to Kirby (2003) “business and entrepreneurial development has been listed as one of the four strategic goals of British universities” (Cited in Adcroft et al. 2005). This shows what a dominant role entrepreneurship has in our society and how it cannot be neglected.

As noted by the European Communities (2006) entrepreneurship education not only leads to more start-ups but also enriches people with more confidence and creativity, which will play a vital role in anything they do in life. So even if a student for example decides not to set up a new venture but instead decides to work for a large corporation, the knowledge they would have gained from studying entrepreneurship will be of great importance throughout their career. According to Gibb (1996:312) “The entrepreneur may indeed exist in all types and sizes of private and public organization.” With this in mind studying entrepreneurship can still make someone an entrepreneur even if setting up a business is not what he or she desires. This is often referred to as “intrapreneurship” in that behaviours within a company deviate from the customary methods of doing business due to innovative activities coming into play (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006). So one

could argue that intrapreneurship can help give a unique edge to a company, which is vital in order to thrive in the business world today.

### 1.5: Recession in 2009

In order to understand the deep effects of the recession in 2009 it is necessary to discuss the role of the government in helping to stabilise the economy. The recession in 2009 has shed a new light on the role of entrepreneurs in society as more and more people are beginning to recognise the importance that they can bring for economic prosperity. For this reason governments need to increase policy measures with regards to entrepreneurship. One way in which this is being addressed is by an increase in the Small Firms Loan Guarantee (SFLG) to more than £1bn. As small firms are seen to be a possible solution to the recession the government is aiming to help them as much as possible through reducing the tax and regulatory burden of such firms. One possible idea was to cut VAT from 17.5pc to 15pc (Tyler, 2008). Such policies are aimed directly at supporting current small businesses. Another initiative according to the BBC (2009a) is for a £5m loans fund to help small businesses in Devon, UK, which are struggling due to the recession. The main principle behind this government initiative is to boost economic recovery in southwest England as the funding will help small businesses obtain capital to sustain and develop their business activities.

Many SMEs are however complaining due to the lack of support provided by the government when they feel government support should be at it's highest as a result of the

recession in 2009. A recent US study, “Understanding Growth Priorities of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses,” indicated that approximately 40% of small and medium sized businesses believe the government has been unsupportive of their efforts (Pasick, 2009). It is important to remember that different government initiatives will be in place depending on the priorities in each country around the world.

What needs to be understood is that SMEs are likely to lack the financial stability, which many large businesses have and consequently will be affected as a result of a recession. However many large businesses have been greatly affected by the recession in 2009. As already discussed finding employment in light of the recession in 2009 has been very difficult particularly when large businesses are increasing job cuts. According to the BBC (2009b) BT has stated it may cut a further 15,000 jobs due to fall in revenue and increasing costs as a result of the recession. This represents approximately 10% of the company’s current workforce. One benefit for SMEs is that they are unlikely to have large running costs, which many large companies like BT have. However this does not undermine the fact that setting up a new SME or running an SME is very difficult during a recession and consequently requires government support.

#### 1.6: Why conduct this research?

Now that a background has been given to this research and the area of entrepreneurship education it is important to next examine the reasons for conducting this present study.

It has been argued that there is limited information present with regards to entrepreneurship education as the literature in the area has only began to grow over the past two decades. (Garavan and O Cinneide, 1994). According to Sexton and Kasarda (1991) most of the research in the area focuses on measures of effectiveness such as participant interest and knowledge acquisition (Cited in Garavan and O Cinneide, 1994). However on the other hand Curran and Stanworth (1989) argue the opposite in that the effectiveness of small business education needs further research. One must consider that since 1989 more research is likely to have been conducted in the field but it is important to know that the field has not been extensively researched.

Sexton and Upton (1988:11) state, “Studies related to teaching effectiveness and entrepreneurship courses have been limited.” While one could state that this study involved looking at students’ perceptions and attitudes about entrepreneurship education, which is similar to past studies as noted by Sexton and Kasarda, it could also be said that this study was unique in that it examined the comparison between two undergraduate year groups who studied an entrepreneurship module at the University of Birmingham. Not only this but because the impact of the recession in 2009 was also considered, it made this study even more important, unique and of great significance for future research.

Providing numerous entrepreneurship courses and programmes is important but they will not be of benefit if students are not satisfied with them. This was one of the main reasons for conducting this study. Courses should be tailored to students’ needs without

forgetting that students need to be equipped with the necessary skills to thrive as successful entrepreneurs. Another purpose of this study was to examine whether the recession in 2009 had an impact upon students' attitudes and perceptions of entrepreneurship.

As this study focused upon entrepreneurship modules it was important to not only examine whether students were satisfied with the modules but also to examine the wider impact of the modules such as whether they had an impact upon students' career aspirations. Clark et al. (1984:26) argue that few entrepreneurship courses "...evaluate the impact the course has had on new venture creation, via student attitudes and actions, following completion of the course." As the growth of new ventures helps with economic prosperity it was important to examine the effects of the undergraduate module on this.

Although entrepreneurship education is present at different levels of education it seemed appropriate to focus upon entrepreneurship education in higher education. The main reason for this is because students studying entrepreneurship at this level will have a deeper understanding about the subject and should be able to help provide a more detailed analysis of entrepreneurship education. It was decided to select the University of Birmingham as the institute of higher education for this study because of its large involvement in entrepreneurship. The University of Birmingham is part of "The Mercia Institute of Enterprise" which is a UK Science Enterprise Centre that helps with the provision of entrepreneurship education ([www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)). Due to the researcher of this study completing their undergraduate degree at the University of Birmingham they

have gained in-depth knowledge about the university, which is another reason for selecting this particular institution.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1: Introduction

This chapter examines past research, which relates to the field of entrepreneurship education. Firstly some models and theories will be examined followed by teaching and learning styles of entrepreneurship students. Characteristics of entrepreneurs will be examined as well as the role, which the teacher plays in entrepreneurship education. Government involvement in the provision of entrepreneurship education at a higher level will be examined as it relates to the following section about setting up businesses. Other small areas examined include the reasons for choosing to study entrepreneurship and the role of the Internet, technology and innovation. The influence of demographics in entrepreneurship is also drawn upon. The final areas examined, before giving an overview of the literature, are formal education and how it is not ideal for entrepreneurship, and the importance, which work placements can bring to entrepreneurship education.

Research into entrepreneurship education is not very extensive but studies, which have been conducted in the area, can help give some insights into this present study and support the findings made. By seeing what areas have been developed within the field of entrepreneurship education then one can identify areas which are not that well researched and which deserve more attention in order to expand the field.

## 2.2: Models and theories about entrepreneurship education

Many models and theories have been developed and put forward so that research into entrepreneurship education can grow. Such models can be argued to form the framework to many studies as they support the development of hypotheses and ultimately give rise to new findings, which enlarges a particular field. A well-known model/theory is one, which has been developed by Ronstadt (1990). Ronstadt (1990) put forward a theory based upon programme offerings and how entrepreneurship courses are taught. Ronstadt argued that a programme, which followed “the old school”, would be based on action by developing a business plan and being exposed to the right people who could help with one’s entrepreneurial success. However Ronstadt argued that this programme was dependant upon individuals possessing the right human traits and characteristics. “The new school” still focuses upon action but also involves a great deal of experience. Ronstadt states that entrepreneurial success is based upon a combination of human, venture and environmental conditions (Cited in Solomon et al. 2002).

Furthermore Ronstadt (1987) also provided a two way continuum model to aid with entrepreneurship course design. The first continuum deals with whether a course should be unstructured or structured. It is argued that courses should be more unstructured due to the dynamic entrepreneurial environment present in today’s world. The second continuum of the model is called “entrepreneurial know-how/entrepreneurial know-who” which explains that an effective entrepreneurship programme should equip students with

an entrepreneurial mindset but also help students form a network of contacts who can aid with their entrepreneurial success in the future.

Both of the contributions put forward by Ronstadt help show that in order to benefit from an entrepreneurship programme a combination of many factors is required but one could argue that certain factors benefit certain individuals more than others as the field of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurs should be treated subjectively as opposed to objectively. Not only this but Ronstadt (1987) argues that entrepreneurship courses should be unstructured but it can be said that this is not possible in an academic context particularly where assessments require structure. This is an area, which has not been addressed in Ronstadts' theories.

Another important model used in studies has been the "Teaching-Learning Process Model" devised by Gage and Berliner (1984), which looks at how to develop a teaching method that will complement the unique characteristics of students, in this case entrepreneurship students. It describes four phases, which include what the teacher must do before instruction, which involves deciding teaching objectives based on students' characteristics. The second phase looks at how the teacher can use their ability to motivate students. The third phase involves carrying out the actions and the final phase is evaluating the instruction, which has been carried, and possibly re-using some parts of the process (Cited in Sexton and Upton 1987).

### 2.3: Teaching entrepreneurship and learning styles of entrepreneurship students

It is important to consider that not all students will be able to follow one particular way of teaching. Kuratko (2005:585) states “Educators are challenged with designing effective learning opportunities for entrepreneurship students.” So one could argue in order to help with being able to offer the right programme to students then their input should be considered. According to Gibb (1996:315) “It is recognised that students themselves may have different preferred learning styles but that a key objective of training and education should be to enrich their range of learning styles helping them to “learn to learn” in very different ways.”

Focusing upon more than one institution in a study may be difficult but it will provide more insight into the area of research. For example McKeown et al. (2006) conducted a study on 123 HEI's in UK in order to examine graduate entrepreneurship education in the UK. It was found that entrepreneurship education is more profound at postgraduate level but an interesting finding was that the main method of teaching entrepreneurship is by a traditional means with little use of technology. As argued by Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006) an entrepreneurial-directed approach in teaching entrepreneurship is imperative. With such an approach the main objective is not solely to equip individuals with knowledge, as most traditional methods tend to do, but to equip individual's with new ways of thinking and new skills (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006).

A similar study to that of McKeown et al. (2006) was that of Solomon et al. (2002) which focused upon a nationwide analysis of entrepreneurship education in the United States. This study also had a comparative element to it in that 2-year colleges, 4-year colleges and international colleges and universities were looked at. The results indicate that case studies are a common method of teaching entrepreneurship as are the creation of business plans. However the use of guest speakers was found more predominately in 4-year colleges and international colleges and universities. Small business consulting and internships were found to be the most common external classroom pedagogical methods.

Few studies have actually identified the main areas in which students would benefit from an improvement in entrepreneurship. Carter and Collinson (1999) conducted a study on Alumni perceptions of HEI's with regards to entrepreneurship and found that students need to be taught more about financial management as well as business communication skills. Respondents also stated that they felt the main barriers to setting up a business were the lack of a viable business idea and the lack of start up capital and experience. From this study one should realise that developing entrepreneurship courses that target students needs should first start with those who have been through the course themselves as they will know which areas they needed further help with and which areas did not benefit them as much as they hoped.

#### 2.4: Characteristics of entrepreneurs

Another area studied with regards to entrepreneurship education is personality traits/psychological characteristics. Sexton and Bowman (1984) make an interesting point that if students who are majoring in entrepreneurship are seen as “budding entrepreneurs”, then it could be the case that they possess the same psychological characteristics as practicing entrepreneurs and thus courses should be designed around these characteristics in order to successfully take into account students’ needs. However a growing debate today is whether or not Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) can actually meet the needs of students (Collins et al. 2004). It should also be considered that even if for example the right teaching programme is found, whether or not it could actually be sustained. Smith et al. (2006) found that innovative programmes for entrepreneurship would be difficult to introduce and sustain in UK HEI’s due to resource constraints, finding suitable entrepreneurs to be involved, and keeping up the innovativeness of the programme. However this was based only on one experience and as a result could work in another university.

In a study conducted by Scheré (1982) it was found that entrepreneurs had more tolerance for ambiguity compared to managers with budding entrepreneurs falling in between the two (Cited Sexton and Bowman 1984). However Gurol and Atsan (2006) found that budding entrepreneurs do not possess a higher tolerance for ambiguity compared to entrepreneurially non-inclined students. Other traits that have been found to be possessed by entrepreneurs/entrepreneurially inclined students include risk taking and the need for

achievement (Gurol and Atsan, 2006; Koh, 1996), locus of control, (Koh, 1996) autonomy and independence (de Vries, 1977).

Sexton and Bowman (1983) used the Jackson Personality Index and the Personality research Form-E in order to examine differences between entrepreneurship majors, business majors and non-business majors. Significant differences were found between the entrepreneur majors and business majors in regards to anxiety, conformity, innovation, and risk-taking (Cited Sexton and Bowman 1984). However Sexton and Bowman (1984) make an interesting point in that many results of such comparative studies are conflicting which means it is difficult to draw any solid conclusions. According to Sexton and Upton (1987:38) “entrepreneurship students can be depicted as independent individuals who dislike restraint, restriction and routine.” Based on this it could be argued that stressing order and routine on entrepreneurship students could result in the loss of creativity and damage to their special potential (Garavan and O’Cinneide, 1994).

Sexton and Upton (1987) conducted a study in order to address the fact that if a student studying entrepreneurship possesses such characteristics then it only seems logical to develop a teaching method, which complements their profile characteristics. They stated that an entrepreneurship course “...should be unstructured and pose problems requiring novel solutions under conditions of ambiguity and risk” (Sexton and Upton 1987:38). A test class of 40 students was used in order to study the effects for example of giving students deadlines but with not much guidance and lectures being in the form of seminar discussions. In order to examine the impact the new course had on the students a

questionnaire was devised allowing students to express their opinions on a seven point likert scale for each of the 22 questions.

It was found, as previously discussed, that students enjoyed the ambiguity of the new unstructured course. It was also stated by students that the course had helped increase their self-confidence as well as their degree to work independently (Sexton and Upton, 1987). However one cannot assume that such a novel course structure will work for all entrepreneurship courses because Sexton and Upton (1987) argue that their study cannot be easily generalised because entrepreneurship students' characteristics may be similar but they will likely vary in strength. So it seems more fitting to first evaluate a certain entrepreneurship course and see which areas students would like improvement and which areas can be easily adjusted to meet their needs before considering a complete revamp of the course. One limitation of many studies concerning course evaluation, as noted by Sexton and Upton (1987) is "teacher warmth" which can lead to student bias. If a student has grown to like a certain teacher then it is probable that this will lead to bias and will most likely affect the data collected.

### 2.5: Role of the "teacher" in entrepreneurship education

One needs to consider the importance the teacher plays in entrepreneurship education. This is an area, which has been studied by Gibb (1996) who argues that teachers face a possible challenge when teaching entrepreneurship because it may be the case that they are teaching it using what he calls a "conventional approach." Such an approach is quite



authoritative in the sense that the teacher focuses on solely on content and “know-how.”

On the other hand Gibb (1996) argues that in order to successfully teach entrepreneurship an “enterprising approach” needs to be employed by the teacher who is seen as a facilitator for students to learn from their mistakes. The teacher who follows this approach is responsive to students’ needs and sessions are flexible. It can be argued that all entrepreneurship programmes should follow this approach so that students are able to see all the dimensions associated with entrepreneurship and realise that learning theory is only one element of entrepreneurship education.

Ultimately “without a clear consensus as to the definition of an entrepreneur, it is understandable that the content of a typical entrepreneurship course varies according to the professor’s personal preferences as to definition and scope” (Sexton and Bowman 1984:21). This is not such a big problem so long as the professor has the relevant experience and knowledge in the field but Sexton and Bowman (1984) argue a problem may arise when the professor are simply people who volunteer to teach the subject and have no real expertise in the field. Obviously this problem will be even worse when the level of education gets higher. In such cases it can be stated that students would be unlikely to gain the skills and knowledge required to become a successful entrepreneur.

## 2.6: Government involvement with the provision of entrepreneurship education at a higher level

The role of the government was examined in the introductory chapter of this research but this section solely focuses upon government involvement with the provision of entrepreneurship education at a higher level. In order to better understand the importance of the government's role in entrepreneurship at a higher level one must consider what is currently happening in entrepreneurship at a higher level.

Some of the first academic courses in entrepreneurship were offered in the early 1960s and then a growth occurred during the mid 60s to mid 70s (Sexton and Bowman 1984). Entrepreneurship is not a widely recognised subject in school education although many different countries support different methods of teaching entrepreneurship to students in primary education up to higher education. The last several years have seen a rise in the number of entrepreneurship courses offered. Brignall (2002) argues that the rise in the number of courses is linked to the improved image of an entrepreneur in the wider economy.

For the remainder of this section the European Communities Report (2006) will be referred to continuously as this report gives an overview of entrepreneurship education in HEI's.

In secondary education entrepreneurship is mainly associated with business studies and economics. Further examination concerning entrepreneurship in secondary and primary

education can be found in appendix 1. An evaluation of “Young Enterprise” can also be found in appendix 1 and the importance, which it plays in equipping young minds with the knowledge of entrepreneurship.

In higher education there is increasing pressure for entrepreneurship to be spread across different courses, as the subject is valuable to everyone, not just students following a business related programme. Students studying an entrepreneurship related module in higher education would learn fundamental facts about how to start and run a business (European Communities, 2006).

At the Birmingham Business School one way in which this is done through the completion of a business plan, which involves a student, writing a report about a business they would like to set up. “Business plan competitions are an effective way to expose students to investors” (European Communities, 2006:10). At the Birmingham Business School the student with the best business plan is presented with a prize, which is normally awarded by a sponsoring company. Such factors, which are present with entrepreneurship education, help to demonstrate the importance that the subject has in today’s society.

Partnerships with business associations and companies, which sponsor specific initiatives like the best business plan, are present but the European Communities (2006) argue that they should be more profound. However the recession in 2009 could affect business partnerships with schools, which is another area the government should be involved in.

According to the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (1992:46) “When business is bad, companies are inclined to reduce spending on charities and on any item that does not contribute directly to bottom line results.” This could have result in students not learning as much as they should about the business world particularly when the business partnership involves taking on students for work experience. Perhaps the government could consider funding certain sponsorships to allow partnerships between businesses and schools to continue in light of the recession. Some of the main objectives involved with business links include explaining the business world and giving some exposure to it. Teaching enterprise, together with entrepreneurial skills is another important objective as well as enhancing personal social development (CBI, 1988:37).

It should be noted that entrepreneurship education has grown significantly over the years and should continue to do so but courses and programmes need to be tailored to students needs. The government’s main focus when looking at entrepreneurship education should be higher education, particularly with regards to the recession in 2009 because it is the potential entrepreneurs that graduate who can help provide some stability to the economy. “According to the 2004 review of the UK Science Enterprise Centres (UK SECs)- the national universities’ network for enterprise education, 3,500 postgraduates registered for some form of enterprise tuition in 2003-4, compared to just 200 when the programme started in 1999” (Cited [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)). In the UK “The Higher Education Innovation Fund” is one way in which the government helps support developments in entrepreneurship education ([www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)).

Many SECs are present around the UK, which is another initiative of the government to help introduce a wider range of entrepreneurship courses in universities. The Mercia Institute of Enterprise, which is the SEC for the West Midlands, is a partnership of eight universities including Aston University and University of Birmingham. This government initiative has been successful because “During the five-year period from 1999 to 2004 a total of 74,326 people (staff and students) received some enterprise education or training through SEC network of UK universities, of which 64,851 were students and 9,110 were professionals. This marked a major increase from 1999s numbers” (Cited [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)). As discussed, entrepreneurship needs to become more widely recognised in areas other than business. The University of Nottingham Enterprise and Innovation or Manchester Science Enterprise Centre deal with this problem through combining entrepreneurship with subjects other than business ([www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)).

Entrepreneurship is also prevalent in US higher education, which again shows its global impact. In the US there are over 2,200 entrepreneurship courses in more than 1,200 schools (Katz, 2003 cited in Kuratko, 2005). According to Vesper and McMullan (1988:10) “Approximately 10 to 25 percent of the 65,000 MBA students graduating each year in the U.S. have probably had at least one entrepreneurship course.” With such high figures it is no surprise that more and more people are pushing for the development of more entrepreneurs to help with productivity growth and ultimately economic prosperity.

In the US, Florida’s Department of Education recognises the importance that entrepreneurship can have to an economy and in 2007-2008 it helped put forward an

entrepreneurial major for high school students. Other states in the US are beginning to follow this innovation. ([www.forum.unleashingideas.org](http://www.forum.unleashingideas.org)).

The government helps with the provision of entrepreneurship education with the hope of growth in new venture creation. Gibb (1996:319) states, “In general operating in a competitive, dynamic and increasingly complex environment arguably demands an entrepreneurial organization.” This quote by Gibb helps to explain why the government needs to be so involved in the provision of entrepreneurship education. According to Clark et al. (1984:26) “The purpose of many of these courses is to encourage the creation of new ventures.” Clark et al. (1984) found that the teaching of entrepreneurship and small business management helped with the growth of successful new ventures. As will be discussed later it can be said that studying entrepreneurship can influence an individual’s intentions of setting up a business.

One could argue that it is important to examine students’ perceptions about government involvement in entrepreneurship education since courses can help increase the number of start up ventures, as stated by Clark et al. (1984).

### 2.7: Students' perceptions of setting up new businesses

In a study by Veciana et al. (2005) a survey revealed that university students in Puerto Rico and in Catalonia consider it desirable to set up a new business. Shapero's model of entrepreneurial event formation should be considered when looking at new venture formation as it states that the intent to start a business is based upon an individual's perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and propensity to act (Cited in Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Veciana et al. 2005). So it could be the case that an individual considers it desirable to set up a new business but it is not feasible. Not only this but the Veciana et al. (2005) study also looked at individual's firm intention and starting a business which was lower than those who consider it desirable to set up a business. The Shapero model also examines how cultural and social environmental factors can impact upon the intent to follow an entrepreneurial path in life (Cited in Veciana et al. 2005). This was identified in the results of the Veciana et al. (2005) study because individuals had a positive image with regards to entrepreneurs and thus may have resulted in their intentions to consider setting up a new business.

Shapero also theorised about how past exposure to entrepreneurship and the presence of role models can impact significantly upon the three antecedents (perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and propensity to act), which lead to entrepreneurial intentions (Cited in Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). This is one good reason as to why it is important to have guest entrepreneurs to come and give lectures budding entrepreneurs, as they will be able to guide them along the right path. Kuratko (2005:589) argues, "students need the

exposure to those entrepreneurs who have paid the price, faced the challenges, and endured the failures.” Such educational experiences are important in developing student’s perceptions about entrepreneurship. According to Dyer (1994) Career socialisation theory suggests that a number of social factors such as educational experiences can influence an individual’s intention to pursue an entrepreneurial career. This complements recent findings by Turker and Selcuk (2009) in that educational factors impact upon the entrepreneurial intention of students.

Peterman and Kennedy (2003) conducted a study about influencing high school students’ perceptions of entrepreneurship by seeing whether the participation in the “Youth Achievement Australia” programme impacted upon perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of starting a business. They found that having positive prior experiences increased perceived desirability of starting a business but those with less positive prior experience noted a larger increase than those with more positive prior experience. They also found that participation in the programme increased perceptions (perceived desirability and perceived feasibility) of starting a business.

It can be said that by studying entrepreneurship an individual’s chances of successfully setting up a new business are going to be high in the sense that they will be equipped with the “know-how” of what is needed. However it may be the case that an individual does not want to pursue such a career. It cannot be said that by taking an entrepreneurship course an individual will want to become an entrepreneur or even learn all the necessary skills. This relates to Ronstadt’s (1990) “old school” of thought in that individuals need



to possess the right human traits (Cited in Solomon et al. 2002). If a student does not possess an entrepreneurial drive then even with learning the necessary skills required it is not likely they will want to pursue the entrepreneurial route. This relates greatly to the reasons as to why students decide to take an entrepreneurship course.

### 2.8: Reasons for choosing to study entrepreneurship

Sexton and Bowman (1984) state, some students see entrepreneurship courses as a “filler” in their timetables whereas others have a genuine interest. Those with a genuine interest are likely to benefit more from an entrepreneurship course, as they will actually want to learn about entrepreneurship and gain as much as they can from the course.

With this in mind perhaps more attention should be devoted to whether students select entrepreneurship courses because of genuine interest or simply because it is an easy option for them. The study conducted by Clark et al. (1984) did show that the study of entrepreneurship led to a growth of new ventures. However Clark et al. (1984) note that the single course they evaluated, “Your Future in Business”, appeared to have attracted students with strong interests in entrepreneurship. It could be said that the interest in the field and skills gained from the course led to the growth in new ventures. One could not be certain that the findings would be the same had the students chose the course due to other reasons. It could be said that courses should focus primarily on attracting students with a genuine interest in entrepreneurship especially when the government’s hopes are to increase the number of self employed individuals.

### 2.9: The importance of innovation in entrepreneurship

Innovation relates greatly to entrepreneurship education, as it is a fundamental skill, which should be gained as a result of studying the area. It has received little attention in enterprise studies conducted over the years and does deserve some consideration.

According to Reynolds, Hay, & Camp (1999) “Sixty-seven percent of all new inventions are created by smaller firms” (Cited in Kuratko, 2005:577). In the dynamic business environment present today new businesses, which enter the market need to have an innovative drive otherwise it, is unlikely they will succeed. Zhao (2005) states that innovation should be a dynamic process and must be ongoing as should entrepreneurship within an organisation in order to ensure success.

It is important to understand that innovation is not simply about coming up with new products. Tidd and Bessant (2009) argue that “process innovation” is just as important as coming up with new products. For example being able to produce car parts at a lower cost than your competitors due to a new manufacturing process is just as good, if not better, as releasing a new car model. As stated earlier the benefits of studying entrepreneurship are not simply that one will possess the ability to set up a new business. It is about an individual possessing an entrepreneurial mindset that will benefit them whatever their career and as a result is able to think innovatively and come up with ideas like the innovative IT led production network of Benetton (Belussi 1989; cited in Tidd and Bessant, 2009.) From this it can be argued that success is innovatively driven through entrepreneurial mindsets within an organisation.

### 2.10: The influence of demographics on entrepreneurship

Some studies related to entrepreneurship education have also been comparative. For example Veciana et al. (2005) compared students' attitudes to entrepreneurship from a university in Catalonia and in Puerto Rico. One interesting difference found in this study relates to gender. In Catalonia there was a relationship between the student's gender and the perception of new venture desirability. It was found that males had a higher desirability and serious intention to start a new business. This was not found with the Puerto Rican sample (Veciana et al. 2005:180). A study into entrepreneurial attitudes of U.S business students conducted by Harris and Gibson (2008) identified that males had higher personal control and innovation, which one could argue, are vital characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. From these two studies it can be said that males are more likely to become entrepreneurs. However it has already been stated that every study is unique and as students and programmes vary then generalisations cannot be easily made.

Another interesting finding in the Veciana et al. (2005) study was that students who had relatives who were entrepreneurs had given more serious thought to starting a business. This was found again with the Catalan sample but not with the Puerto Rican sample. This finding is also supported by Harris and Gibson (2008) who found that students with family business experience had formed strong entrepreneurial attitudes. This is likely to be due to the strong influence present on an individual's perceptions by family members. If a young child has grown up in a family, which has made their own business, worked

with the family in that business, then it is likely that over the years the individual has formed entrepreneurial attitudes.

The Veciana et al. (2005) study compared two countries, which is what Fuchs et al. (2008) also did. They looked at school systems in Germany and Sweden. It was found that German schools do not really promote self-employment and German students consequently do not favour self-employment whereas Swedish students do. It should be made clear that different countries will obviously favour entrepreneurship more than others. Many factors will come into play such as government involvement, the state of the economy, and the education system in general. It is important to remember that the three factors stated can all relate to each other because if the state of the economy is poor then government involvement should be high and in turn the focus on their education system should be high particularly if the governments aim is to decrease unemployment through the creation of more jobs.

Kolvereid and Moen (1997) compared business graduates with an entrepreneurship major and graduates with other majors. It was found that students with an entrepreneurship major had greater entrepreneurial intentions and were more likely to set up a new business than other graduates. Comparing different degrees is useful in order to see whether entrepreneurial intentions are solely present with those who actually study entrepreneurship.

Although not directly found in the Kolvereid and Moen (1997) study, it can be argued that such intentions may also present with students on different degree programmes particularly as there is an increasing number of courses being offered on art and engineering degrees (Kuratko, 2005) and it is argued that educational factors like studying entrepreneurship can affect entrepreneurial intentions, as discussed earlier (Turker and Selcuk, 2009). If entrepreneurship is becoming such an important part of society then perhaps there should be more focus in areas other than business. In particular degrees such as Art, which focus greatly upon creativity, could be linked to entrepreneurship. Hamidi et al. (2008) found that exercises in creativity can often increase entrepreneurial intentions. However this was solely for students studying entrepreneurship education. Based on this it could be said that if entrepreneurship education was introduced into more degrees, which entail creative elements, it could result in more students following an entrepreneurial career path even if they are not business students. This could be of great benefit for an economy which is in a recession because it would increase the chances of the number of graduates for example who could become self employed through setting up their own business.

#### 2.11: The use of Internet and technology in entrepreneurship education

As mentioned previously with the McKeown et al. (2006) study there has not been much use of technology but this is not supported by the fact that 43% of the entire sample in the Solomon et al. (2002) study stated that information about entrepreneurship is provided to them via the web. This could be due to the fact that the findings in the Solomon et al.

(2002) study were mainly from the US whereas for the McKeown et al. (2006) study findings were from the UK. From this it can be argued that UK HEI's are not progressing as fast as US institutions. It is no surprise that traditional methods are still the main form of delivery when teaching entrepreneurship. With the growth of the Internet and other technologies, more innovative ways of teaching entrepreneurship should be considered and utilised.

Furthermore Solomon (2007) found in a 2004-2005 survey that the use of technology has grown considerably in entrepreneurship education. It was also found that guest speakers, class discussions, and business plans form a vital part of entrepreneurship courses.

Although business plans can be viewed as a traditional method of teaching entrepreneurship, the use of guest speakers and class discussion involve more active participation on the part of the student, which forms a part of the entrepreneurial directed approach, mentioned earlier (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006). It is important to remember that traditional teaching methods can be as effective as new teaching methods like the Internet but it depends on whether they are used effectively. It could be the case that one university uses the Internet as the main channel of communication but another university uses lectures in a more effective manner thus benefiting a student more.

Internet and new technologies like podcasts have simply opened up new channels of communication for people in entrepreneurship education to take advantage of.

### 2.12: The use of formal education and work placements in entrepreneurship

Many studies tend to look at how studying entrepreneurship helps develop the mindset needed in order to become a successful entrepreneur. However some researchers have found formal education to negatively impact upon the entrepreneurial process by reducing curiosity, vision, and willingness to take risks (Fallows, 1985; Shapero, 1980; Cited in Bird, 1989:64). This relates to the earlier discussion about how entrepreneurs learn differently than other types of students due to their entrepreneurial characteristics. Formal education tends not to follow a flexible approach so it can be seen to limit the entrepreneurial process.

According to Bird (1989:67) “...there is debate among educators and entrepreneurs on just how much of entrepreneurship can be taught (or learned in a formal setting).” It is for this reason that students may benefit more from work placements in order to learn by experience, which can be seen as better way to introduce budding entrepreneurs to the real business world. Work placements and internships should be considered for entrepreneurship programmes as one could argue that they help students learn the true value and understanding of entrepreneurship. Bird (1989:64) also states that “those with limited work experience are handicapped by unproven or underdeveloped skills and the lack of credibility perceived by seasoned managers, customers, and lenders.” Studying entrepreneurship will of course equip a student with the knowledge required to be an entrepreneur but with no experience it is likely that the new entrepreneurs will struggle as stated by Bird (1989). When setting up a business it is likely that an individual will

require some form of investment whether it is from friends or a loan from the bank.

Consequently an individual with prior work experience will be seen as a safer investment than someone with no prior experience even though they might have studied entrepreneurship.

Casson (1982:356) argues “formal education has an opportunity cost in terms of on-the-job training foregone; time spent in academic pursuits could have been spent ‘learning the trade’ as a delegate entrepreneur.” As stated previously it could be argued that not possessing such training could hinder one’s chances of becoming entrepreneur. It can be seen that a trade off exists between how much formal education is required and how much training is required. Casson (1982) also states that the training could easily come after formal education so it would just simply mean that an entrepreneur would have a delay in starting their career. An interesting point made by Casson (1982) is that formal education stresses uniformity, which as we have already seen is the complete opposite to the characteristics of an entrepreneur. This could consequently impact upon the entrepreneur’s individuality.

As entrepreneurship is concerned with situations, which cannot be easily defined, it is clear that the field lends itself to work experience as well as education (Casson, 1982). By having work experience an individual will possess more knowledge about what to do when faced with a scenario because they would have likely experienced such a scenario or something similar, which they have learnt from. In the case of entrepreneurship it is safe to say that textbooks, lectures, and assignments can only provide so much to the



budding entrepreneur, so when devising entrepreneurship courses more attention should be given to the importance that internships and placements can bring to students. It can be argued that both entrepreneurship education and work experience combined produce the real entrepreneur. Furthermore as the government is pushing for more entrepreneurs in society to aid with the recession in 2009 then they could consider making it policy to introduce internships into university entrepreneurship courses.

### 2.13: Overview of literature

After reviewing the literature it can be stated that there is a vast amount of information present with some areas receiving more attention than others. Areas such as exploring personality traits/characteristics of entrepreneurship students have received a great deal of attention (Gurol and Atsan, 2006; Koh, 1996) whereas thorough examinations of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship courses have not been dealt with as much. Even when this has been done the main focus is for example on the desire to set up a business and not primarily on the course. It is important to realise that without a solid entrepreneurship course students will not benefit and even if they wanted to set up a business they would not have learnt the fundamentals required in order to do so. Not only this but there has been little attention given in designing courses around students' needs. Relating to this is the finding that students can choose an entrepreneurship course without even having a genuine interest and see it as "filler" (Sexton and Bowman, 1984).

One emerging theme from the literature review is that a change is required in terms of teaching entrepreneurship. It has been found that an innovative method of teaching entrepreneurship needs to be utilised in order to complement those who are entrepreneurially inclined. However it is important to examine what exactly such an innovative method should consist of. As universities, courses and students vary from one setting to another then no solid conclusions can be drawn from findings in the literature and therefore one could argue that an innovative method of teaching will vary. Not only this but the literature also suggests that the teacher plays a vital role in the delivery of the teaching method and it is likely that teachers will also vary and consequently this will impact on their desired delivery method of teaching.

Another emerging theme is how intentions and perceptions of students are easily affected by educational and social factors. Due to the recession in 2009 it will be interesting to see what role this plays on students' perceptions about entrepreneurship. One interesting finding is the relatively few comparative studies present on entrepreneurship education. As this area is limited then it will be interesting to bring to light any themes or trends especially with regards to the recession in 2009.

From the literature it has been found that students who have had more educational experiences are likely to be more entrepreneurially inclined and could therefore have a higher desirability to setting up a new business. If a comparative study was conducted then this hypothesis could be put to the test in order to see for example if students who have been studying entrepreneurship longer are more likely to have the desire to set up a

business because they would have had more educational experiences and consequently a higher entrepreneurial intent than those students who have studied entrepreneurship for a shorter amount of time.

After reviewing the literature it can be argued that although a few comparative studies are present, there are no past studies which compare two year groups who have studied the same module. Not only this but the impact of the economic climate does not appear to have been considered on students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education. This study will aim to address these issues in order to add to the field of entrepreneurship education.

Given the overview of the literature one can argue that many past findings are of relevance for this study. Now that the literature has been examined the research objectives for this study need to be stated.

### Chapter 3: Research Objectives

Now that the literature has been reviewed it is important to state the objectives of this research study. It was decided that 4 research objectives needed to be examined for this research:

- 1. To evaluate the overall effectiveness of the undergraduate (Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies) and postgraduate (Strategic Management and Enterprise) entrepreneurship modules based on undergraduate and postgraduate students' perceptions at the Birmingham Business School.*
- 2. To examine the effects of the Recession in 2009 on students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education through asking questions concerning government involvement and the significance of entrepreneurship education in the economy.*
- 3. To identify any differences/similarities between the undergraduate students who took the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies module in 2007/2008 and undergraduate students who took the module in 2008/2009.*
- 4. To examine the relationship between undergraduate students' satisfaction with their entrepreneurship module and their likelihood of setting up a business.*

## Chapter 4: Research Methodology

### 4.1: Introduction:

After stating the research objectives of this study in the previous chapter, it is important to discuss the most suitable research design that can help answer the objectives for this research. This chapter explains and justifies the research methodology used in this study and relates it to the research objectives.

### 4.2: Cases

As discussed this research study was focused on a case study at an institute of higher education (Birmingham Business School) analysing the different streams (postgraduate and undergraduate modules) of entrepreneurship education provision. This section outlines each of the entrepreneurship modules (cases). It should be noted that the information discussed below was based upon the outlines for the entrepreneurship modules from the Birmingham Business School (Walker, 2008).

#### 4.2.1: Undergraduate Module

The Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies module is coursework based with no exam, is worth 20 credits and runs over two terms. Final year Commerce/Business

Management, Accounting and Finance, Engineering and Physics students take the module, which shows the diverse range of students that take the module.

The learning outcomes consist of students understanding why entrepreneurship is so important and why people choose to set up their own business along with the barriers that may be faced when deciding to do so.

The module is assessed by a business plan (70% of the module), which involves a student choosing a business they would like to set up, and detailing everything that is required to get it set up. This will involve the student making financial projections and estimations as to how much money will be required to set up the business, how to obtain start up capital, looking at its market, coming up with marketing strategies and designing and developing the product/service. Due to the extensive effort required for the business plan it is required to be a minimum of 8,000 words. However as each business will be different it is difficult for an exact word limit to be set. It is best that the students present a business plan for an entirely new business. What makes this module student centred is the fact that the student is required to work independently for the majority of the module. Students are allowed to sign up to see business plan advisors (entrepreneurship lecturers) in order to ask any questions that they may have and so guidance can be given to them. Prizes amounting up to £300 are awarded to the business plans, which gain the highest marks. The prizes are awarded by Birmingham City Council and by HSBC.

The remaining 30% of the module is assessed in the form a reflective diary, which involves three different submissions at three different times throughout the module. Each submission contains three different parts. The first part is entitled the “Learning Event” and involves the students detailing a “Eureka moment” which has changed their way of thinking. It could be for example through a talk with an entrepreneur or by reading a journal that helped trigger an idea. The second part involves the students evaluating a learning tool, which they have used such as a Gantt Chart. The final part of each diary requires the students to read an academic article from the SME theory section of the entrepreneurship website (WebCT) and discussing its relevance to their current stage of their business plans. Each diary submission must be three pages in total (one page for each section).

In the first term lectures are given by course tutors and external speakers who are often entrepreneurs themselves and can offer advice to students for when they write their business plans. Lectures are focused upon areas such as marketing, finance, SME theory and project management. The second term is focused solely on the writing up of the business plan and therefore no lectures are given but instead students are able to book appointments to see business plan advisors with any questions they may have.

At this point it should be noted that some minor changes were made to the undergraduate module between 2007/08 to 2008/09. A few extra finance lectures were given and instead of signing up manually for clinics with the business plan advisors, as was done in

2007/08 it was done electronically through WebCT in 2008/09. These changes were based upon students' feedback from 2007/08.

#### 4.2.2: Postgraduate Module

The MSc Strategic Management and Enterprise module is a 20 credit module that runs over two terms. Assessment for the module is based on an individual coursework assignment (worth 50%) and a three-hour unseen exam (worth 50%). As with the undergraduate module a business plan is the coursework assignment but for the postgraduate module students must consider the strategic implications to their businesses.

The learning outcomes of the module consist of students having the ability to identify factors which impact upon the strategic decision making in organisations, including culture and values. The business plan helps students identify the challenges of strategic management in small commercial and social enterprises. Students also learn the outcomes of making such strategic decisions and what the financial implications are. Through the completion of the business plan students will also be able to appreciate different stakeholder perspectives.

As the module is worth 20 credits and is at masters level then the business plan should be of a very high standard and lectures are given in the first term to help students with the progression of their business plans. Lectures cover areas such as strategic choices, the global business environment, pricing strategies for SMEs and challenges for planning



social enterprises. The second term also consists of some lectures in the areas of financial planning and banking issues. Guest speakers also give lectures as with the undergraduate module. Business plan consultations also take place to help students with any difficulties, which they may be faced with.

The module should help students in being able to think strategically in the future. This is a vital skill to possess particularly in such a competitive business environment where employers look for unique skills.

For both the undergraduate and postgraduate modules students benefit considerably as they learn about what is required to set up a successful business in such a competitive business world. They should be equipped with valuable skills as a result of completing the modules, which will be of benefit to them whether they decide to set up a business in the future or not.

#### 4.3: Research design

In order to answer all the research objectives for this study it was important to devise a carefully planned research methodology. A research design was needed that would allow data to be collected concerning students' perceptions about the undergraduate and postgraduate entrepreneurship modules. Through the collection of students' perceptions then the effectiveness of the undergraduate and postgraduate modules could be assessed and a comparison between the two undergraduate year groups would also be possible.

The research design would need to take into account the fact that this study is longitudinal and would involve data collection over a period of two years. A longitudinal study was decided upon, as it was important to assess the effectiveness of the undergraduate module through tracking perceptions of the module over time. It was decided that by collecting data over two years about students' perceptions of the module it would add more reliability to the findings about the effectiveness of the module as two different groups would have experienced the same module. A research design was needed that would also help examine the effects of the recession in 2009 on students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education. Finally the research design would need to allow for an examination into the relationship between undergraduate students' satisfaction with their entrepreneurship module and their likelihood of setting up a business.

In order to help devise the most appropriate research design for this study a multi-variate methodology analysis was conducted in order to examine the various methodology options, which were available.

Figure 1: A multi-variate research methodology grid

<i>Methodology</i>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Accessibility of students</b>	<b>Inductive</b>	<b>Deductive</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Telephone interviews</b>	/	x	x	/	/	x	x
<b>Questionnaires</b>	x	/	/	/	x	/	/
<b>In-depth interviews</b>	/	x	x	x	/	x	x
<b>Consumer Panel</b>	/	x	x	x	/	x	x
<b>Focus Groups</b>	/	x	x	x	/	x	x
<b>Participant observation</b>	/	x	/	x	/	x	x
<b>Observation</b>	/	x	/	x	/	x	x
<b>Secondary Data</b>	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

Figure 1 shows the multi-variate methodology analysis. To the left of the grid displays the possible means of collecting data for this research and the top row displays common characteristics associated with research methodologies. If there is (/) displayed in a box it means that a certain characteristic is of benefit to the method of collecting the data for this research whilst an (x) indicates a drawback. It should be noted that what is displayed in the grid would not necessarily be the same for other research studies. For example for this research there was no cost associated with the use of questionnaires but for other studies there may well be a cost associated with this form of data collection.

Before discussing the implications of figure 1 for this study it is important to first review the methodology options available. Telephone interviews would involve a short conversation (10-15 mins) about the entrepreneurship modules and the recession. The main elements of the modules like the business plan, guest speakers etc. could be used as different themes. A few minutes could be spent discussing each theme so that students could express their opinions about the key elements of the modules. Telephone interviews would allow the participants to express themselves more freely compared to face-to-face interviews thus giving the researcher more data. However a large number of respondents would be needed for this study because if more opinions were to be obtained about the modules then it would add more reliability to the findings. Consequently it would be ineffective to solely use telephone interviews due to time constraints associated with this method and thus not obtaining enough data about the modules.

The same applies for in-depth interviews, which would also be time consuming even though the researcher would be able to discuss the entrepreneurship modules to a greater extent with the students. However there would also be the risk of students being more reserved in face-to-face interviews and thus not fully expressing their opinions which would be a problem considering this study is focused greatly upon opinions and attitudes. For example a student may not wish to criticise a certain element of the module like the reflective diaries in a face-to-face interview but would if they were filling in a questionnaire, as it would be anonymous.

Consumer panels are another methodology option but as this research study is not commercial in its nature then it does not lend itself to a methodology, which uses consumer panels. Focus groups would be more ideal because they would save time when compared to face-to-face interviews as the researcher would be able to communicate with more than one student in each session and there is also the added benefit of one student helping another express their opinion about a certain area of the module. However if focus groups were used in this study it is likely that not all the necessary areas would be covered with regards to the entrepreneurship modules due to the fact that focus groups are also a time-consuming methodology option.

Questionnaires would allow the researcher to cover all areas of the entrepreneurship modules and other areas, which are of relevance such as the recession in 2009. Although in depth opinions are unlikely to be obtained, questionnaires would ensure a quick collection method, which is an important choice factor for this research design due to the number of respondents needed. As anonymity would be achieved with this method it is likely that students would express themselves more freely about the modules than with the qualitative research methods mentioned earlier.

Secondary data is another possible method as it can give the researcher information about the entrepreneurship modules, which they had not thought of before. However one big drawback is that the researcher is unlikely to have been involved with the collection of the secondary data and it can often be dated which could result in the researcher using information about the entrepreneurship modules that is inaccurate or irrelevant. (Malhotra

and Birks, 2007). The researcher must ensure that any information used from secondary data is not dated. For example the secondary data may discuss business plan clinics. The researcher must ensure that business plan clinics are still being used in the modules at the time when the data is collected.

Observation could be used in this study through the researcher sitting in various entrepreneurship lectures and observing student reactions to the guest speakers for example. However such a research method lends itself to research, which involves examining participant behaviour such as examining buying habits of consumers. It can be said that observation would not be an ideal choice for this study as opinions and attitudes are of more importance than behaviour.

When examining figure 1 it can be argued that all the choice factors listed are very important for this study. A qualitative research method is needed due to opinions being of vital importance in this study. However a quantitative research method is also important because it would allow an easy comparison of data due to the data being coded. As already mentioned a quick research method is needed due to the large sample size desired for this study. With many of the qualitative research methods students would be inaccessible for this study which makes it an important choice factor as a quantitative method would be needed in order to obtain enough data for the study. Since this study is testing theory in a particular context and not generating new theory one could argue that a deductive approach is a better choice for this study. Cost needed to be considered in this

study as the research methods entail an element of cost. For example using a telephone for the interviews or postal questionnaires.

From figure 1 it is clear that secondary data was an ideal choice for this research because such data can be both qualitative and quantitative and lends itself to both an inductive and deductive research approach. Another obvious choice was questionnaires and although the grid shows that questionnaires are not a means of collecting qualitative data, this research allowed for this by including open-ended questions so that students could express their opinions and attitudes more freely. The grid also shows that there was no cost associated for questionnaires with this research due to the Birmingham Business School sending out the questionnaires to students, which was another important choice factor in selecting this method.

The inaccessibility of students was the main reason for not being able to use many of the qualitative methods in this study. In order to conduct face-to-face interviews with past students it would have meant traveling to different locations which would not have been suitable for this research. However it was decided to use telephone interviews because the researcher had access to the telephone numbers of undergraduate students from 2007/2008 and the university would cover the costs. This also allowed for participant observation in the sense that the researcher would be involved with all telephone interviews.

As a result of the research objectives in this study it was decided to use a mixed research design that would result in the collection of quantitative data and qualitative data. The collection of quantitative data would result in a quick and easy comparison between the two undergraduate year groups due to quantitative data being coded. Qualitative data was also needed, as opinions were vital for this study but a quantitative research design was decided upon in combination with a qualitative research design to help support quantitative findings. By focusing more upon a quantitative research design the findings would also be more significant due to statistical tests being performed which could then be verified by others as research into this area develops.

#### 4.4: Data collection

With regards to the undergraduate module (Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies) the most appropriate means of data collection was postal questionnaires mainly because of the fact the undergraduate students in 2007/2008 had already finished their degrees and had left the university. With this in mind it was necessary to do the same when looking at the postgraduate module (Strategic Management and Enterprise) because the postgraduate students would not be having lectures when the data would have been collected therefore it would have been difficult to solely rely on qualitative data collection within this period of time.

However it was felt necessary to further examine students' opinions and attitudes therefore telephone interviews were carried out with some of the undergraduate students



who took the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies in 2007/2008. For this research a comparative approach was also looked at with the undergraduate students. The same questionnaire, which was administered to the undergraduate students in 2007/2008, was also administered to the undergraduate students in 2008/2009 in order to see if perceptions about entrepreneurship education had changed. However further questions were added in order to ascertain how students felt about entrepreneurship education considering the downturn in the economy in 2009. As the module for the postgraduate students had changed considerably it was not appropriate to compare the two years. It should also be stated that a questionnaire was the only means of data collection for the undergraduate students in 2008/2009 as it was felt that no further data was needed.

The main reason for choosing questionnaires as the means of data collection was mentioned earlier but questionnaires are a quick and cost effective means of data collection, which was needed for this research. "Questionnaires can be designed to determine what people know, what they think, or how they act or plan to act. They can measure subject's factual knowledge about a thing or a number, people's opinions, attitudes and motives for behaving in certain ways. They can be used to measure the frequency of past behaviours or to prediction future actions" (Mcnabb 2002:126).

One cannot forget that opinions and attitudes matter considerably for this research, which in turn favours a more qualitative approach. In order to deal with this the questionnaires were designed to allow students to express their opinions. Also the telephone interviews helped to expand upon the questionnaire results for the undergraduates. One could argue

that conducting the interviews first may have been better as key issues could have been established and used in the questionnaire in order to get a wider perspective on what students felt about these issues.

As well as the primary data collection secondary data was used in terms of postgraduate students' opinions about their module. However as the researcher was not present when the data was collected this could cause problems in terms of the accuracy of the data (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). So this research was designed to allow both a quantitative and qualitative approach to support each other and therefore allowed to go into more depth about students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education. "Using qualitative techniques can help to elaborate and explain underlying reasons in quantitative findings" (Malhotra and Birks 2007:155).

#### 4.5: Questionnaire design

As questionnaires were the main form of data collection in this study it was important for the questionnaire design to complement the research objectives for this study. The three questionnaires will briefly be discussed and in order to explain the questionnaire design each research objective will be taken in turn to justify the questions included.

The undergraduate 07/08 questionnaire (appendix 2), undergraduate 08/09 questionnaire (appendix 3) and postgraduate questionnaire (appendix 4) all followed a similar structure as already stated. Students were required to first provide some basic information

concerning their degree, ethnic origin, father's occupation and intended occupation. This was decided upon, as it would help show any diversity present between students that take the modules. The majority of questions included were centered on different aspects of the entrepreneurship modules since the objectives of the study were focused upon module effectiveness and students satisfaction with the module.

In general it can be said that the three questionnaires were designed in a manner similar to module evaluation questionnaires, which students complete at the end of a module. Due to the more detailed nature of the undergraduate module, the undergraduate questionnaires also included sections concerning WebCT and the "role of entrepreneurship." Questions concerning the role of entrepreneurship were also present in the postgraduate questionnaire.

The first objective of this research involves the overall effectiveness of both the undergraduate and postgraduate module. The questionnaires for both modules contained questions regarding various elements of the module such as whether assessment criteria was well explained and the effectiveness of the website for the undergraduate module. Such questions were suitable in order to obtain a clear understanding as to whether students felt the modules were effective.

The second objective focuses upon the impact of the recession in 2009 and whether it affected students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education. By including questions

concerning government involvement and the value of entrepreneurship education it was felt that reliable data could be collected in order to answer this research objective.

The third objective is based around comparing the two undergraduate groups. The questionnaire for the undergraduate module remained exactly the same for both years apart from the addition of some questions to the 2008/2009 group which will not be looked at in a comparative nature. Those questions were to identify the effect of the recession in 2009 on students' perceptions, which relates to the second research objective. As the questions concerning the undergraduate module were the same both years an exact comparison of students' perceptions could be made in order to see for example if the module had improved in effectiveness over the two years.

The final research objective involves an examination into the relationship between student satisfaction with the undergraduate module and undergraduates likelihood of setting up their own business. In order to help answer this objective questions concerning motivation, improved understanding in the field, external speakers and assessment criteria were used as the main measures of student satisfaction because it can be argued that these are the main elements that determined students satisfaction of the entrepreneurship module. A question was also included in both undergraduate questionnaires concerning student's likelihood of setting up a business.

It was felt that by including “further comments” at the end of the questionnaires it could help provide some information, which was not considered for the research but could have been relevant to any of the four research objectives.

A pilot version of each questionnaire was administered to a small sample to ensure that questions included could answer the research objectives and to ensure that the questionnaires were not too long. There were no significant problems resulting from the pilot study and thus the same questionnaires were used, with no revisions made, when administering the final versions to students.

The questionnaire was administered by post to the 111 undergraduates who took the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies module in 2007/2008. The total response rate was approximately 40%. The questionnaire administered to the 27 postgraduate students via the postgraduate office in the Business School had a total response rate for the postgraduate students was 26%. The final questionnaire was administered via the undergraduate office in the Business School to only half the undergraduate students (due to researcher constraints) who took the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Studies module in 2008/2009. The total response rate was approximately 40%. This questionnaire differed from the previous undergraduate questionnaire in that the section “Role of Entrepreneurship” was expanded given the financial crisis present in 2009. The questionnaires were analysed using a statistical software package known as SPSS. This allowed the researcher to compare data, which was vital for this study through the use of various statistical tests such as t-tests.

#### 4.6: Telephone Interviews

The telephone interviews were conducted solely with the first set of undergraduate students and therefore a comparison will only be made between the questionnaire data of the two undergraduate groups. A convenience sample was selected for the in depth telephone interviews due to researcher constraints. Ten undergraduates were asked to expand upon some of their answers, which they gave in the questionnaires. The interviews lasted approximately 10-15 minutes each. This was felt to be sufficient time for students to expand upon what they said in the questionnaires. The researcher took notes of the main points made by each student and analysed the interviews by theme. The interview structure can be seen in appendix 6. This structure was decided upon, as these were the main findings from the questionnaires so as already discussed, it was important to further examine these findings.

With all the data collected for this research participants were told that data would be strictly confidential and would remain anonymous. By ensuring anonymity it was thought that students would be likely to express more of their opinions about the modules, which would ultimately provide more data for this study.

Now that the research methodology has been discussed, the following two chapters will discuss the results and findings of the data collected through the use of this research methodology.

## Chapter 5: Results

### 5.1 Introduction:

A mixed research design was used for this study as discussed in the previous chapter, which helped provide a large amount of data as will be stated in this chapter. All data obtained from closed questions was analysed using a statistical software package (SPSS). Data from open-ended questions was placed into frequency tables as will be displayed in this chapter. The first section of results shows data from both modules. All questions are looked at in order to help examine the overall effectiveness of the modules. However questions relating to journals and theories used will not be examined as limited data was provided on these questions. It should also be noted that the questions related to degree type, ethnic origin, father's occupation and students intended occupation will not be discussed. The second section looks at differences/similarities between the two undergraduate years. The third section looks at the relationship between student satisfaction and students likelihood of setting up a business. The final section discusses the qualitative data collected from the telephone interviews.

### 5.2: Review of results from all 3 questionnaires concerning both entrepreneurship modules

Before looking at the results it should be noted that the total number of respondents for some questions will appear higher than others due to the fact some questions where

present in all 3 questionnaires whilst some questions were not. Each table will be labeled in order to show whether the results are solely for undergraduates, postgraduates, or both. In depth discussion of the results will be in the following chapter but for now it is important to see students' perceptions before discussing the implications of the findings.

For this section mean and standard deviation scores will be stated as well as frequencies and percentages in order to examine students' perceptions of the modules.

#### 5.2.1: Undergraduate and Postgraduate results from questions present in all 3 questionnaires

This section displays the results from the questions that were present in all three questionnaires.

The first table shows results relating to how beneficial students found the external speakers that gave guest lectures throughout the modules. The table also shows results concerning the usefulness of the core textbook, which students used as well as whether they felt that they had improved their understanding of concepts in entrepreneurship as a result of the module. Results relating to students motivation and the clarity of the assessment criteria are also displayed.



**Table 1.1: Results concerning key elements of both modules (external speakers, usefulness of the core textbook, improved understanding of concepts in the field, motivation and clarity of assessment criteria).**

<i>(All Undergraduates and Postgraduates)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>External Speakers</i>	2.9	1.1	5 (6.0%)	38 (45.8%)	8 (9.6%)	26 (31.3%)	6 (7.2%)	83 (100%)
<i>Usefulness of Core Textbook</i>	3.2	1.0	1 (1.3%)	23 (29.1%)	26 (32.9%)	20 (25.3%)	9 (11.4%)	79 (100%)
<i>Improved Understanding Of Concepts In The Field</i>	2.5	1.1	6 (7.3%)	50 (61.0%)	5 (6.1%)	17 (20.7%)	4 (4.9%)	82 (100%)
<i>Motivation</i>	2.2	1.0	18 (21.7%)	43 (51.8%)	11 (13.3%)	8 (9.6%)	3 (3.6%)	83 (100%)
<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	3.4	1.3	8 (9.8%)	18 (22.0%)	8 (9.8%)	33 (40.2%)	15 (18.3%)	82 (100%)

It should be noted that the total responses for each question in table 1.1 differ due to missing data. Also in order to better understand the mean scores a scale is given below:  
1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= No Opinion, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree. This scale is of use in tables, which display a mean score.

From table 1.1 it is clear that overall the majority of respondents were satisfied with the external speakers and the talks, which they gave. 51.8% of respondents (strongly agree & agree) thought they helped improve their understanding of entrepreneurship. However this does not dismiss the fact that 31.3% of respondents did not feel the same in that the external speakers did not help to improve their understanding of entrepreneurship. A minority of respondents also wrote next to their answer comments such as “Interesting

but not helpful for coursework”, and “Only certain speakers helped.” The mean for this question is 2.9 which falls into the “agree” category but it should be noted how close the mean figure is to the “no opinion” category. The small standard deviation (SD) figure of 1.1 indicates that results did not vary much above and below the mean score.

The core textbook was an important area to examine, as it was a vital area for the reflective diaries. The highest response for this question was the “No Opinion” category with 32.9%. It is clear that respondents had mixed feelings about the usefulness of the core textbook because 30.4% found it useful (strongly agree & agree) whilst 25.3% chose to disagree that the textbook was useful for them. The mean figure 3.2 supports the finding that the “no opinion” category was the most popular response for students and there was a small deviation above and below the mean as the standard deviation figure was 1.

The next question was based upon whether the module had helped students improve their understanding of concepts in the field of entrepreneurship. From table 1.1 68.3% of respondents found the module helped improve their understanding of concepts in the field. However 25.6% of respondents did not find (strongly disagree & disagree) that the module helped improve their understanding of concepts in the field. The mean figure of 2.5 indicates students agreed that the module helped improve their understanding of concepts in the field and a small standard deviation figure (1.1) supports the finding that only 25.6% did not agree with the statement.

With all modules a certain level of motivation is required in order to do well and a high level is needed for this module as students need to perform very well in the coursework as there is no exam.

When looking at both the number of responses for “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” it is clear that many students were motivated to do well on this module. Overall 73.5% of respondents stated that they were motivated to do more than the minimum requirements for this module. Only 13.2% of respondents “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” stated that they were not motivated to do more than the minimum requirements for the module. The mean figure for this question was 2.2, which falls into the “agree” category and as with the other questions there was a small standard deviation above and below the mean (1.0).

The assessment criteria need to be clearly explained in order for students to understand what is required of them, especially for the entrepreneurship modules, which are mainly coursework based. In total 58.5% of both undergraduate and postgraduate respondents thought the assessment criteria were not clearly explained for the module. However 31.8% stated that they were explained. The mean for this question was 3.4, which indicates that many students had “no opinion” about whether the assessment criteria were clearly explained. This may be due to the high figures, which agreed and disagreed with the statement thus causing a mean figure to be in-between the two. The standard deviation figure of 1.3 was the highest in table 1.1.

Assessment criteria were given for all elements of the modules but because so much effort is required, for example for the business plan, some students thought that more explanation was needed.

The next question to be looked at is the areas in which students wanted further lectures.

**Table 1.2: Areas where students wanted further lectures**

<i>(All Undergraduates and Postgraduates)</i>		
<b>Areas where students wanted further lectures</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Finance + Accounting	37	38.5
Business Plan structure + layout	29	30.2
Reflective diaries	11	11.5
Marketing	9	9.4
Lectures about Practical cases/Successful ventures	3	3.1
Sales forecasting	2	2.1
Refresher Lectures	1	1.0
Growth strategy	1	1.0
Structural HRM	1	1.0
Interaction with local SMEs	1	1.0
Lectures on Laws and Regulations	1	1.0
<i>Total</i>	96	100

11 different responses were given but some were more popular than others. The table above is ranked starting with the most popular response. The total number of responses amounted to 96 because some respondents stated more areas in which they wanted further lectures than others. From the table the most popular answer given by respondents was “Finance and Accounting” (38.5%) which was closely followed by “Business plan structure and layout.” The reflective diary was seen as an area which needed further

lectures on by 11.5% of the respondents whilst areas such as structural HRM, refresher lectures, growth strategy, interaction with local SMEs and Laws and regulations were not common responses.

Students were given 2 terms to complete the business plan due to the amount of effort and time required to complete it. This in total gave students approximately 6 months to complete their business plans to a satisfactory standard. Below shows the results for this question:

**Table 1.3: Realistic deadline for the business plan**

<i>(All Undergraduates and Postgraduates)</i>	<b>Realistic Deadline For The Business Plan</b>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	78	94.0
<i>No</i>	5	6.0
<i>Total</i>	83	100

Overall 94% of students found the deadline given to complete the business plan was realistic whilst only 6% thought it was not.

As a result of completing the business plan students should have become aware of barriers, which affect the setting up of a successful business. Respondents gave a variety of answers, which are listed on the next page along with the frequency and percentage of each response.

**Table 1.4: Main barriers to successful entrepreneurship**

<i>(All Undergraduates and Postgraduates)</i>		
<b>Main Barriers To Successful Entrepreneurship</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Finance/Start up capital	43	35.5
Risk taking	12	9.9
Viable/Unique business idea	11	9.1
Too much competition	11	9.1
Lack of experience	8	6.6
Human error	7	5.8
Legislation	5	4.1
Unsustainable/Saturated target market	5	4.1
Poor economic climate	3	2.5
Lack of information	3	2.5
Lack of motivation	3	2.5
Lack of unique marketing	2	1.7
Creative thinking	2	1.7
Lack of skills	1	0.8
Detail of business plan	1	0.8
Time management	1	0.8
Adaptation to the market	1	0.8
Lack of confidence	1	0.8
Poor decision making	1	0.8
<i>Total</i>	121	100

All of the answers listed above are likely to have come from students' knowledge of the business world combined with what they learnt from the module.

The most common response with 35.5% was finance/start up capital. Respondents stated that raising the capital required to fund the new venture is a very difficult procedure. This was one area, which was needed to be detailed in the business plan and it may have given students an indication as to the difficulty involved in raising the funds required. This answer was the only one with such a high response rate.

Other common answers included risk taking, having a viable business idea and too much competition in the market. The low response rate for “Poor economic climate” should be noted as this answer was expected to be higher as a result of the recession in 2009.

However respondents stated other barriers that may affect the setting up of a business more than having a poor economic climate such as competition.

The next question to be examined involved asking students about their opinion of entrepreneurs and the role of SMEs in today’s society. Upon completion of the module it is expected that students would have gained the knowledge about the importance of entrepreneurship in today’s society. The next page shows the answers given for this question along with the frequency and percentage of each answer.

**Table 1.5: Role of SMEs and entrepreneurs in today's society**

<i>(All Undergraduates and Postgraduates)</i>		
<b>Role Of SMEs And Entrepreneurs In Today's Society</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SMEs help a weak economy/Provide economic growth	9	14.3
SMEs are an important part of our economy	8	12.7
SMEs provide innovation/Creative thinking	7	11.1
SMEs provide employment	6	9.5
SMEs are diminishing	5	7.9
Admiration/Respect for SMEs	4	6.3
SMEs keep larger companies honest/agile	4	6.3
SMEs needed as customers want a more personal service	3	4.8
SMEs struggle to succeed	3	4.8
SMEs help encourage competition	3	4.8
SMEs provide inspiration	2	3.2
SMEs are Successful/Strong	2	3.2
Able to anticipate future developments	1	1.6
SMEs dominate the market	1	1.6
SMEs provide more customer satisfaction than large firms	1	1.6
SMEs tackle transnationalisation	1	1.6
SMEs help build workers' skills	1	1.6
Good reference for personal/business long term plan	1	1.6
SMEs lack in generating awareness	1	1.6
<i>Total</i>	63	100

As with the previous question not all the answers will be discussed, only the answers with the highest response rates.

As can be seen from table 1.5 there were three frequent answers given for this question. 14.3% of answers were that entrepreneurs and SMEs help a poor economy/provide economic growth. This relates to the discussion in the literature review and needs to be



examined further. For now it can be said that respondents believed that SMEs and entrepreneurs are of great importance to an economy. This links with the next highest answer where 12.7% of the responses given were about how SMEs and entrepreneurs are of importance to our economy.

11.1% of responses given were concerned with how entrepreneurs and SMEs provide innovation and creative thinking.

Overall one can say that the answers given were quite spread as no answer had a very high frequency/percentage, which shows that students have differing opinion about the role of SMEs and entrepreneurs in society. Respondents clearly understand the nature of entrepreneurship due to the fact they were able to state that SMEs provide employment and keep larger companies more agile. Above all 6.3% of respondents' answers were concerned with having great respect and admiration for entrepreneurs and SMEs.

#### 5.2.2: Results from questions present in both Undergraduate 07/08 + 08/09 questionnaires

The results in this section are from questions, which were present in both undergraduate questionnaires.

**Table 1.6: Reasons for choosing the undergraduate module**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>	<b>Reasons for choosing Undergraduate Module</b>					
	<b>Frequency</b>			<b>Percentage</b>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>All Coursework/No Exam</i>	39	37	76	51.3	48.7	100
<i>Interested In Entrepreneurship</i>	23	53	76	30.3	69.7	100
<i>Expand Knowledge Of Entrepreneurship</i>	13	63	76	17.1	82.9	100
<i>Recommended By Other Students</i>	6	70	76	7.9	92.1	100
<i>Other</i>	17	59	76	22.4	77.6	100

Although the question relating to why students chose the entrepreneurship module listed responses whereby respondents had to select only one response, some respondents chose more than one so it was decided to examine each possible answer separately in order to prevent the exclusion of responses.

The total number of responses for this question was 76 as it was only present in the undergraduate questionnaires. 51.3% of respondents selected “All Coursework/No Exam” as the main reason for deciding to take the entrepreneurship module. This was the most popular response by undergraduate students compared with the other possible answers.

The next highest response was “Interested In Entrepreneurship.” 30.3% of undergraduate respondents chose the module due to having an interest in the field of entrepreneurship. One could argue that by having an interest in entrepreneurship a student may also wish to expand their knowledge in this particular field. However only 17.1% respondents selected this answer as their reason for choosing the module.

At university students get to know many different people including people from the years above them. The students who have already taken the entrepreneurship module may have recommended the module to the younger years. From the data collected only 7.9% of respondents chose the module based on recommendations by other students.

By including an “other” response it allowed respondents to state any other reason they may have had for choosing the module that was not already listed in the questionnaire. Surprisingly 22.4% of responses given were in the “other” category. Below lists the reasons given for choosing the module.

1. Looks good on CV
2. Wanted to learn about starting a business
3. Process of elimination
4. Double credit module
5. Compulsory
6. Challenging
7. Only option
8. Combines all elements of the course
9. Allows a practical application of knowledge

Out of these responses the most popular “other” response was because it was “compulsory.” This relates to engineer students who must take the module as part of their degree. However from the above list it is clear that the respondents chose the module because they want to gain something out of it. For example another popular response was respondents wishing to learn about starting a business.

It was important to examine the usefulness of the clinics for the undergraduate students, as these were the main method for students to deal with any queries they may have had with regards to their business plans.

**Table 1.7: Usefulness of business plan clinics**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>Business Plan clinics were useful</i>	2.5	1.0	11 (14.5%)	33 (43.4%)	18 (23.7%)	12 (15.8%)	2 (2.6%)	76 (100%)

23.7% of respondents had no opinion with regards to this statement and this is likely to be due to the fact that they did not attend any clinics. In total 57.9% of respondents found the clinics useful for dealing with any problems they may have had whilst 18.4% stated the opposite. It should be noted that some respondents stated next to their answers that they found the finance clinics very useful. This could relate to the high percentage of respondents that wanted further lectures in this area. A mean score of 2.5 supports the high number of students who found the clinics useful. There was a small deviation above and below the mean as the SD figure was only 1.

The booking system for the clinics required students to visit the undergraduate office and sign up via a sheet posted on the wall. However for the undergraduates in 2008/09 they were allowed to sign up via WebCT which is the website for students who attend the university.

**Table 1.8: Problems with the booking system for the clinics**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>	<b>Problems with the Booking System for the clinics</b>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	33	44.0
<i>No</i>	42	56.0
<i>Total</i>	75	100

The results for this question are mixed as 44% found a problem with the booking system whilst 56% did not. As two different booking systems for the clinics were used then are clearer indication of the findings will be detailed further on in the results when both undergraduate years are compared. For now it is important to examine the reasons as to why 44% of respondents stated that there was a problem with the booking system. Table 1.9 lists the responses given in the questionnaires as to why respondents thought there was a problem with the booking system and some of the recommendations which they suggested along with the frequency and percentage of each response:

**Table 1.9: Problems and Recommendations for the booking system of the clinics**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>		
<b>Problems and Recommendations For Booking System</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Not enough slots/Fully booked	17	40.5
Students multi-booked	12	28.6
Sign up through WebCT	3	7.1
Limited time given for clinic session	2	4.8
More advisors needed	2	4.8
Only allow a certain number of bookings	2	4.8
Advisors didn't turn up	1	2.4
1 <sup>st</sup> come 1 <sup>st</sup> served is unfair	1	2.4
Difficult to check availability	1	2.4
Advisors not aware of students plans	1	2.4
<i>Total</i>	42	100

The most popular problem stated was that the clinics were fully booked or that there were no available slots. 40.5% of respondents found this to be a big problem and this relates to the second most common answer. 28.6% of respondents stated that some students had multi-booked thus leaving fewer spaces for students who had yet to book for clinics.

The response "Sign up through WebCT" was given by respondents from 2007/08 who thought that this would be a more adequate method of signing up for the clinics. Other recommendations given were for more advisors to be used for the clinics and to only allow a certain number of bookings per students. This could also be another reason as to why some respondents had no opinion about the usefulness of the clinics. It could have been the case that they wanted to attend some clinics but were unable to find a slot due to multi-bookings by certain students.

This question requires further attention and will be carefully examined in the discussion section.

The next few questions relate to the website for the undergraduate entrepreneurship module where many resources are available to help students progress with their business plans and help them with their reflective diaries. For example many readings are available to help generate ideas for students' business plans as well as templates for the structure of the business plan. Table 1.10 displays the results from the questions concerning the co-ordination of web material with the module and how easily students found it to navigate around the website.

**Table 1.10: Effectiveness of the entrepreneurship website**

<i>(All Undergraduates )</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>Good Co-ordination of Web Material</i>	3.1	1.0	1 (1.3%)	28 (36.8%)	19 (25.0%)	22 (28.9%)	6 (7.9%)	76 (100%)
<i>Easy to navigate around the website</i>	3.0	1.1	3 (3.9%)	31 (40.8%)	9 (11.8%)	28 (36.8%)	5 (6.6%)	76 (100%)

The first question concerning the website examined whether web based material was well co-ordinated with the module material. The results for this question are evenly split as 38.1% stated that web based material was well co-ordinated with the module material whilst 36.8% did not agree with the statement. 25% of respondents had no opinion and one possible cause for this is that they did not access the website as much as the other

respondents. The mean score of 3.1 falls into the “no opinion” category with a standard deviation of 1. This supports the high responses for “agree” “no opinion” and “disagree”

The next question involving the website was to examine how easy students found it to navigate around the website. It could be the case that if they struggled to navigate around the website that they did not use it that often which could explain the 25% who had no opinion for the previous statement.

Again the results are quite even as 44.7% found it easy to navigate around the website whilst 43.4% stated they did not find it easy to navigate around the website. One could argue that the 43.4% from this question could relate to the 25% of respondents who had no opinion on the previous question. The mean score (3.0) as with the previous question falls into the “no opinion category and the standard deviation figure of 1.1 suggests results did not deviate greatly above and below the mean.

As the website had many different sections it was important to identify which areas contributed the most to the students understanding of the module. Respondents were required to state the 2 areas, which contributed the most to their understanding of the module. However as with the first question concerning the reason for choosing the module, some respondents circled more than the specified amount. Consequently each possible response will be taken in turn so that no answers are excluded.



**Table 1.11: WebCT Sections contributing to students understanding of the module**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>	<b>WebCT Sections</b>					
	<b>Frequency</b>			<b>Valid Percentage</b>		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Discussion Forum</i>	11	64	75	14.7	85.3	100
<i>Case Studies</i>	10	65	75	13.3	86.7	100
<i>SME Theory</i>	15	60	75	20.0	80.0	100
<i>Project Management Section</i>	3	72	75	4.0	96.0	100
<i>Marketing Section</i>	4	71	75	5.3	94.7	100
<i>Finance Section</i>	32	43	75	42.7	57.3	100
<i>Business Plan Section</i>	38	37	75	50.7	49.3	100
<i>Reflective Diary Section</i>	29	46	75	38.7	61.3	100

The discussion forum allowed students to post comments/thoughts about the module or to check for updates concerning the module. Only 14.7% stated that the discussion forum contributed the most to their understanding of the module.

The case studies section allowed students to look at different SME cases, which could help, inspire their business plans. Only 13.3% thought this section of the website contributed the most to their understanding of the module.

SME theory allowed students to apply theory to their own business plans. 20% of respondents thought that this section contributed the most to their understanding of the module.

The project management section was not greatly used by students and this shows by the results above as only 4% of respondents chose this area as contributing the most to their understanding of the module.

The marketing section could help students greatly as a section concerning marketing is required for the business plan. Although it is a useful section many respondents stated it did not help them particularly as only 5.3% of respondents thought it contributed to their understanding of the module.

The finance section was an important section particularly for the business plan, as students were required to make their own profit and loss accounts and balance sheets for their businesses. Within this section was a template for doing these financial accounts. This section was clearly popular with students as 42.7% of respondents stated that this area contributed the most to their understanding of the module.

The business plan section was an area of vital importance as it focused upon the areas of the business plan, which students needed to be aware of. Just over half of the respondents (50.7%) stated that this area contributed the most to their understanding of the module. As it contained a template for the business plan it is clear as to why it was such a helpful area for students.

The reflective diary section was an important area as it could help students with 30% of their module marks. It contained academic readings required for the third part of each reflective diary as well as different examples to help with the completion of the reflective diaries. This was another helpful area for students as 38.7% of respondents found it contributed the most to their understanding of the module.

Overall the section which contributed the most to students understanding of the module was the business plan section followed by the finance section.

The next question is of great importance for this research as it concerns the likelihood of students setting up their own businesses. What should be noted is that the table on the next page does not contain postgraduate responses. Due to module differences the question about setting up a business was worded differently for the postgraduates and will be discussed further on in this section. For now table 1.17 shows the results for the undergraduates.

**Table 1.12: Likelihood of Undergraduates setting up a business**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Very Likely</i>	<i>Likely</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Very Unlikely</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>Likelihood of undergraduates setting up a business</i>	2.6	0.9	11 (14.5%)	24 (31.6%)	30 (39.5%)	10 (13.2%)	1 (1.3%)	76 (100%)

46.1% of respondents stated that they were likely to set up a business in the future.

However an interesting finding is that 39.5% of respondents were unsure about whether they will set up a business, which could relate to the recession in 2009 impacting upon students' intentions of setting up a business. Only 14.5% stated that they were not likely to set up a business in the future. The mean score of 2.6 indicates that many students felt they would be likely to set up a business in the future. The standard deviation figure was 0.9 indicating a very small deviation above and below the mean score.

### 5.2.3: Results from questions present only in the Undergraduate 08/09 questionnaire

The following 6 questions were only included in the 2008/09 undergraduate questionnaire and do not directly link to the entrepreneurship module at the Birmingham Business School. They focus greatly upon the areas discussed in the literature review and will give an indication of students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education.

The table below shows how important respondents feel entrepreneurship education is in our society.

**Table 1.13: Importance of Entrepreneurship education**

<i>(Undergraduates 08/09 )</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Quite Important</i>	<i>Of Some Importance</i>	<i>Of Little Importance</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>Importance of Entrepreneurship Education</i>	1.8	0.6	10 (30.3%)	20 (60.6%)	3 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	33 (100%)

30.3% of respondents stated that entrepreneurship education is very important and 60.6% stated it is quite important. What is interesting is that no respondent stated entrepreneurship education as having little or no importance to society. As discussed entrepreneurship education is of importance to our society and all the respondents stated this but with differing levels of importance. The mean score of 1.8 indicates many students agree that entrepreneurship education is very important and the small standard

deviation figure (0.6) adds even more significance to this finding since the results did not deviate greatly above and below the mean.

The next table displays results relating to whether students think entrepreneurship education leads to new ventures and the value of entrepreneurship.

**Table 1.14: Entrepreneurship education leads to new ventures and the value of studying entrepreneurship.**

<i>(Undergraduates 08/09 )</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>Entrepreneurship Education Leads To New Ventures</i>	2.0	0.9	9 (27.3%)	18 (54.5%)	3 (9.1%)	3 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	33 (100%)
<i>Studying Entrepreneurship is only of value if you want to set up a business</i>	4.0	0.5	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (12.1%)	25 (75.8%)	4 (12.1%)	33 (100%)

81.8% of respondents stated that entrepreneurship education does lead to new ventures.

Only 9.1% had no opinion about the question and the same percentage stated that entrepreneurship education does not lead to new ventures. The mean score (2.0) indicates that students agree that entrepreneurship education does lead to new ventures. The standard deviation was 0.9, which means the results did not deviate greatly above and below the mean.

The next question focused on whether students thought that learning about entrepreneurship is only valuable if you intend on setting up your own business. Table 1.14 also shows the answers to this question.

No respondent chose “strongly agree” or “agree” whilst 87.9% did not agree that learning about entrepreneurship is only valuable if you intend on setting up a business. The mean score of 4 indicates students do not agree with the statement and the small standard deviation figure (0.5) adds more significance to this finding since results did not deviate significantly above and below the mean. This shows that students understood the true value of studying entrepreneurship in that it is beneficial no matter what an individual does in life.

Studying entrepreneurship provides an individual with many different benefits. However it was important to examine what benefits students can gain from studying entrepreneurship. Table 1.15 on the next page shows the answers given by respondents for this question along with the frequency and percentage of each answer.

**Table 1.15: Main benefits from studying entrepreneurship**

<i>(Undergraduates 08/09)</i>		
<b>Main Benefits From Studying Entrepreneurship</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Can set up own business	7	25.0
Ability to think creatively	5	17.9
Understand various elements of business and environment	4	14.3
Equipped with valuable skills	3	10.7
Understand complexities of setting up a business	2	7.1
More practical than other modules	1	3.6
Added confidence	1	3.6
Learning how to do a business plan	1	3.6
Put skills into practice	1	3.6
Passion and integrity	1	3.6
Innovative	1	3.6
Belief you can do it	1	3.6
<i>Total</i>	28	100

25% of responses given were that studying entrepreneurship could allow someone to set up his or her own business. This relates greatly to the previous question about entrepreneurship education leading to new ventures. 17.9% of responses show that respondents found that studying entrepreneurship will result in an individual being able to think creatively. 14.3% of responses were centred on the fact that studying entrepreneurship can help an individual learn about the various elements of business and the business environment. 10.7% of responses focused on how studying entrepreneurship can equip an individual with valuable skills.

As students would have experienced some teaching methods it was important to examine which teaching method students stated to be most suitable for teaching entrepreneurship.

The table below shows the results to this question:

**Table 1.16: Students' preferred methods of being taught entrepreneurship**

<i>(Undergraduates 08/09)</i>	<b>Methods of Teaching Entrepreneurship</b>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Talks By Entrepreneurs</i>	15	45.5
<i>Practical Lectures Involving Group Work</i>	8	24.2
<i>Case Studies</i>	7	21.2
<i>Other</i>	2	6.1
<i>Use Of Theory</i>	1	3.0
<i>Total</i>	33	100

45.5% of respondents stated that talks by entrepreneurs were the best method for teaching entrepreneurship.

24.2% chose practical lectures involving group work as the best method for teaching entrepreneurship, which was closely followed by 21.2% of respondents who selected case studies, as the best method. The “other” responses given for this question were that example business plans are the best method to teach entrepreneurship. This clearly relates to the entrepreneurship module, which these two students took.

Government involvement was the next question for the undergraduate students 2008/09 as the involvement of the government relates to the recession in 2009 so it was important



to examine whether students believed the government is doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education.

**Table 1.17: Government involvement in the provision of entrepreneurship education**

<i>(Undergraduates 08/09)</i>	<b>Is the government doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education?</b>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	2	6.3
<i>No Opinion</i>	2	6.3
<i>No</i>	28	87.5
<i>Total</i>	32	100

Although a “no opinion” category was not in the questionnaire some respondents stated they had no opinion so it was decided to include the category for the analysis of the results. 87.5% of respondents felt the government is not doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education in light of the recession in 2009.

Based on the 6 extra questions included in the undergraduate questionnaire 2008/09 it is clear that students found entrepreneurship education to be of great importance, to be of benefit to an individual no matter what they do in life and that more government involvement is needed as a result of the recession in 2009.

#### 5.2.4: Results concerning the recommendation of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate modules

As this question is split into two parts it was decided to display the results together instead of by an undergraduate/postgraduate basis as with the other questions.

The next question was in all 3 questionnaires and was included in order to examine whether students would recommend the module. As with the previous question an extra category was included due to some respondents stating their own response.

**Table 1.18a: Would you recommend the module?**

<i>(All Undergraduates and Postgraduates)</i>	<b>Would you recommend the module?</b>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	71	85.5
<i>Maybe</i>	5	6.0
<i>No</i>	7	8.4
<i>Total</i>	83	100

85.5% of respondents would recommend the module to other students, 6% stated that they might recommend the module whilst 8.4% would not recommend it. It is now important to see the reasoning behind these responses. The table on the next page displays the reasons as to why undergraduate students would recommend the module to others along with the frequency and percentage of each response.

**Table 1.18b: Reasons for recommending the undergraduate module**

<i>(All Undergraduates)</i>		
<b>Reasons For Recommending The Undergraduate Module</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
100% coursework/ No exam	21	30.0
Enjoyable/ Interesting/ Challenging	12	17.1
Learn about SMEs and entrepreneurship	6	8.6
Touches upon all business related areas	5	7.1
Useful if want to set up a business	4	5.7
Module rewards your effort	3	4.3
Work independently	3	4.3
Allows practical application of knowledge	3	4.3
Time management and Organisational skills improve	2	2.9
Self-motivating	2	2.9
Understand complexity of businesses	2	2.9
Beneficial no matter what you do in life	2	2.9
Think about the real world	1	1.4
Sense of accomplishment	1	1.4
Self learning experience	1	1.4
Easy	1	1.4
Unique module	1	1.4
<i>Total</i>	70	100

As can be seen from table 1.18b, 30% of responses were all coursework/no exam. 17.1% of responses for recommending the module were to do with respondents finding the module enjoyable/interesting/challenging. Respondents stated that they would recommend the module due to learning a lot about SMEs and entrepreneurship. Although only 8.6% of responses stated this it still proves that the module was of great benefit to students when combined with other responses given such as the improvement of time management and organisational skills and being able to learn about many different areas of business.

An interesting finding was that some respondents enjoyed the independent nature of the module. This finding will be addressed in the discussion section as it relates greatly to the unique characteristics of entrepreneurship students.

Due to the small number of responses for possibly/not recommending the module it was decided to discuss the findings below rather than presenting frequencies/percentages.

As seen in table 1.18a, 6% of respondents were unsure as to whether they would recommend the undergraduate module. The main reasons for this as stated in the questionnaires were that the module needs improvement before they would recommend it. It was also stated that a student should only take the module if they are good at coursework. One respondent explained that if a student were to take the module then they need to ensure they are on top of their work by the end of the first term otherwise they would struggle in the second term. Some respondents stated they may recommend the module but gave no reason.

Following table 1.18a, 8.4% of respondents would not recommend the undergraduate module. These respondents mainly stated that lectures were poor, there was minimal guidance and little organisation to the module.

What should be noted is that all postgraduate respondents would recommend the module so the 6% who were unsure and 8.4% who would not recommend the module were from the undergraduate years.

The main reasons for postgraduate respondents recommending the strategic management and enterprise module are as follows:

1. Lectures useful
2. Enjoyable and learn a lot by completing the business such as strategies required for a successful SME.
3. Important for the masters programme
4. Helps provide a complete structure for business planning

#### 5.2.5: Undergraduate students' further comments concerning the undergraduate module

Before moving on to the questions, which were solely in the postgraduate questionnaire, the "Further Comments" from the undergraduate questionnaires need to be discussed. The majority of the comments came from the 2007/08 undergraduate group. It was felt that the most suitable method for presenting the comments is by discussion.

Both the 2007/08 and 2008/09 year groups made important comments about the undergraduate module. They found the reflective diaries unhelpful, time consuming and did not gain much from them. More explanation was needed before the first reflective diary because many respondents felt they did poorly as a result. In general lectures and the organisation of the module was poor. It was felt that the lectures did not support the main assessment of the module being the business plan. The lectures solely gave students an overview about entrepreneurship and different SMEs. According to some respondents

more prestigious external speakers were needed. The WebCT section for entrepreneurship was poor and needed improvement according to respondents. This could explain why many respondents stated they had a problem with navigating around the website. Some respondents felt they needed more guidance and when they were given guidance it was different depending on which lecturer they visited. As already mentioned the booking system was problematic according to some respondents. Upon receiving back business plan marks some respondents stated there was no justification of the mark, which they were awarded. Another problem was that respondents felt lecturers needed to be more involved and offer more one to one time.

Although the majority of comments about the undergraduate module were negative some comments were positive such as the module being 100% coursework and it being self-taught. It is clear that some students favour this approach more than others, which is why some respondents found this to be a problem whereas others did not.

Some suggestions for improving the module were also discussed. One respondent in particular wrote a possible format for the module. They stated that a 1-2 page report outlining business idea and projections should be used as well as a one hour presentation on the business idea. The presentation should be worth 50% and the questions concerning the presentation should be worth the other 50%.

However it was not mentioned whether this format should include a business plan because such a format would not be possible for a 20-credit module unless this

respondents suggested this format as a replacement for the 30% reflective diary mark. Another suggestion which was interesting involved the module leaders developing a “Dragon’s Den” style assessment whereby all students at the beginning of the module will come up with their business ideas and present it to both of the module leaders to ensure that there idea is suitable for the business plan.

2007/08 respondents stated using WebCT for the booking system of the clinics and having more finance lectures, which were both done for 2008/09 yet respondents still found both as a problem. One important suggestion made by a few respondents was to have lectures focused on how to write the actual business plan and have lectures relating to each section of the business plan.

#### 5.2.6: Results from questions present only in the Postgraduate questionnaire

As already discussed some questions were unique to the postgraduate module and consequently were analysed separately using SPSS. Table 1.19 shows the results for whether postgraduate respondents would set up a business. This question was worded differently to the undergraduate question, which is why they were not analysed together.

**Table 1.19: Postgraduates’ thoughts on setting up a business**

<i>(Postgraduates)</i>	<b>Would you set up a business in the future?</b>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Yes</i>	4	57.1
<i>No</i>	3	42.9
<i>Total</i>	7	100

As can be seen in table above 57.1% would set up a business in the future whilst 42.9% would not.

The next question was split into 3 parts and it was focused upon the usefulness of management theory for entrepreneurship.

**Table 1.20: Usefulness of management theory for entrepreneurship**

<i>(Postgraduates)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>(a) Management Theory Useful In Setting Up A Business</i>	1.7	0.8	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)
<i>(b) Management Theory Useful For Monetary Growth</i>	1.9	0.9	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)
<i>(c) Management Theory Useful For Future Planning</i>	1.6	0.5	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (0%)

85.8% of respondents stated that management theory is useful in setting up a business. It is interesting to note that no respondent stated that they disagree with the statement. The mean score for this question was 1.7 indicating students strongly agreed with the statement. A small standard deviation (0.8) was present indicating results did not deviate considerably above and below the mean.

71.5% of respondents stated that management theory is useful for monetary growth. Again as with part (a) of this question, no respondent stated they disagree with management theory being useful for monetary growth. The mean score was 1.9, which again, as with the previous statement, indicates students strongly agree with the statement



and a small standard deviation of 0.9 suggests results did not deviate greatly above and below the mean.

All respondents stated that management theory is useful for future planning which is likely the reason as to why the standard deviation is 0.5 with the mean score being 1.6.

Due to completing the module with a strategic element added to it, students should have become aware of challenges involved with strategic management in SMEs. The next page shows the findings from this question:

**Table 1.21: Main challenges of strategic management in SMEs**

<i>(Postgraduates)</i>		
<b>Main Challenges of Strategic Management in SMEs</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Being differentiated to others	1	11.1
Forecast limitations	1	11.1
Manage and control price	1	11.1
People in organisation	1	11.1
Developing growth strategy	1	11.1
Professional workers; paying higher salaries to attract them	1	11.1
Resource restriction	1	11.1
Cashflow control	1	11.1
Staffing management system	1	11.1
<i>Total</i>	9	100

The frequency of each response given was the same (11.1%) However all the responses help show some difficulties, which can be experienced with strategic management in

SMEs such as being able to manage and control price, being differentiated to others and forecast limitations.

The following question relates greatly to the knowledge acquired from completing the business plan for this module as the strategic decision making process relates to all sections of the business plan for the postgraduate module.

**Table 1.22: Factors, which influence the strategic decision making process in SMEs**

<i>(Postgraduates)</i>		
<b>Factors which influence the Strategic Decision Making process in SMEs</b>		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Market environment	2	20.0
Customers' needs and interests	1	10.0
Price	1	10.0
Entering new market	1	10.0
Leaders capability in management and strategy	1	10.0
Management structures	1	10.0
Business objectives	1	10.0
Company's profit/loss	1	10.0
Company's growth plan	1	10.0
<i>Total</i>	10	100

As with the previous question all frequencies are the same (10%) except for “Market Environment” which was the most popular response given as a factor, which influences the strategic decision making process in SMEs. All the factors listed play an important role for the strategic decision making process in SMEs especially business objectives, profit/loss and customers' needs and interests.

After completing the module it was important to see if students were able to think strategically when making business decisions. Table 1.23 shows the results for this question.

**Table 1.23: Students ability to think strategically as a result of the module**

<i>(Postgraduates)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Question</b>								
<i>Ability to think strategically due to module</i>	1.7	0.5	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)

All the respondents stated that they had the ability to think strategically when making business decisions as a result of the module. This is shown by the mean score of 1.7 and supported further by a small standard deviation figure of 0.5.

The postgraduate respondents made very few comments about the module. One respondent stated that more class time was needed in order to help with the understanding of the module. Another suggested giving handouts of each lecture so they could follow the lecturer more easily. The handout materials, which were given, needed updating according to one of the respondents.

This first section of results has helped identify the overall perceptions of students about the different aspects related to the entrepreneurship. However it is important to now examine any similarities or differences between the two undergraduate year groups.

### 5.3: Differences and Similarities between the two undergraduate years

This section of the results focuses upon any differences and similarities between the two undergraduate year groups with regards to the entrepreneurship and small business studies module.

In order to identify any differences or similarities it was decided to focus upon the mean scores and mean differences between the two undergraduates groups on each question, which was present in both questionnaires. To identify any significant differences an independent samples t-test was performed using SPSS. However the use of mean scores and the independent samples t-test was only used for scale data which is data collected from questions that involved statements where students had to state on a scale the degree to which they strongly agree to strongly disagree. The non-scale data was analysed for differences using a chi-squared test.

All the scale data will first be examined followed by non-scale data. Table 2.1 shows the mean, mean difference, standard deviation and the independent t-test significance figures for the scale data. In order to better understand the mean scores a scale is also provided below:

1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= No Opinion, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

**Table 2.1: Comparison of scale data for the two undergraduate years**

	<i>Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed) (p)</i>
<i>External Speakers</i>	2007/2008	43	3.1	1.2	0.88
	2008/2009	33	2.7	1.0	
<i>Improved Understanding of concepts in the field</i>	2007/2008	42	2.7	1.2	.407
	2008/2009	33	2.5	0.9	
<i>Core Textbook</i>	2007/2008	42	3.2	1.1	.444
	2008/2009	30	3.4	0.8	
<i>Motivation</i>	2007/2008	43	2.3	1.1	.333
	2008/2009	33	2.1	0.9	
<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	2007/2008	42	3.6	1.3	.168
	2008/2009	33	3.2	1.2	
<i>Good Co-ordination of Web Material</i>	2007/2008	43	3.1	1.1	.688
	2008/2009	33	3.0	0.9	
<i>Easy to navigate around the website</i>	2007/2008	43	2.9	1.2	.169
	2008/2009	33	3.2	1.0	
<i>Usefulness of business plan clinics</i>	2007/2008	43	2.4	1.0	.372
	2008/2009	33	2.6	1.0	
<i>Setting Up Business</i>	2007/2008	43	2.4	1.0	.159
	2008/2009	33	2.7	0.9	

When examining both year groups and their opinions about whether the external speakers improved their understanding of entrepreneurship it is clear that a small difference is present as the mean scores fall into two different categories. The mean score for the 07/08 group is 3.1 whereas it is 2.7 for the 08/09 group. This indicates that the 07/08 group had no opinion about the external speakers whereas the 08/09 group generally agreed that the external speakers helped improve their understanding of entrepreneurship. As already stated, this difference is very small and this is supported by a small mean difference of 0.4. The standard deviation for the 07/08 group is 1.2 and 1.0 for the 08/09 group. This

small deviation above and below the mean for both groups indicates that answers given were similar.

In the previous section we identified that the majority of respondents stated the module improved their understanding of concepts in the field of entrepreneurship. In table 2.1 results for “improved understanding” show that a similarity is present between both year group as the mean is 2.7 for the 07/08 group and 2.5 for the 08/09 group. This indicates that both year groups agreed that the module did help to improve their understanding of concepts in the field of entrepreneurship. A very small mean difference is present (0.2.) Results for the 07/08 group were not as consistent as the 08/09 group as the standard deviation for the 07/08 group was 1.2 whereas for the 08/09 group it was 0.9.

Results from table 2.1 concerning the core textbook show a similarity between the two year groups as with the previous question. The 07/08 group displays a mean score of 3.2 and the 08/09 group a mean score of 3.4, which shows that both year groups had no opinion about the usefulness of the core textbook. As with the previous question the standard deviation is small for both years as it is 1.1 for the 07/08 group and 0.8 for the 08/09 group. What can be stated from this is that the responses for the 08/09 group did not deviate as much as the other group above and below the mean score.

As with the core textbook, results concerning motivation were similar for both year groups. A mean score of 2.3 for the 07/08 group and 2.1 for the 08/09 group indicate that both year groups agreed that they were motivated to do more than the minimum

requirements for the module. The standard deviation was 1.1 for 07/08 undergraduates and 0.9 for 08/09 undergraduates, which indicates again consistent responses amongst the year groups.

When examining the results from table 2.1 for the assessment criteria of the module one can identify another similarity between the two year group as the mean scores of 3.6 and 3.2 place both year groups in the same category which is that they both had no opinion about whether the assessment criteria were clearly explained for the module. However the standard deviations for both groups are slightly higher than the previous questions as 1.3 for 07/08 group and 1.2 for the 08/09 group indicate that results deviated above and below the mean more than the other questions. When looking back to this question in the previous section it is clear that a split is present as most responses were in the “agree” and “disagree” categories, which explain the mean scores provided here.

Perceptions regarding whether web material is co-ordinated were spread amongst the “agree” “no opinion” and “disagree” categories in the previous section. This supports the mean score for the 07/08 group being 3.1 and 3.0 for the 08/09 group. A mean difference of only 0.1 indicates responses were similar between both year groups in that both had “no opinion” about whether web based material was well co-ordinated with module material. The standard deviation for both groups was again similar but for 07/08 it was slightly higher with 1.1, which shows that responses for the 07/08 group varied above and below the mean more than the other group.

The other important area when looking at the website was being able to navigate easily. Although the mean difference is only  $-0.3$ , the mean scores given place both groups in different categories. The 07/08 group display a mean score of 2.9 which indicates that they generally agreed about finding it easy to navigate around the website though it should be noted that this mean score is very close to the “no opinion” category. The 08/09 group display a mean score of 3.2 which shows they had no opinion about the matter. The standard deviation for the 07/08 group was 1.2 and it was 1.0 for the 08/09 group. This explains the high number of “agree” and “disagree” responses given in previous section for this question.

When examining table 2.1 the results for the clinics show another similarity between the two year groups as a mean of 2.4 for the 07/08 group and 2.6 for the 08/09 group indicate that both groups agreed that they found the clinics useful. The standard deviation was the same for both years (1.0).

Results concerning the likelihood of setting up a business were again similar as a mean score of 2.4 for the 07/08 group and 2.7 for the 08/09 group place both year groups in the “likely” category meaning overall respondents stated that they were likely to set up a business in the future. The standard deviation for the 07/08 group was 1.0 and 0.9 for the 08/09 group. The mean difference of  $-0.3$  helps to explain the high percentage of respondents who were not sure about this question as noted in the previous section. This percentage is likely to have come from the 08/09 group as the mean score for this group is closer to the “not sure” category than the 07/08 group.



From table 2.1 we can clearly state that many similarities are present between the two year groups, which is the reason as to why no significant differences were found when performing the independent samples t-test.

Table 2.1 also shows the independent samples t-test results for all scale variables present in both undergraduates' questionnaires. The t-test for equality means indicates that the differences are not significant at the 95% confidence level as  $p > 0.05$ . However it was close which explains the small difference noted in table 2.1. It can be said that there is a significant difference at the 90% confidence level as  $p < 0.1$ . No other significant differences are present in table 2.1 as  $p > 0.05$ .

It is now important to examine non-scale data in order to identify any significant differences between the two undergraduate year groups. The most accurate method for determining any significant differences for non-scale data for this research was to use a chi-square test. A chi-square test was performed for each non-scale item question, which will now be shown in turn.

As discussed in the first section of the results, the responses for the question relating to the reason for choosing the module were treated individually due to multiple responses being given by some respondents. The next page shows a table which displays the results from the cross-tabulation element of the chi-square test for the 5 different options which students could have chosen for this particular question.

**Table 2.2: Comparison between the two undergraduate year groups for choosing the undergraduate module**

Reasons for choosing module	Response	Year		Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) (p)	Degrees of freedom (df)
		07/08	08/09			
<i>All Coursework/No Exam</i>	Yes	23	16	0.187	0.665	1
	No	20	17			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Interested In Entrepreneurship</i>	Yes	14	9	0.247	0.619	1
	No	29	24			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Expand Knowledge of Entrepreneurship</i>	Yes	7	6	0.048	0.827	1
	No	36	27			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Recommended by others</i>	Yes	2	4	1.433	0.231	1
	No	41	29			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Other reasons</i>	Yes	11	6	0.589	0.443	1
	No	32	27			
	Total	43	33			

From the table above one can see the similarity present between both year groups for this response. This is supported by the chi square test as  $\chi^2=0.187$  ( $p=0.665$ ,  $df=1$ ). As  $p>0.05$  this shows that there is no statistical difference between the 2007/08 undergraduates and the 2008/09 undergraduates for selecting the module due to it being all coursework/no exam.

As with the previous question there is a similarity between the two groups. The chi square and significant figures  $\chi^2=0.247$  ( $p=0.619$ ,  $df=1$ ) show that there is no significant difference between the two year groups for choosing the module due to their interest in entrepreneurship.

It is clear that a similarity is also present with regards to whether students chose the module in order to expand their knowledge of entrepreneurship. As  $\chi^2=0.048$  ( $p=0.827$ ,  $df=1$ ) it is clear that there is no significant difference between the two year groups.

The chi square figure ( $\chi^2=1.433$ ) and significance figure ( $p=0.231$ ,  $df=1$ ) show that there is no significant difference between the two year groups when looking at whether students were recommended to take the module by others at the university.

The final reason in table 2.2 for the question concerning selecting the module involves “Other” reasons for why students may have chose the module. As  $\chi^2=0.589$  ( $p=0.443$ ,  $df=1$ ) it can be argued that there is no significant difference between the two year groups.

When looking at this question overall it is clear that students from both years chose the module largely for the same reason. Students believed that having an all coursework/no exam module was beneficial for them. This is clear from table 2.2, which displays the most “yes” responses for both year groups indicating the most popular reason for choosing the module.

Table 2.3 shows the comparison between the year groups for the question concerning their opinion about whether they felt the deadline for the business was realistic.

**Table 2.3: Comparison between the two undergraduate years for the questions concerning the business plan deadline, booking system, recommending the module and the reflective diary section of WebCT**

Question	Response	Year		Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) (p)	Degrees of freedom (df)
		07/08	08/09			
<i>Realistic deadline for business plan</i>	Yes	42	31	0.687	0.407	1
	No	1	2			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Problems with booking system for clinics</i>	Yes	18	15	0.051	0.822	1
	No	24	18			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Recommend the module to others</i>	Yes	37	27	0.600	0.741	2
	Maybe	2	3			
	No	4	3			
	Total	43	33			
<i>Usefulness of Reflective diary section on WebCT</i>	Yes	12	17	4.102	0.043	1
	No	30	16			
	Total	42	33			

The table indicates that both year groups felt the deadline was realistic for the business plan. This is supported by  $\chi^2=0.687$  ( $p=0.407$ ,  $df=1$ ) which indicates there is no significant difference between the two year groups concerning their opinion about the deadline being realistic.

Table 2.3 also shows the comparative results concerning problems with the booking system for the business plan clinics. The chi-square figure  $\chi^2=0.051$  ( $p=0.822$ ,  $df=1$ ) show there are no significant differences between students' responses as to whether they found a problem with the booking system for the clinics. This is interesting considering

the 08/09 undergraduates used WebCT, which was seen as more efficient. From the results it is clear that it made little difference to the problems students experienced with the booking system.

Table 2.3 shows a comparison between the year groups concerning their intentions to recommend the module. As  $\chi^2=0.600$  ( $p=0.741$ ,  $df=2$ ) it can be said that there is no significant difference between the two year groups about whether they would recommend the module. From the data in table 2.3 it is clear that both year groups would largely recommend the module.

The last non-scale data to be examined comes from the question concerning the areas of the website which students felt contributed the most to their understanding of the module. The chi-square results can be seen in appendix 5 but it is important to state that no significant differences were present between the two year groups for any area of the website except for the reflective diary section as shown in table 2.3. As  $p<0.05$  (0.043) there is a significant difference between the two year groups with regards to how useful they find the reflective diary section of the website. From table 2.3 one can clearly see that more 2007/08 undergraduates found this section not very useful compared with the 2008/09 undergraduates.

Overall as can be seen in appendix 5, the finance section and the business plan section contributed the most to students' understanding of the module.

Although there were a few open ended questions in both questionnaires it was decided to only compare coded data between the two undergraduate years for this study.

5.4: Relationship between student satisfaction with the undergraduate module and likelihood of setting up a business

This section of results looks at examining the relationship between student satisfaction with the module and their likelihood of setting up a business. It was decided to use the following variables as the means of measuring student's satisfaction:

- External speakers
- Improved Understanding
- Motivation
- Assessment Criteria

These variables were chosen because it was felt that if a student displayed positive results with these 4 variables then one could argue that the student was satisfied with the module since the variables form a big part of the module.

A bi-variate correlation was performed with these four variables and student's desire to set up a business in the future. The next page shows the table of the bi-variate correlation results.

**Table 3: Correlation between student satisfaction with the module and their likelihood of setting up a business**

		<i>Setting Up A Business</i>
<i>External Speakers</i>	Pearson Correlation	-0.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.851
	N	76
<i>Improved Understanding</i>	Pearson Correlation	0.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.938
	N	75
<i>Motivation</i>	Pearson Correlation	0.171
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.139
	N	76
<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	Pearson Correlation	-0.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.912
	N	75

As can be seen by table 3 there is no significant relationship present between any of the four variables and students' likelihood of setting up a business due to  $p > 0.05$  for all the four variables used.

#### 5.5: Telephone interviews with Undergraduate students 2007/08

10 telephone interviews were conducted with undergraduate students from 2007/08. It was decided to do this in order to confirm findings from the questionnaires. However as already mentioned the interviews were not conducted with 2008/09 undergraduates. The reason for this is because as findings were similar between both year groups it was not felt necessary to collect further data.

The telephone interviews were based on findings from the questionnaires. Many findings were identified as a result of the questionnaire data, which helped form a structure for the



interviews. The structure of the telephone interviews can be seen in appendix 6.

Interviewees were asked about these 8 different areas, which were seen as the most important findings from the questionnaire data and as a result needed further clarification by students. It should be noted that many interviewees simply stated what was already known from the questionnaire data so this will not be discussed again. The interviewees did not expand on the questionnaire findings as much as would have been liked but the most relevant interview findings given by each student will be discussed in this section. The findings stated are taken directly from the Birmingham Business School report (Walker & Armstrong, 2009.)

The ten former students, which were interviewed, were all of the same age (21) and 5 were female and 5 were male.

#### 5.5.1: Telephone interview findings by theme

##### Lectures

Finance lectures given throughout the module were useful as stated by many interviewees but other lectures were not beneficial for aiding with the completion of the business plan. Student C expressed how the lectures were commonsense and that students would have benefited more if each lecture was based on an overview of each section of the business plan so that students could understand what to actually include in each section.

Student E was expecting in depth case studies on entrepreneurial ventures in the lectures. For example looking at Dyson and how they expanded. This student explained that what students were actually taught could have been done in a few lectures. They mentioned that lectures could have revolved around looking at the business plans of successful ventures to help give a framework for students' business plans. Lectures should have been based upon the completion of the business plan due to the fact it was worth 70% of the module.

### Reflective Diary

From the interview findings it is clear that this assessment was ambiguous to students and having strict deadlines for each diary entry was difficult for students. Student A expressed that deadlines should have been later or perhaps have allowed open deadlines because a "Eureka" moment may not have occurred in the time given thus resulting in not being able to complete the first section of the reflective diary. Student D expressed that the 1<sup>st</sup> reflective diary should not have been weighted the same as the other two because students were unaware of what was actually required until they get back the first diary. Student G explained how students could have benefited from only having 2 diary entries with one being in the middle of the module and one at the end. They found that a lot of time was spent thinking about the diaries when this time could have been spent focusing on the business plan.

The diaries did not help the students learn anything new and did not reward students' efforts accurately as the maximum mark available was 70%. Student C in particular argued that the reflective diary mark resulted in a lower final mark for them, as their business plan was higher than 70%. As a student could only score a maximum of 70% for the reflective diaries it brought down this students final mark. Student H made the point that the reflective diary mark should only be used if a student has scored low on the business plan because if a student achieves a first in the business plan it is likely the reflective diary mark will pull down the mark as the highest one could achieve was 70. Student B raised the point that the reflective diaries solely supplemented the business plan and their importance in learning was poor.

Consistency was also a problem according to Student I. This particular student stated that the reflective diary had no consistency with regards to the marks given. They felt that the feedback from the first diary entry should have helped when completing the other two diary entries. However their feedback was very brief with no explanation on how to improve the mark, which they were awarded. As a result this student struggled with the completion of the following diary entries and felt this affected their overall mark awarded.

#### *Booking system for clinics*

Student E and H explained how they did not find much difficulty in signing up for the one to one clinics but perhaps doing it online would have been more appropriate and

being given more information about each advisor. This would have allowed students to make a more informed decision on which advisor to visit as they would have known who would have been most appropriate to visit considering their business plan.

The only important finding with regards to the booking system is that WebCT should have been used for the 08/09 undergraduates which was done but problems were still present with this system as seen by the questionnaire findings.

### Core Textbook

It was found that the core textbook was useful solely for the sections of the reflective diary and was not beneficial for the completion of the business plan. Recommendations were given about the use of other textbooks to help with the writing up of the business plan. According to Student A a better textbook could have been “The Sunday Times: The Business Plan Workbook.” This textbook would have been more suitable to aid with the completion of the business plan.

Student E stated that a list of case study books should have been provided along with recommended books on how to actually write a business plan. Student J also felt a case study book discussing the way in which many successful SMEs have been set up would have been a better option as a core textbook for this module. Student F stated that a core textbook was not vital for the module but if a core textbook is used in the future it should focus on how to write a business plan.

### *Conflicting advice by lecturers*

Conflicting advice was given with regards to the word limit of the business plan and whether or not to include academic sources in the business plan. This resulted in complications particularly for Student F who was worried that they had not written enough for certain sections of the business plan. As some of the business plan advisors were also examiners this made the problem worse because a student may have agreed with one advisor but another advisor who may have had a differing opinion may have ultimately marked their business plan.

### *WebCT*

Navigation of WebCT was difficult for students particularly when it came to finding journals to help with the reflective diaries. Student D found WebCT very poor in that the layout was hard to follow and journals for the reflective diaries were hard to find and some would not open. It was stated by Student D that more use of icons could have aided the navigation problem. It was stated in one of the interviews to split WebCT into two sections revolving around the reflective diary and the business plan, as these are the two assessment areas of the module. The reflective diary section could explain in detail the 3 sections of the diary and the business plan section could be split along each section of the business plan. The business plan format on WebCT was beneficial to some students as it provided a clear layout of what was needed.

### External speakers

The external speakers did not aid with the completion of the business plan and they should have been more focused on the different areas of the business plan. Student A explained that the external speakers should be from different fields, which relate to the business plan. For example a speaker should be used in the field of marketing, finance, etc.

They should not discuss stories about entrepreneurship but instead provide information to aid with the business plan as stated by Student B who also felt that the external speakers were good if a student had a genuine interest in entrepreneurship. Student J made the point that external speakers should discuss their own ventures but they should explain the reasons behind what made their ventures so successful as that would have helped provide more insight into students' own business plans.

### Assessment criteria

No clear assessment criteria was provided to show what was needed to complete a successful business plan as argued by Student C other than a template provided on WebCT. More information should have been provided concerning the amount of words to include in each section of the business plan and what is needed in order to achieve a certain mark as argued by Student D.

Student F mentioned that a clear assessment criteria was also not given for the reflective diaries. The example provided for the reflective diary was not good according to Student F, as it did not even relate to entrepreneurship. According to Student I a tick sheet should have been formulated for each section of the business plan so that students would have been more aware of what the finance section should actually entail. Although the business plan format on WebCT did help, a more detailed sheet would have helped particularly with the finance section.

All of the interview findings mentioned are of great importance and will be drawn upon where necessary in the next chapter. What should be noted are the similarities present in the interviews as well as the questionnaire data.

As all the results have now be shown it is important to discuss the implications of the results and how they help answer the research objectives for this study.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

### 6.1: Introduction:

This chapter focuses on examining the findings of the results stated in the previous chapter. The first section of this chapter looks at the findings concerning the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship modules. The second section focuses upon the findings, which relate to the effects of the recession in 2009 on students' perceptions. The third section examines the similarities/differences found between the two undergraduate year groups whilst the final section of this chapter examines the relationship between student satisfaction with the undergraduate module and their likelihood of setting up a business.

Due to the large amount of data collected for this study it was decided to discuss the implications of the results in turn for each section.

The first section of results looked at the effectiveness of both the undergraduate and postgraduate modules. All the questions from all 3 questionnaires were examined and many implications can be drawn from the results.



## 6.2: Effectiveness of the modules

### 6.2.1: Why students chose the undergraduate module

When examining reasons for students choosing the undergraduate module it is clear that the main reason students chose the module was because it was all coursework and had no exam. However it cannot be argued like Sexton and Bowman (1984) that students regarded the module as a “filler” in their timetables. From the data this is not clear and cannot be argued. On the other hand it can be stated that the majority of students did not choose the module because they had a genuine interest in the field. When examining the “Other” reason for choosing the module some students gave responses such as “Process of elimination” and “Only option.” For these students the argument given by Sexton and Bowman (1984) has more relevance about the module simply being a “filler.”

Choosing a module particularly in a student’s final year of study will be difficult and students are likely to want fewer exams in the summer, which explains the high response rate for “All Coursework/No Exam.” However the module did attract some students with a genuine interest in the field of entrepreneurship.

It is interesting that not many students took the module based upon recommendations from other students. However one must not forget the possibility that a recommendation by other students could have been to take the module due to it having no exam so

respondents found the first answer “All Coursework/No Exam” to be a more suitable response.

It can be argued that unless an exam is introduced, the module is likely to continue to attract students who want a lighter exam schedule as both year groups chose this as the main reason for taking the module. However this could result in fewer people taking the module and thus fewer people learning about entrepreneurship. If the aim of the Birmingham Business School is to attract students with a genuine interest in entrepreneurship then an exam should be introduced, as it will mainly attract students with a genuine interest in entrepreneurship. Those with a genuine interest in the field will not be concerned about choosing the module with an exam because they will want to learn about entrepreneurship.

#### 6.2.2: Effectiveness of the external speakers

The results concerning the external speakers are very interesting because the majority of students from both modules stated that the external speakers helped to improve their understanding about entrepreneurship but a large percentage stated the opposite.

Due to the important role, which the business plan had for both modules, it is likely that many respondents felt the external speakers did not help them for this as was stated in numerous questionnaires and in some of the telephone interviews. Consequently since many students felt the speakers did not help them with their business plans it can be said

that the module leaders could give the speakers more guidance on what to include in their talks in that they should relate more to the business plan.

The external speakers were used heavily in both modules and benefited the majority of students. It can be argued that those with a genuine interest in the field benefited the most from the external speakers. This is supported by a comment made in one of the interviews about the guest speakers being beneficial for those students who had a genuine interest in the field. By using Ronstadt's (1987) "entrepreneurial know how/entrepreneurial know-who" continuum, one can argue that both the modules in this study are effective as Ronstadt argues an effective entrepreneurship module has a mix of both which both modules in this study had. The "know-who" can be seen to be the external speakers whilst the "know-how" is centred on the business plan.

As guest speakers form an important educational experience for students it can be argued that as the majority of students benefited from this particular educational experience it strengthened their entrepreneurial intentions and may have increased their intentions to set up a new business (Dyer 1994; Turker and Selcuk, 2009). However as will be discussed later it is clear that the use of external speakers did not impact upon students' intentions to set up a business.

### 6.2.3: Areas in which students wanted further lectures

Students wanted further lectures in finance and the business plan. The lectures were primarily focused upon the guest speakers particularly for the undergraduate module but it is clear that many students were not happy with this teaching method as it did not directly complement the assessment for the module. The “Teaching-Learning Process Model” devised by Gage and Berliner (1984) could be used in order to assess the usefulness of the teaching method used (cited in Sexton and Upton 1987). From the data gathered one could argue that some parts of the teaching method can be re-used. For example the use of external speakers is beneficial as it forms part of the entrepreneurial directed teaching approach as argued by Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006) but perhaps speakers in the future should focus more on the elements of the business plan or have fewer entrepreneurial talks and have some lectures which guide students on the business plan structure and different areas as noted by some interviewees. As the finance section was a vital part of the business plan more lectures should have focused on this area. However as previously discussed more finance lectures were given in 2008/09 but still students found further lectures were needed.

An interesting similarity is present between this study and the study conducted by Carter and Collinson (1999) where it was found that students needed to be taught more about financial management within the field of entrepreneurship. One could argue the government could impose a rule, which states that all entrepreneurship courses must

teach students the fundamentals about finance considering the importance, which it plays in the entrepreneurial world.

#### 6.2.4: Usefulness of the core textbook

Students appeared to have mixed feelings about the core textbook. Many found it useful solely for the reflective diaries as noted in the interviews. Some interviewees even stated that a better textbook was needed for the business plan such as a case study textbook. It could be that some students used the textbook more than others for the reflective diaries, which is what caused the mixed responses. One possible explanation for many respondents selecting the “no opinion” category is that they simply did not use the textbook and therefore had no opinion about its usefulness.

The module leaders should consider a different core textbook particularly one which can help with the completion of the business plan. It could be worth giving students a list of recommended textbooks which the module leaders feel will aid students with the completion of their business plans.

#### 6.2.5: Improved understanding and motivation

The results show that the module overall was effective in these areas as the majority of students believed the module helped to improve their understanding of concepts in the field of entrepreneurship. This is likely to be due to the business plan which students

were required to complete. As it was an independent piece of work and covered many different areas it provided students with a great understanding of entrepreneurship. Not only this but students did state that guest speakers did provide some useful information about entrepreneurship though it was not directly relevant for the business plan.

According to findings by Solomon (2007) guest speakers and business plans a vital elements of entrepreneurship courses, which is clearly the case for the entrepreneurship modules at the Birmingham Business School.

Motivation can be argued to be an important measure of student satisfaction with a module because if a student is happy with a module then it is likely they will be motivated to do well. The results in this study indicate students were motivated to do more than the minimum requirements for the modules. As already discussed when reviewing the literature, entrepreneurship students have been found to have a high need for achievement (Gurol and Atsan, 2006; Koh, 1996). In this study this can be argued to relate to the fact that the majority of students were motivated to do more than the minimum requirements which could be an indication of their high need for achievement.

However one must consider the possibility that students were motivated to do more than the minimum requirements because for example they found the lectures poor and thus felt they had to do extra work in order to pass the module particularly as there was no exam to help improve a students mark. With this in mind one must remember that motivation is not necessarily related to satisfaction but could be an indication of students high need for achievement.

#### 6.2.6: Clarity of the assessment criteria

What is interesting to note from the results is that students stated the modules were useful in improving their understanding of entrepreneurship and they were motivated but they thought that the assessment criteria were not clearly explained. It can be said that without a clear assessment criteria then students will not know how to perform in the module and consequently may not be motivated to do more than is necessary. However the opposite occurred in this research, as students were motivated even without having a clear assessment criteria to follow. Even with the assessment criteria not being clear to students, they still believed the module helped improve their understanding of entrepreneurship, which can be argued to be the biggest indication of module effectiveness.

As the assessment criteria were poor for the reflective diaries and the business plan then the module leaders need to ensure students are made aware of what is required in order to succeed in the module. Perhaps the module leaders could spend a lecture guiding the students through the different sections of the business plan and explaining what is required. Each student should be made aware of what is required in order to achieve a certain mark in both assessments. This could be done through a list, which is given to each student at the start of the module.

#### 6.2.7: Usefulness of the business plan clinics

The results indicate that students were happy with the clinics and they helped to deal with any problems they may have had with the business plan. Such clinics can be argued to allow active participation on the part of the student, which forms part of an entrepreneurial directed approach to teaching (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006). Such an approach can be seen to be most effective to teaching entrepreneurship students about entrepreneurship as it takes into account student needs and treats them subjectively as opposed to objectively. Gibb (1996) argues the teacher should be a facilitator when pursuing an enterprising approach to teaching entrepreneurship by taking into account students' needs. One could argue the clinics allowed for this as students were allowed to discuss their ideas and advisors offered their support.

#### 6.2.8: Effectiveness of the booking system for the clinics

A problem was clearly present with the booking system as nearly half of the respondents stated they found a problem. The two most significant problems were that many students multi-booked and consequently this led to the other problem of not having enough slots available. In 2008/09 students booked electronically via WebCT, which was based on suggestions by undergraduates in 2007/08. However it is clear that problems were still present. Continuing to use WebCT is a good idea but perhaps limiting students to a number of bookings so that everyone will be able to attend a clinic as was suggested in the results. As shown in the results there were many students who had no opinion about



the clinics and the likely reason for this is because they could not find any available slots so they did not attend.

#### 6.2.9: Effectiveness of WebCT

A few questions were present in both undergraduate questionnaires about the use of WebCT for the entrepreneurship module. Results concerning whether web-based material was well co-ordinated with module material and navigation of the website were mixed but it can be argued that the highest response for both questions was that students believed there was good co-ordination and the website was easy to navigate around. However this does not diminish the large number of responses, which stated the opposite. Solomon et al. (2002) conducted a study and found 43% of their sample to access information about entrepreneurship via the Internet. The Internet is becoming more and more popular and it can be said that it forms a significant part of an effective entrepreneurship module. It is clear that providing information via the web is a benefit for any module as it allows students to access it anywhere and anytime but what is interesting to note from the results of this study is that many students were unhappy with the website and consequently more effort is required in order to have an effective WebCT section for the entrepreneurship module.

As was already discussed in this study, the Internet is a channel of communication, which can be used effectively or ineffectively. Based on the interview findings one possible recommendation for the module leaders is to provide an effective WebCT layout, which

complements the two assessments of the entrepreneurship module. For example have two main sections: “Business Plan” and “Reflective Diary.” Then provide the different sections of the business plan under the business plan section and the same for the reflective diary section. A search tab could also be of use if students are unable to find a journal for example.

When examining the different areas of the website it is clear that it provided students with many resources relevant to entrepreneurship but the two most popular areas according to undergraduate students were the business plan and finance sections. This is because these two sections related greatly to the completion of the business plan therefore students found them to contribute the most to their understanding of the module. The information provided on the website was not found to be a problem but it appears to largely be navigating around the website and ensuring module material is consistent with that of the website. Solomon (2007) found in a 2004-2005 survey that the use of technology has grown significantly in entrepreneurship education. This therefore means not only improving WebCT but also considering further technology such as web casts and video feeds. For example guest speakers could be recorded and then the video placed on WebCT for students to access at a later date. According to Solomon et al. (2002) the streaming of such videos would be a viable use of technology.

Students could also be asked about other information which they would like on WebCT because many areas on WebCT were not of much use to students as noted in the results like the project management section. This could be removed and replaced with something

that is of more use to students such as more financial information, which was of great use to both undergraduate year groups.

#### 6.2.10: Recommending the modules

Students in general would recommend the modules to other students, which indicates that students were generally satisfied with the module. However due to a lot of negative feedback in the further comments involving lectures being poor, poor organisation of the undergraduate module etc., one needs to consider the extent to which students would actually recommend the module because it is good or whether it is due to the fact the assessment favours them particularly with the undergraduate module where there is no exam. This is supported by the fact that the majority of undergraduate students stated they would recommend the module, as it has no exam.

Some students clearly would recommend the module because they found it enjoyable, interesting and because they learnt about the world of entrepreneurship. Some even stated they enjoyed it due to the fact it allows students to work independently. This again relates to the unique characteristics of entrepreneurship and it could be argued that the modules attracted students with strong entrepreneurial intentions. As noted by Sexton and Upton (1987:38) “entrepreneurship students can be depicted as independent individuals who dislike restraint, restriction and routine.” This could be a reason as to why some students favour the entrepreneurship modules at the Birmingham Business School albeit a small number in this study.

Many comments stated in the interviews and further comments in the questionnaires suggest some improvement is needed to the module particularly concerning the reflective diaries as many students found them to be a poor means of assessment for the module and did not contribute to their understanding of the module. As a result the module leaders should consider a new form of assessment for 30% of the module. Perhaps an entrepreneurship essay could replace the reflective diaries or even a multiple-choice exam at the end of the year as this would help students learn more about entrepreneurship compared to the reflective diaries.

As already stated, Kuratko (2005:585) argues “educators are challenged with designing effective learning opportunities for entrepreneurship students.” As entrepreneurship is viewed as a subjective area it can be said that deciding upon a type of assessment is difficult. Two students explained how they did not like the ambiguity of the reflective diaries, which is interesting considering findings from previous studies, which state entrepreneurship students like ambiguity in their courses. (Sexton and Upton, 1987.)

It is interesting to note that the characteristics of entrepreneurship students found in this study vary compared to those of other studies because it appears that many students had a high need for achievement, which indicates they are entrepreneurially inclined, but a couple of the interviewees appear to not possess a high tolerance for ambiguity which is argued to be a common characteristic in entrepreneurially inclined students. (Sexton and Upton, 1987). Although ambiguity was not an area, which was detailed significantly in

the findings for this study, it is important to be aware that characteristics will vary which helps explain why past studies cannot always be generalised.

What can be understood is that the reflective diaries added an unstructured element to the entrepreneurship module as students were required to come up with their own ideas and consequently guidance was minimal. Many students stated they did not gain from the reflective diaries and one could consequently argue a better form of assessment is required for 30% of the module. However this adds support to the argument that these entrepreneurship students do not like ambiguity and thus do not favour an unstructured module particularly when taking into account comments about students finding the module unorganised. This could be Birmingham Business School's attempt to offer an unstructured course, which is argued by Ronstadt (1987) to be better form of course design.

#### 6.2.11: Main barriers to successful entrepreneurship

Many different responses were given concerning barriers to successful entrepreneurship. Although this question does not directly relate to module effectiveness one could argue it indirectly relates as students answers may have come from the knowledge acquired as a result of taking the module. The most popular response given was finance/start up capital indicating that students were aware of the difficulties entailed in setting up a business, which may have been as a result of completing the business plan. What is interesting is that two of the answers stated, finance/start up capital and having a viable business idea,

were also stated as barriers by respondents in a study conducted by Carter and Collinson (1999). Before beginning the business plan students were told about ensuring they had a viable business idea which could be an indication as to why this was an answer given by students. Competition was another detailed area of the business plan, which again could explain why students stated this as an answer. It is clear that students were aware of external factors that can impact upon the entrepreneurial process whether it is as a result of studying entrepreneurship or through general knowledge.

Having a poor economic climate was not a popular answer indicating that not even students from 2008/09 feel that the recession in 2009 has affected entrepreneurial activity. This finding will be discussed further later.

Answers given also show signs of student's awareness of entrepreneurial characteristics. Some barriers included lack of motivation, risk-taking, and creative thinking. As already mentioned high motivation can be argued to be related to a high need for achievement and risk taking is a trait possessed by entrepreneurs as noted by Gurol and Atsan (2006) and Koh (1996). Creative thinking relates to being innovative which can be argued to be another entrepreneurial trait as Harris and Gibson (2008) identified that males had higher innovation than females. Though the comparative element of the Harris and Gibson study is not relevant for this point, what is relevant is that entrepreneurial attitudes were being examined, of which innovation was one. It could be argued that some of the students who took the modules were "budding entrepreneurs" and thus possess entrepreneurial characteristics, which could explain many responses given for this question. This also

adds support to the argument that the government should consider the provision of entrepreneurship education as a priority in light of the recession in 2009 because it is clear in this study that “budding entrepreneurs” were present and possess the knowledge to set up a successful business and help add stability to the economy.

#### 6.2.12: Role of SMEs and Entrepreneurs

Students appeared to have a wide range of opinions on this matter but the most popular and interesting response given is that SMEs and entrepreneurs can help a poor economy and provide economic growth. Although this will be dealt with in the next section, it is important to understand that this response may relate to the recession in 2009 as students were aware that the government is trying to aid small business growth in order to help stabilise the economy.

It appears by some responses given that a positive image towards SMEs and entrepreneurs was present. It can be said that students look up to practicing entrepreneurs and they may influence their decision about starting a business as was argued in the study conducted by Veciana et al. (2005). Promoting a positive image of entrepreneurs must continue and this is something, which can be done in every entrepreneurship course through the use of guest entrepreneurs as done at the Birmingham Business School. The government could consider more broadcasting of entrepreneurship programmes like “The Apprentice” and “Dragon’s Den” in order to further promote entrepreneurs.

#### 6.2.13: Likelihood of undergraduate students setting up a business

The majority of undergraduate students stated that they were likely to set up a business in the future but a large number stated they were unsure. It could be argued that a large percentage of respondents who stated they were unsure were from the 2008/09 undergraduate group as the mean score for this group was closer to the “unsure” category than the 2007/08 undergraduates. However the mean scores for both groups were similar indicating that both year groups stated similar responses. One could argue that their intention to set up a business is due to taking the entrepreneurship module as it may have strengthened their entrepreneurial intentions as found by Turker and Selcuk (2009).

Before moving on to examine the questions which were solely present in the undergraduate 2008/09 questionnaire it is important to first discuss the results of the questions present in the postgraduate module.

#### 6.2.14: Postgraduate Module

All postgraduate respondents stated management theory is very useful for setting up a business, for monetary growth and for future planning. One possible explanation for no respondent stating they disagree with the usefulness of management theory for any of the 3 different parts could be the use of the theory in the module, which made them aware of its usefulness for SMEs. The module leaders should consider more use of theory in the



module as it can help make students aware of its importance in entrepreneurship, as was the case with management theory in the postgraduate module.

They also felt that strategic management poses a variety of challenges for SMEs. These responses are likely to be as a result of the knowledge gained from the module particularly as all respondents feel they have improved their ability to think strategically as a result of the module. It is likely that the three-hour examination would have been a contributing factor in students' abilities to think strategically. One way to cope with the challenges posed by strategic management is for more planning to be used by SMEs. If management planning is used effectively it can help an SME deal with the challenges mentioned by postgraduate students in this study like "developing growth strategy" and "forecast limitations."

Over half of the respondents stated they intend on setting up a business in the future. This is slightly higher than the undergraduate response rate, which could indicate that more educational experiences lead to students becoming more entrepreneurially inclined and may wish to pursue an entrepreneurial career as noted by Dyer (1994) and Turker and Selcuk (2009). However the results for such an assumption are not valid in this study as the number of responses for undergraduate students were far greater than those of the postgraduates.

### 6.3: Effects of Recession 2009

As already discussed it was important for this study to examine the effects of the recession in 2009 on students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education. Several additional questions were included in the undergraduate 2008/09 questionnaire to help answer this objective.

Nearly all respondents stated that entrepreneurship education is important in today's society and that it can lead to the growth of new ventures, which indicates students were aware about what entrepreneurship means to a society. The government could consider making all universities introduce an entrepreneurship degree as students clearly feel entrepreneurship is important and can lead to the growth of new ventures which is what the government want. Undergraduate students were clearly aware about the importance of entrepreneurship and it can be argued that the recession in 2009 made them aware of this importance as noted by the high response given about the role of SMEs and entrepreneurs. Students stated that SMEs and entrepreneurs can help a poor economy and provide economic growth. It can be said that this response links with the recession in 2009.

Again nearly all respondents stated that in light of the recession in 2009 the government is not doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education which supports the findings that the students value entrepreneurship education and consider it a vital part of our society even if one does not wish to set up their own business. It can be argued that

the recession in 2009 made students aware of the government's role in entrepreneurship and they believed the government needs to be doing more particularly when past studies have shown that studying entrepreneurship leads to higher start up ventures which can aid with unemployment and contribute to an improvement in the economy. (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). As already stated introducing entrepreneurship degrees in universities is one way the government could help further. Further introduction of work placements and internships need to be considered as Casson (1982) states that entrepreneurship lends itself to both education and work experience. Work experience can also be a social factor which can influence an individual's intent of starting a business as argued by Dyer (1994) and consequently the government must not neglect the important role which work experience as well as education plays in entrepreneurship.

Another possible effect of the recession for undergraduate students in 2008/09 is on their intentions on setting up a business. Although the mean scores for both year groups show us that the majority of students were likely to set up a business in the future, the mean score for the 2008/09 group was closer to the "Unsure" category which shows that more students, albeit a small number of students, from 2008/09 were unsure about whether they will set up a business in the future. It can be argued that the recession had an impact upon their intentions. Shapero's model of entrepreneurial event formation can help explain the findings here because the model states that cultural and social environmental factors can impact upon the intent to follow an entrepreneurial path in life (Cited in Veciana et al. 2005). In this case it is likely that the recession in 2009 impacted upon undergraduate students' intentions about setting up a business in the future. Taking the

Shapiro model further it can be argued that undergraduate students in 2007/08 considered it more feasible, had more desire, and a higher propensity to act in terms of setting up a business than 2008/09 undergraduates (Cited in Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Veciana et al. 2005).

It is important for the government to constantly promote the setting up of businesses and show people that there are ways of setting up a business even during a recession in order to prevent a decline in entrepreneurship if potential entrepreneurs are disheartened due to the recession as found in this study. Perhaps the government could consider more policies similar to banks issuing long term loans with low interest rates so that potential entrepreneurs can have access to start up capital required to set up a business without the worry of having to pay a significant amount of interest.

When looking directly at entrepreneurship education it is clear that undergraduate students in 2008/09 were aware there are more benefits to studying entrepreneurship than simply being able to set up a business. This relates to the finding that studying entrepreneurship is not only valuable for people who intend on setting up a business. There are more benefits one can gain according to students such as being equipped with valuable skills, being able to think creatively and understanding different areas of business. At the start of every entrepreneurship course all students need to be made aware of all the wide scale benefits associated with studying entrepreneurship.

Another important finding from the additional questions in the undergraduate 2008/09 questionnaire is that students believed talks by entrepreneurs to be the best method of teaching entrepreneurship. This is interesting considering the large number of respondents who did not find external speakers useful. However when comparing both undergraduate year groups it is clear that undergraduates in 2008/09 found the external speakers more useful and as this question was solely in the 2008/09 questionnaire this explains the high response given for talks by entrepreneurs as the best method for teaching entrepreneurship. As already stated guest speakers should be used for the modules but the module leaders must ensure the lectures, which guest speakers give are related to module assessment as students found this was not the case in the study.

What is interesting to note is the number of respondents that stated practical lectures and case studies were the best teaching methods. This variety of teaching methods makes it difficult for courses to be designed to suit the needs of all students, which is why there are findings in this research that indicate negativity towards the entrepreneurship modules. The findings from this question support Kuratko (2005:585) who states “educators are challenged with designing effective learning opportunities for entrepreneurship students.” Gibb (1996) notes that students will have different learning styles, which helps to explain why some students considered guest speakers to be the best teaching method for entrepreneurship whilst others felt practical lectures involving group work are the best method.

What is also interesting about the responses given for this question is that the two most common responses: “Guest speakers” and “Practical lectures involving group work” can be seen to form an entrepreneurial directed approach to teaching entrepreneurship as noted by Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006) because they involve active participation on the part of the student. So it can be stated that students in this study favoured this approach over traditional approaches such as the use of theory. Based on this the module leaders should design the module around these two teaching methods.

#### 6.4: Comparison between the two undergraduate year groups

The findings from this research indicate many similarities between the two undergraduate year groups concerning the entrepreneurship module. In general both year groups seem satisfied with the module as they feel that they improved their understanding of concepts in the field as a result of the module and they were motivated to do more than the minimum requirements. However it should be noted that although findings are similar between the two groups it can be said that the module was more effective in 2008/09 by a small amount. The reason for this is because the 2008/09 group believed they had improved their understanding of concepts in the field and were motivated more than the 2007/08 group. Students would also recommend the module and they also felt that the clinics were useful though the booking system needs improvement particularly by ensuring students do not multi-book. A limit can be set on WebCT to ensure students cannot sign up for more than one clinic in one week.

As mentioned in the results, some of the mean scores indicate students had no opinion, for example concerning the assessment criteria. However these mean scores are present due to the high number of “agree” and “disagree” responses, which in effect balanced each other out. What can be concluded is that students appeared to be unsure about the clarity of the assessment criteria, which suggests an improvement is needed, as discussed earlier, in order to ensure all students are aware of the assessment criteria for the module.

It should be noted that the module appeared to have mainly attracted students that favoured having all coursework and no exam. Both year groups appeared to have a low genuine interest in the field of entrepreneurship and this was lower for the 2008/09 group. One explanation for this could be that since these students were in their final year of study they wanted to choose safe module options and since this module was all coursework it would be of great benefit to them when it came to final exams and they had one less exam. It is difficult to predict whether the module would be as popular if an exam was introduced as a means of assessment. One could argue that it could help attract those students with a genuine interest in the field and not those who see the module as an “easy ride.”

Another important finding concerning the 2007/08 undergraduates was how they were often given conflicting advice concerning the business plan. Although this was not examined in detail for the 2008/09 undergraduates it was clear that it was a problem for the other year group. As argued by Sexton and Bowman (1984:21) “without a clear consensus as to the definition of an entrepreneur, it is understandable that the content of a

typical entrepreneurship course varies according to the professor's personal preferences as to definition and scope." This quote relates greatly to the problem found in this study concerning conflicting advice because it is likely that different lecturers had differing views about the requirements for the business plan. This could also explain why many students felt the assessment criteria were not clearly explained. Before the start of the module all lecturers involved must all agree about the key elements of the module such as the layout of the business plan, word count, and referencing otherwise conflicting advice will still be given to students.

Both groups believe the module required better organisation, further lectures in finance and on the business plan. What is interesting, as previously noted, 2008/09 undergraduates found the external speakers more useful than 2007/08 undergraduates. Although this difference was not statistically significant it supports the argument put forward by Gibb (1996:315) " ...that students themselves may have different preferred learning styles..." It could be that 2008/09 undergraduates preferred the use of external speakers more than the 2007/08 group.

The only statistically significant difference found between the two groups was that the reflective diary section of WebCT did not contribute as well to students understanding of the module in 2007/08 as opposed to students in 2008/09. This may relate to the fact that the reflective diary posed a bigger problem for students in 2007/08 rather than the following year as noted by the interviews and by the fact there was less negative feedback concerning the reflective diaries in 2008/09.



### 6.5: Relationship between student satisfaction with the entrepreneurship module and likelihood of setting up a business

The results show there is no significant correlation between any of the variables used to measure student satisfaction and students likelihood of setting up a business. One could argue that educational experiences do not impact upon students' intentions of setting up a business. This finding is inconsistent to that by Peterman and Kennedy (2003) who found that participation in an entrepreneurship course increased students' perception of setting up a business. Although that was only one study, and as we know all studies are different, it is also inconsistent to arguments about educational experiences influencing an individual's intention to pursue an entrepreneurial career (Dyer, 1994). Furthermore Clark et al. (1984) found that teaching entrepreneurship helped with the growth of new ventures. Again this can be argued to be inconsistent with this study, as the module appeared to have no affect on students' intentions of setting up a business.

It is important to discuss why there was no correlation between the variables and students likelihood of setting up a business in this study. One could argue that the variables used were not the most ideal measures of student satisfaction with the module. As already discussed these measures were used as they formed key elements of the module and thus if students were satisfied with these measures then one could argue they were satisfied with the module. One could attribute the correlation found in the Peterman and Kennedy (2003) study to the measures used. It is likely that the measures used in this study like

motivation differed to those of the Peterman and Kennedy (2003) thus resulting in different findings.

Shapero's model argues that the presence of role models can impact significantly upon the three antecedents (perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and propensity to act), which lead to entrepreneurial intentions (cited in Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). It can be said that external speakers are role models for entrepreneurship students but Shapero's model does not support the findings in this study because external speakers had no affect on students' intentions of setting up a business. However as mentioned in the first section of the discussion, some students stated that they respect and admire the role of entrepreneurs, which could be an indication that these students are influenced by practicing entrepreneurs and regard them as role models.

Students in this study indicated that setting up a business in the future was likely which suggests other social factors may impact upon their entrepreneurial intentions. It has been argued that students displayed a high need for achievement in this study. It could be that certain internal factors centred on the students' unique characteristics impact upon their intentions of setting up a business. It may also be a case of other factors affecting students' perceptions such as having family members with their own businesses thus influencing students to follow (Veciana et al., 2005; Harris and Gibson, 2008).

One must also consider other possible social factors like the state of the economy. It was found in this study that the mean score for 2008/09 undergraduates was closer to the

“unsure” category indicating that the recession in 2009 may have had an impact on students’ intentions of setting up a business in the future.

Now that all the findings have been discussed the next chapter will conclude the main findings in this study and the impact they have for the entrepreneurship modules at the Birmingham Business School.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion/Summary

### 7.1: Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the main findings discussed in the previous chapter and links them back to the objectives. Each objective will be taken in turn and the main findings, which relate to each of them will be summarised.

### 7.2: Module Effectiveness

The findings in this study indicate that the entrepreneurship modules at the Birmingham Business School are effective in certain areas whilst ineffective in other areas. It should be noted that the majority of the findings relate more to the undergraduate module as opposed to the postgraduate module. In general the postgraduate module appeared to be more effective than the undergraduate module but the low postgraduate response rate makes this finding less reliable.

Students appear to have an increased understanding of concepts in the field as a result of taking the modules. They were also motivated to do more than the minimum requirements for the module which can be argued to relate to their high need for achievement which is suggested to be a characteristic of entrepreneurially inclined students (Gurol and Atsan, 2006; Koh, 1996). The students on both modules would also

recommend the module which also suggests they were generally satisfied with the module.

However it can be stated that the main measures of effectiveness for the modules are the variables, which were considered for measuring student's satisfaction with the module. For example external speakers form a big part of the modules and as the majority found them useful in improving their understanding of entrepreneurship then it can be said that the modules were effective with regards to the external speakers. However it can be argued that the module was ineffective with the use of external speakers as many students felt they did not help with the module. What needs to be noted is that the fact students wanted further lectures in areas like finance and the business plan. It can be said that lectures were effective because students did feel that the external speakers helped improve their understanding of entrepreneurship but they just did not relate to the module assessment. It is evident from the results that students felt lectures were not well co-ordinated with the module assessment.

Although all the findings cannot be summarised here, what is clearly evident in this study is the amount of mixed responses for many of the questions such as the website questions and the assessment criteria which in effect make it difficult to draw any solid conclusions concerning module effectiveness other than what has already been discussed so far. It is clear certain areas of the undergraduate module need improvement such as the website, assessment criteria, lectures and the general organisation of the module.

The mixed findings can be argued to relate to the argument made by Gibb (1996:315) “It is recognised that students themselves may have different preferred learning styles but that a key objective of training and education should be to enrich their range of learning styles helping them to “learn to learn” in very different ways.” All students are different and will consequently have differing needs, which the Birmingham Business School tries to meet with the undergraduate modules. However as noted by Collins et al. (2004) many universities are struggling to meet students’ needs which is clearly the case in this study due to the amount of negative feedback concerning certain areas of the undergraduate module.

The teaching method found to be used by the Birmingham Business School leans towards Ronstadt’s (1990) old school as the modules focus on the business plan as the main form of assessment plus the use of guest speakers which can be regarded as part of a students network of people who can aid with their entrepreneurial success (cited in Solomon et al. 2002). Undergraduate students in 2008/09 were found to favour an entrepreneurial directed teaching approach as noted by Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006) so perhaps the undergraduate module could introduce more teaching methods of this nature other than the current use of external speakers which do involve some active participation on the part of the student. Perhaps more group work can be introduced, as this appears to be popular amongst the students in this study.

From the findings in this study it can be argued that the business plan is an effective teaching method but the ambiguity of the reflective diaries appears not to favour

entrepreneurship students at the Birmingham Business School which is an interesting finding as entrepreneurially inclined students have been found to possess a high tolerance for ambiguity (Sexton and Upton, 1987). As some students favoured the independent nature of the module and they can be seen to possess a high need for achievement it is clear that the entrepreneurship students possess differing characteristics and thus makes it difficult to conclude that the entrepreneurship students at the Birmingham Business School are entrepreneurially inclined. This is supported by the fact that many students who chose the module did not appear to have a genuine interest in the module. However it can be said that certain entrepreneurially inclined characteristics were present in this study.

### 7.3: Has the recession in 2009 affected students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education?

The recession in 2009 appears to have had an impact upon students' perceptions about entrepreneurship education particularly when considering how students believed the government is not doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education combined with responses about SMEs and entrepreneurs contributing greatly to economic growth and helping a poor economy. Students understood that entrepreneurship education can ultimately lead to a growth in new ventures, which explains why many feel the government is not doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education. Students in this study understand that the value of entrepreneurship goes further than simply being able to set up a business and that it is important for anything in life.

When considering undergraduates in 2007/08 and 2008/09 who were likely to set up a business in the future it is clear from the mean scores that the 2008/09 group was more unsure. However this finding is not statistically significant but does offer some insight into the idea that the recession in 2009 may have impacted upon students' intentions of setting up a business.

#### 7.4: Differences/Similarities between the two undergraduate year groups

The results in this study show that many similarities are present between the two year groups. Both groups appeared to have chosen the module due to it having no exam, both groups were motivated and improved their understanding of concepts in the field, both stated that more finance and business plan lecture were needed, both believed the booking system for the clinics should have been better and ultimately organisation of the module should have been better.

No statistically significant differences were found other than one chi-square result which showed that the reflective diary section of the website did not contribute as well to students understanding of the module in 2007/08 as opposed to students in 2008/09. Another difference, although not statistically significant, which should be noted is that 2008/09 undergraduates favoured the external speakers more than the previous year which supports findings elsewhere in the study that 2008/09 undergraduates favoured an entrepreneurially directed approach to teaching.



It can be argued that the undergraduate module did not improve significantly in effectiveness over the two years nor did it become more ineffective. However it is clear that certain areas of the undergraduate module need re-organising in light of students' comments.

#### 7.5: Relationship between student satisfaction with the entrepreneurship module and likelihood of setting up a business

No significant correlations were found between the four variables used to measure student satisfaction and the likelihood of setting up a business. It can therefore be argued that students likelihood of setting up a business is not influenced by educational experiences in this study but it is possible that other external factors play a part in influencing students such as role models and family entrepreneurs (Veciana et al., 2005; Harris and Gibson, 2008). It may even be the case that students' intentions are based upon internal factors related to their entrepreneurial characteristics.

Now that the findings of this research have been summarised it is important to examine the limitations present in this study and also put forward any areas, which require further research in order to improve the reliability of the findings in this study.

## Chapter 8: Limitations/Future Research

### 8.1: Introduction:

Although many conclusions were drawn upon in the previous chapter one must not forget the possible limitations, which could have affected the findings in this research. The final chapter of this study focuses upon the limitations present in this study as well as possible areas which could be examined in the future as a result of the findings.

### 8.2: Limitations

Many important findings have been obtained as a result of this study but one significant limitation is that as the study was focused solely on the Birmingham Business School it does not allow generalisations of the findings. For example it was found that the entrepreneurship students in this study had a high need for achievement. This finding cannot be generalised to other entrepreneurship students at different business schools because of differences, which are present amongst not only students but also the courses, and the schools, which the students attend.

Other limitations present in this research include the low response rate achieved for the postgraduate students, which in effect limited the amount of significant tests, which could have been performed for this group of students. It would have been desirable to examine differences/similarities between postgraduates and undergraduates in order to test the

theory formed in the literature review about students with more educational experiences having a stronger desire to set up a business. This could be a possible area for future research especially as comparative studies focusing upon different year groups appear to be scarce.

Although the questionnaires used in this research provided a large amount of data it can be argued that the reliability of this data may be affected by student bias. One limitation of many studies concerning course evaluation, as noted by Sexton and Upton (1987) is “teacher warmth” which can lead to student bias. In this study one could argue it was a possible case of “teacher dislike” particularly when considering all the negative comments made by students concerning the undergraduate module.

Another limitation involves the additional questions included in the 2008/09 undergraduate questionnaire and not in the 2007/08 undergraduate questionnaire. The reason for these questions not being included in the 2007/08 questionnaire is because the questionnaires for 2007/08 had already been collected before the 2008/09 had been finalised. Had these questions been in both questionnaires it would have possibly meant more solid conclusions being drawn with regards to the second objective in this research concerning the effects of the recession in 2009 on students’ perceptions about entrepreneurship education.

It can also be stated that a question directly asking the level of satisfaction the students gained as a result of the module would have been better to use in order to examine the relationship between student satisfaction and the likelihood of setting up business.

Another possible limitation of the study is the fact that the undergraduate questionnaire was only administered to half of the students on the module and may have affected the reliability of the results. However due to researcher constraints it was not possible to administer the questionnaire to all the students on the module.

### 8.3: Future Research

Although the findings in this research cannot be generalised they can be used as basis for future research in many different areas in order to help further expand the field of entrepreneurship education. For example as no relationship was found between student satisfaction with the entrepreneurship module in this research and the likelihood of setting up a business it could indicate that other factors may affect students' intentions of setting up a business. As studies have already looked at external factors, which affect intentions to set up a business (Turker and Selcuk, 2009; Peterman and Kennedy 2003) perhaps more studies are needed into examining the relationship between internal factors and the desire to set up a business.

More research is needed into examining the effects of the recession in 2009 on students' intentions to set up a business because it was found in this research, though not

statistically significant, that the recession in 2009 did have a minor impact upon students' intentions of setting up a business. Shapero's model of entrepreneurial event formation looks at perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and propensity to act as factors that contribute to an individual's likelihood of setting up a business (Cited in Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Veciana et al. 2005). This research study looked at the likelihood of undergraduates setting up a business which can be argued to encompass all 3 of Shapero's factors but in light of the recession in 2009 perhaps more research is needed into looking at perceived feasibility as the state of the economy during a recession is poor and thus makes less feasible to set up a business. By looking at feasibility then the effects of the recession in 2009 can be identified more clearly as students in this research study may have regarded "likelihood of setting up a business" as their desire to set up a business. As we know, individuals may have the desire to set up a business but sometimes certain factors that are outside of their control can make it unfeasible to do so.

Further research is also needed into enhanced teaching methodologies such as the use of new technologies. Although this has been briefly touched upon in this research it is important to examine students' perceptions about new technologies such as video feeds and web casts because it is necessary to move away from traditional teaching methods and it is inevitable especially when one considers the fierce competition business schools face in attracting students. Business schools attempt to add value to their modules and such technologies could have the power to do so.

As already mentioned in this study, students on different degrees take the undergraduate entrepreneurship module. It could be worth focusing upon the different degrees and seeing if any differences present between them especially as entrepreneurship is becoming more popular and as seen in this research its presence needs to be felt in other academic disciplines. Perhaps asking students on different degrees what attracts them to an entrepreneurship course could help tailor entrepreneurship courses to specific degrees.

#### 8.4: Contribution

Overall this research has contributed to the field of entrepreneurship education since certain objectives of the research are unique such as examining the effects of the recession in 2009. Other comparative studies for example have looked at different majors (Kolvereid and Moen, 1997) or gender (Veciana et al. 2005) whereas this study looked at different undergraduate year groups studying the same module thus making it different to past comparative studies. The author thus hopes a basic benchmark has been signalled for further applied research into this vital area of education for both national and international affairs.

## Appendix 1: Primary and Secondary Entrepreneurship education and Young Enterprise facts

It should be noted that the EU Commission report (2006) is used extensively in this appendix. An examination into the role of entrepreneurship education at primary and secondary level is provided along with facts concerning Young Enterprise. All help show the significance and large impact of entrepreneurship education.

### Primary Education

Starting at primary education the report argues, “Coherent initiatives or programmes led by education authorities are still rare in primary education” (European Communities, 2006:6). In Luxembourg 11-12 year old pupils follow a French-language programme, which looks at starting a business based on a cartoon. Many countries like the UK, Iceland and Norway run a programme in primary and lower secondary schools called the “Young Inventors Competition” which helps encourage students’ creativity and to develop their ideas and produce inventions, which are entered in the competition (European Communities, 2006). Such programmes are very useful as students learn from a young age some irreplaceable skills and learn fundamental facts about the world of business, which will be of great benefit to them when they become older.

### Secondary Education

In secondary education the Report argues that students should learn about entrepreneurship and see it as a possible career path. It also stated that practical projects need to be encouraged at this level of education so that students' entrepreneurial mindsets develop. At this age it is imperative students begin to understand the importance entrepreneurship can bring to an economy. In Ireland the curriculum promotes entrepreneurship at the secondary education level by providing students with entrepreneurship experience through programmes like the Transition Year. At this level students are often given the responsibility of setting up a mini company. According to the European Communities (2006) over 200,000 students every year are involved in such a programme in the EU 25 and Norway (Cited from Mini-Companies in Secondary Education, Best Procedure Project: Final Report of the Expert Group, September 2005.)

### Young Enterprise

In the UK many schools follow a programme run by "Young Enterprise" which is the UK's leading business and enterprise education society, which is available for primary schools, secondary schools and universities. Programmes run by Young Enterprise focus on students' ability to learn as they do ([www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)). "With more than 5,500 schools and colleges participating in our programmes, Young Enterprise currently reaches more than 350,000 young people are year..." ([www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)). The next page shows the vision of Young Enterprise, which states:



*“That all young people will have the opportunity to gain personal experience of how business works, understand the role it plays in providing employment and creating prosperity, and be inspired to improve their own prospects, and the competitiveness of the UK.”( [www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)).*

It is evident that the vision of Young Enterprise relates greatly to the importance that entrepreneurs and SMEs can have for economic prosperity. Young Enterprise runs all over the UK with different programmes for different levels of education. Below shows a list of the different programs available by Young Enterprise along with a description for each taken directly from the Young Enterprise website ([www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)):

*Primary Programme (ages 4-11, five lessons):*

“Volunteers from business open a window on the world of work and life in their community for primary students.”

*Your School Your Business (ages 12-15, seven sessions):*

“A hands on transition activity for students entering secondary school, introducing school as a business and encouraging students to appreciate their role in secondary school.”

*Enterprise In Action (ages 12-15, five session):*

“Business volunteers challenge students to develop capabilities for entrepreneurship through a creative enterprise challenge.”

*Personal Economics (ages 12-15, five lessons):*

“Develop financial experience and encourage aspirations for life. Students gain a hands-on, practical introduction to personal finance.”

*Quickstart (ages 13-15, ten sessions):*

“Working in teams and supported by a business mentor, students experience setting up and running their known real company through an intensive 10-day programme.”

*Quickstart Music (ages 13-15, ten sessions):*

“Groups of students experience setting up and running their own mini music enterprise and take on the full spectrum of music industry roles in a creative enterprise programme.”

*Learn To Earn (ages 13-15, six sessions):*

“Students learn to understand the link between their education and their future success and happiness in work and life.”

*Project Business (ages 13-15, six sessions):*

“Students gain a practical, activity-based insight into economic and business life through sharing the real life experiences of a local volunteer.”

*Team Programme (ages 15-19+, one-two academic years):*

“Young people who experience difficulties with their learning have the opportunity to develop skills for work through a real-life enterprise experience.”

*Company Programme (ages 15-19, one academic year):*

“Inspire success through real business experience. Students gain practical experience of business and enterprise through setting up and running their own real company.”

*Masterclasses (ages 15+, full or half day):*

“Students are inspired and challenged to consider business start-up, and gain insight into specific industry sectors through first hand accounts from entrepreneurs.”

*Graduate Programme (ages 18-25+, one calendar year):*

“Students in Higher Education have the opportunity to test-out self-employment and business creation through setting up and running their own company.”

*Key Programme (ages 14-16, residential course):*

“Young people are taken out of their own environment and immersed in a dynamic, motivational and potentially life changing experience.”

For example one school, which participates in the Young Enterprise “Company Programme” in the West Midlands, UK, is “Bromsgrove School.” After visiting this school and obtaining information from the individual who runs the programme it was clear what an important role Young Enterprise plays in teaching young individuals about the world of enterprise. Every year at Bromsgrove a new group of students set up a mini company with their own company name and manufacture their own products, which they sell at special fairs and to students. Some of the products made by students at this particular school include: mugs, jewellery and valentines roses. The company normally

sells products within the school on special days such as Comic Relief and Valentines Day. Students are given the responsibility to manage their company and are responsible for dealing with all financial matters. As many schools participate in this programme, prizes are awarded to the companies, which perform very well. This adds a competitive nature to the programme and as a result products are likely to be of a higher standard.

Appendix 2: Undergraduate 2007/08 questionnaire

**Degree Title:**.....

**Ethnic Origin:**.....

**Father's Occupation:**.....

**Your intended Occupation:**.....

**1. From the list below select the main reason why you chose the Entrepreneurship module:**

All coursework/No exam

Interested in Entrepreneurship

Expand Knowledge of Entrepreneurship

Recommended by other students

Other.....

**2. “I feel the external speakers in lectures improved my understanding of entrepreneurship”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**3. Which areas if any did you feel you wanted further lectures?**

.....

.....

**4. Which theories did you use for your business plan and how useful did you find them?** (Please rate usefulness from 1-5 with 5 being most useful.

E.g. Smith's Triangle = 5)

.....

.....

**5. Which journals did you use for your business plan and how useful did you find them?** (E.g. Identify journal as Smith 2000) (Please rate usefulness from 1-5 with 5 being most useful)

.....

.....

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**7. “The module improved my understanding of concepts in this field.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**8. “I was motivated to do more than the minimum requirements for this module.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**9. “The assessment criteria for the module were clearly explained.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**10. Do you feel that the deadline given was realistic in order to complete the business plan to the standard required?**

No

**11. “I found the one to one clinics with the business plan advisors useful as they allowed me to deal with any problems I may have had with the business plan.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**12. Did you experience any problems with the booking system for the clinics?**

No

*If YES then answer question 13. If NO then move onto question 14.*

**13. Could you please state what problems you found with the booking system for the clinics and in what way you feel it could be improved?**

.....

.....

.....

**WebCT**

**14. “Web based material was well co-ordinated with module material.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

### 15. “I found it easy to navigate around the website.”

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**16. Select from the list below which 2 areas of the website you feel contributed the most to your understanding of the module.**

Discussion Forum	Case Studies	SME theory
Project Management Section	Marketing Section	Finance Section
Business Plan Section	Reflective Diary Section	

### **Role Of Entrepreneurship**

**17. What do you think are the main barriers to successful entrepreneurship?**

.....

.....

**18. What is your opinion on the role of SMEs and entrepreneurs in today's society?**

.....

.....

**19. Are you likely to set up a business in the future either full time or part time?  
(Not necessarily your chosen business for the business plan)**

Very likely      Likely      Not Sure      Unlikely      Very Unlikely

**20. Would you recommend the module to others?**

Yes No



**21. Could you please give a reason for your answer to the previous question?**

.....

.....

**Please feel free to make any other comments you feel are important and were not covered in the questionnaire:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**We would like to thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire**

Appendix 3: Undergraduate 2008/09 questionnaire

**Degree Title:**.....

**Ethnic Origin:**.....

**Father's Occupation:**.....

**Your intended Occupation:**.....

**1. From the list below select the main reason why you chose the Entrepreneurship module:**

All coursework/No exam

Interested in Entrepreneurship

Expand Knowledge of Entrepreneurship

Recommended by other students

Other.....

**2. “I feel the external speakers in lectures improved my understanding of entrepreneurship”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**3. Which areas if any did you feel you wanted further lectures?**

.....

.....

**4. Which theories did you use for your business plan and how useful did you find them?** (Please rate usefulness from 1-5 with 5 being most useful.

E.g. Smith's Triangle = 5)

.....

.....

**5. Which journals did you use for your business plan and how useful did you find them?** (E.g. Identify journal as Smith 2000) (Please rate usefulness from 1-5 with 5 being most useful)

.....

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Yes No

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Yes No

**13. Could you please state what problems you found with the booking system for the clinics and in what way you feel it could be improved?**

.....

.....

**WebCT**

**14. “Web based material was well co-ordinated with module material.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**15. “I found it easy to navigate around the website.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**16. Select from the list below which 2 areas of the website you feel contributed the most to your understanding of the module.**

Discussion Forum	Case Studies	SME theory
Project Management Section	Marketing Section	Finance Section
Business Plan Section	Reflective Diary Section	

---

**Role Of Entrepreneurship**

**17. What do you think are the main barriers to successful entrepreneurship?**

.....  
.....

**18. What is your opinion on the role of SMEs and entrepreneurs in today’s society?**

.....  
.....

**19. Are you likely to set up a business in the future either full time or part time?  
(Not necessarily your chosen business for the business plan)**

Very likely      Likely      Not Sure      Unlikely      Very Unlikely

**20. Do you think entrepreneurship education is important in today’s society?**

Very Important	Quite Important	Of Some Importance
Of Little Importance	Not Important	

**21. “Entrepreneurship education in higher education leads to more start-up ventures and more economic growth.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**22. What do you think are the main benefits one can gain from studying entrepreneurship?**

.....  
.....

**23. Select which ONE of the following you feel is the most important in teaching entrepreneurship to students:**

Case Studies                      Talks by Entrepreneurs                      Use of Theory  
Practical lectures involving group work                      Other.....

**24. “Learning about entrepreneurship is only valuable if you intend on starting your own business.”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**25. In light of the recession, is the government doing enough for the provision of entrepreneurship education?**

Yes                      No

---

**26. Would you recommend the module to others?**

Yes                      No

**27. Could you please give a reason for your answer to the previous question?**

.....  
.....

**Please feel free to make any other comments you feel are important and were not covered in the questionnaire:**

.....  
.....

.....

.....

**We would like to thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire**

Appendix 4: Postgraduate 2007/08 questionnaire

**Ethnic Origin:**.....

**Father's Occupation:**.....

**Your intended Occupation:**.....

**1. Do you intend on setting up a small business in the future?**

Yes

No

*What are your views on the following statement:*

**2. "I believe management theory to be useful in:**

**a) Setting up a business"**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**b) For monetary growth in SME's"**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**c) For future planning"**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**3. What do you think are the main barriers to successful entrepreneurship?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**4. What is your opinion on the role of SMEs and entrepreneurs in today's society?**

.....  
.....

.....

**5. What do you feel to be the main challenges of strategic management in SMEs?**

.....

.....

.....

**6. Which factors do you feel influence the strategic decision making process the most in organisations?**

.....

.....

.....

**7. “I thought the guest speakers offered improved my understanding of strategic management and enterprise”**

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**8. Which areas if any did you feel you wanted further lectures?**

.....

.....

.....

**9. Which theories/models did you use for the business plan?**

.....

.....

.....

**10. How useful did you find the theories/models?** (Please rate usefulness of each theory from 1-5 with 5 being the most useful. E.g. Smith’s Triangle = 5)

.....



.....  
.....

**10. Do you feel that the deadline given was realistic in order to complete the business plan to the standard required?**

Yes

No

**11. “Overall I would rate the core textbook as useful.”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**12. “The module improved my understanding of concepts in this field.”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**13. “I feel that I have improved my ability to think strategically when it comes to making business decisions as a result of this module.”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**14. “I was motivated to do more than the minimum requirements for this module.”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**15. “The assessment criteria for the module were clearly explained.”**

Strongly Agree

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**16. Would you recommend the module to others?**

Yes

No

**17. Could you please give a reason for your answer to the above question?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Please feel free to make any other comments you feel are important and were not covered in the questionnaire:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**We would like to thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire**

Appendix 5- Chi-square tests

Usefulness of WebCT Sections	Response	Year		Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) (p)	Degrees of freedom (df)
		07/08	08/09			
Discussion Forum	Yes	6	5	0.011	0.916	1
	No	36	28			
	Total	42	33			
Case Studies	Yes	7	3	0.918	0.338	1
	No	35	30			
	Total	42	33			
SME Theory	Yes	10	5	0.866	0.352	1
	No	32	28			
	Total	42	33			
Project Management	Yes	3	0	2.455	0.117	1
	No	39	33			
	Total	42	33			
Marketing Section	Yes	3	1	0.619	0.431	1
	No	39	32			
	Total	42	33			
Finance Section	Yes	20	12	0.957	0.328	1
	No	22	21			
	Total	42	33			
Business Plan Section	Yes	19	19	1.125	0.289	1
	No	23	14			
	Total	42	33			
Reflective Diary Section	Yes	12	17	4.102	0.043	1
	No	30	16			
	Total	42	33			

## Appendix 6: Interview structure

Below shows the areas, which were discussed in the interviews:

- Lectures
- Reflective Diary
- Booking System for clinics
- Core textbook
- Conflicting advice by lecturers
- WebCT
- External speakers
- Assessment criteria

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