

HOPE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FORESIGHT

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ABSTRACT

Hope Theory is a psychological theory which aims to explain why and how people move from identification of goals to pathways setting and action. Developed by Professor C.R Snyder, it identifies pathways thinking, agentic belief (willways) and goal identification as central to the development of Hope.

Research into Hope and Entrepreneurship has shown that successful entrepreneurs demonstrate higher Hope scores than others, and as such can expect many side benefits, from increased social satisfaction to better health outcomes. Both Entrepreneurship and Foresight hold an image or intention as central to the success of their endeavours. Hope Theory can inform both disciplines through its teasing out of pathways and willways thinking and the role these play in goal attainment. The intersection of Hope Theory, entrepreneurship and foresight has many interesting implications for both entrepreneurs and educators.

INTRODUCTION

There are wide ranging explanations for what makes an entrepreneur and who may possibly be successful. This makes for a problematic search for definitions for those coming to field for the first time. Possible explanatory frameworks for entrepreneurship cover both social and individual factors. Shane (2003, p2) argues that researchers have had a “tendency to look at only one part of the entrepreneurial process without consideration for whether the explanations they offer have any explanatory power for, or relationship to, the other parts of the entrepreneurial process.”

This paper offers a possible explanation for why some entrepreneurs are more successful than others, rather than trying to explain the act of entrepreneurship itself. As this explanation stems from a psychological theory it is focussed on the individual aspects of entrepreneurship, although it is hoped that researchers looking at other aspects may also find it useful. The paper is specifically focussed on the interventions and support that educators of entrepreneurs might consider to ensure the success of their student’s ventures. Equipping budding or early phase entrepreneurs with high Hope levels will positively affect their levels of success.

The research stems from a foresight perspective that holds the enacting of images of the future as a cornerstone of the choices which govern human behaviour. This paper argues that all images of the future have a moral dimension. Substituting an individual’s image of the future for the goal in Hope Theory, offers a cognitive explanation as to why and how people choose to enact, or not, their preferred image of the future. Entrepreneurship is a logical testing place for this theoretical juncture as entrepreneurs are innovating and creating their own futures, sometimes in direct contrast to accepted norms.

This paper explains how Hope Theory operates and outlines empirical research on the Hope levels of entrepreneurs. Once applied to the process of entrepreneurship, and the education of entrepreneurs, Hope Theory has implications for the ways in which programs aimed at entrepreneurs are delivered, and the possible support mechanisms needed to develop high Hope levels which will assist successful entrepreneurial activity.

HOPE THEORY, FORESIGHT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

When looking at a field from the outside and attempting to applying trans-disciplinary thinking to it, an integrated definition of entrepreneurship is useful. Such a definition is offered by Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004, p30):

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires the *application of energy* and passion towards the *creation and implementation* of ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients include the *willingness* to take calculated risks...the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skill to marshall needed resources; the fundamental skill of building a solid business plan; and finally the *vision* to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion. (*emphasis added*)

This definition highlights three main factors of interest to the perspective of this paper: energy, creation/vision (or goal setting) and implementation (or pathways development). These three are crucial elements of Hope Theory which is discussed in more detail below. The idea that holding a vision of what is possible forms the link between foresight and entrepreneurship; the intersection of three may help answer questions around how and why entrepreneurs are successful.

Entrepreneurship, as an area of study, has traditionally focussed on what is “wrong” with entrepreneurs and how to fix their weaknesses, rather than on what they do “right”. The positive psychology and organisational behaviour movements, in which Hope Theory is situated, aims to bring a new view to the entrepreneurship area, one which investigates what makes entrepreneurs successful. There is still a focus on improving; however it is taken from studies looking at developing positive attributes rather than ameliorating negative ones. This research also a similar aim, but with the addition of demonstrating the usefulness of foresight, especially of futures images, and the value these may add to the success of entrepreneurship.

The author’s interest in the topic of Hope initially come through a desire to understand how and why people act to bring about their preferred images of the future. The author’s background is foresight, or Futures Studies, where one of the core foci is the image of the future held by individuals and groups. According to Slaughter (1995, p48) foresight is an attribute or a competence, that “pushes the boundaries of perception in at least four major ways:

- by assessing the implications of present actions, decisions, etc;
- by detecting and avoiding problems before they occur;
- by considering present implications of possible future events; and
- by envisioning aspects of desired futures.”

IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

Bell (2003, p82) in the *Foundations of Futures Studies* states that the study of the image of the future is one of the basic concerns of futurists, thus they “study the ways in which images of the future influence human behaviour and how that behaviour in turn contributes toward making the future.” These images have an implicit moral basis; that those images which are positive will have beneficial consequences and those which are dystopic will be negative in consequence for both individuals and their organisations. The implications for entrepreneurs will be in their ability to communicate positive and hopeful images to those they wish to influence.

When used in this context, images of the future are essentially the manifestation of our expectation that transformation is possible. Creating a vision, be it as an individual or organisation, taps into the deepest desires of the people involved and allows them to express how they wish the world to be. Polak in his work, *The Image of the Future*, argues that using images of the future as guides for present behaviour is a very old human practice. “Once he (man) became conscious of creating images of the future, he became a participant in the process of creating this future.” (Polak 1973, p6)

Holding clear images of the future is also one way in which fear and trepidation about complexity can be minimised. The fear and anxiety held about the future by individuals is mitigated through development of futures images, whether they come true or not, and they allow clear decisions to be taken in

the present which otherwise may seem fraught with difficulties – the future is a playground in which the boundaries of the present loosen and creativity abounds. Entrepreneurs, especially those in the social realm, appear to enjoy such playful, generative thinking, using it to generate ideas and opportunities for action.

“risks taken by the social entrepreneur are likely to be the leveraging of resources which do not currently exist—the things of the faith, hope and charity kind. Social entrepreneurs can transcend their immediate circumstances for a preferred future, and in so doing they reach beyond the flesh and blood of the past or the present.” (Gillin and Hayward, 2005 p284)

This “planning” through imagination appears to be an innate human trait. Ingavir argues “that people instinctively and constantly develop alternative plans for the future...It is only by access to serial plans for future behaviour and cognition, i.e. access to “our memory of the future”, that we can select and perceive meaningful messages.” (in McKiernan and McKay 2002, p5) It may be for this reason that most people find the process of imagining the future to be pleasurable and energising.

Patalono, using Kenneth Boulding’s work on image as a base, suggests that imagery is important because “it enables collective sharing of values and meanings...it has cohesive power, which may acquire a strategic value in organisations and in cooperative interactions.” (Patalono 2003, p8) Thus it is not the “image” per se which is of value, rather the expressed values and meaning contained within it. Polak argues that it is the “values, means and ends” that drive this process in current societies; mean that we now “stagger under the double load of not only having to construct (his) own future but having to create the values that will determine its design.” (Polak 1973, p9) The ability for entrepreneurs to harness and explicitly state the value proposition of their idea or vision is powerful, and will enable them to move forward more purposefully, taking others with them.

David Cooperrider argues that “the artful creation of positive imagery on a collective basis may well be the most prolific activity that individuals and organisations can engage in if their aim is to help bring to fruition a positive and humanely significant future.” (Cooperrider 2001, p2) Drawing on sources such as Polak, he uses the heliotropic hypothesis to explain why human systems evolve towards the most “positive” image.

Organisational actions have an observable and largely automatic tendency to evolve in the direction of positive imagery...Hence, it can be argued that positive images of the future generate in organizations (1) an affirmative cognitive ecology that strengthens peoples’ readiness and capacity to recall the positive aspects of the past, to selectively see the positive in the present, and to envision new potentials in the future; (2) it catalyzes an affirmative emotional climate, for example, of heightened optimism, hope, care, joy, altruism, and passion; and (3) it provokes confident and energized action. (Cooperrider 2001, p14)

POSITIVE ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Much of the thinking around concepts of hope and organisations comes out of the positive psychology movement instigated by Martin Seligman in the late 1990’s. It emerged due to the perceived lack of focus on the positive characteristics of people rather than what may be “wrong” with them. A computer search cited by Luthans found a preponderance of articles outlining the negative side of human behaviour, around 200,000 but only 1,000 which focussed on positive concepts and capabilities of people. (Luthans 2002b, p696) This focus is especially interesting when one considers that this move to the positive had been heralded by Maslow in 1954 when he proposed research into topics such as love, optimism and actualization of potential. (Wright 2003, p437) Although this focus on disease had been useful to a point, Seligman argued “that the progress had come at some significant costs. It neglected human strengths and ignored what could go right with people.” (in Ghoshal 2005, p85) Thus a focus on hope, optimism, joy and fulfilment began to take root.

The positive psychology movement was used as the starting point by Fred Luthans when he defined a new branch of organisational behaviour - Positive Organisational Behaviour or POB. This discipline uses the findings of the positive psychology movement, which are individually based, and applies them to collectives. POB is defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and effectively managed for performance

improvement in today's workplace." (Luthans 2002a, p59) It includes the psychological constructs of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, well-being, and emotional intelligence; and attempts to apply them to the development and performance of management and employees.

Luthans identifies Hope as "the most unique POB capacity," (Luthans 2002b, p699) as it is active in a dispositional (trait) sense but also as a state. Hope Theory is included in POB because the level of Hope held by a person can be influenced by interventions, and it has been related to employee performance and leadership effectiveness. It is for these reasons that he suggests further research and application of the concept. Jensen and Luthans (2002), and Peterson and Luthans (2002) have undertaken some research into this area which is discussed below.

HOPE THEORY

Hope Theory can be summarised as having three equally important aspects: agency (willpower), pathways (waypower) and goals. Hope reflects the capacity of an individual to conceptualise goals, develop pathways to achieve these goals; and initiate and sustain the motivation required to achieve them. (Snyder et al 2003) This theory is illustrated, along with the interaction of images of the future, in Figure One.

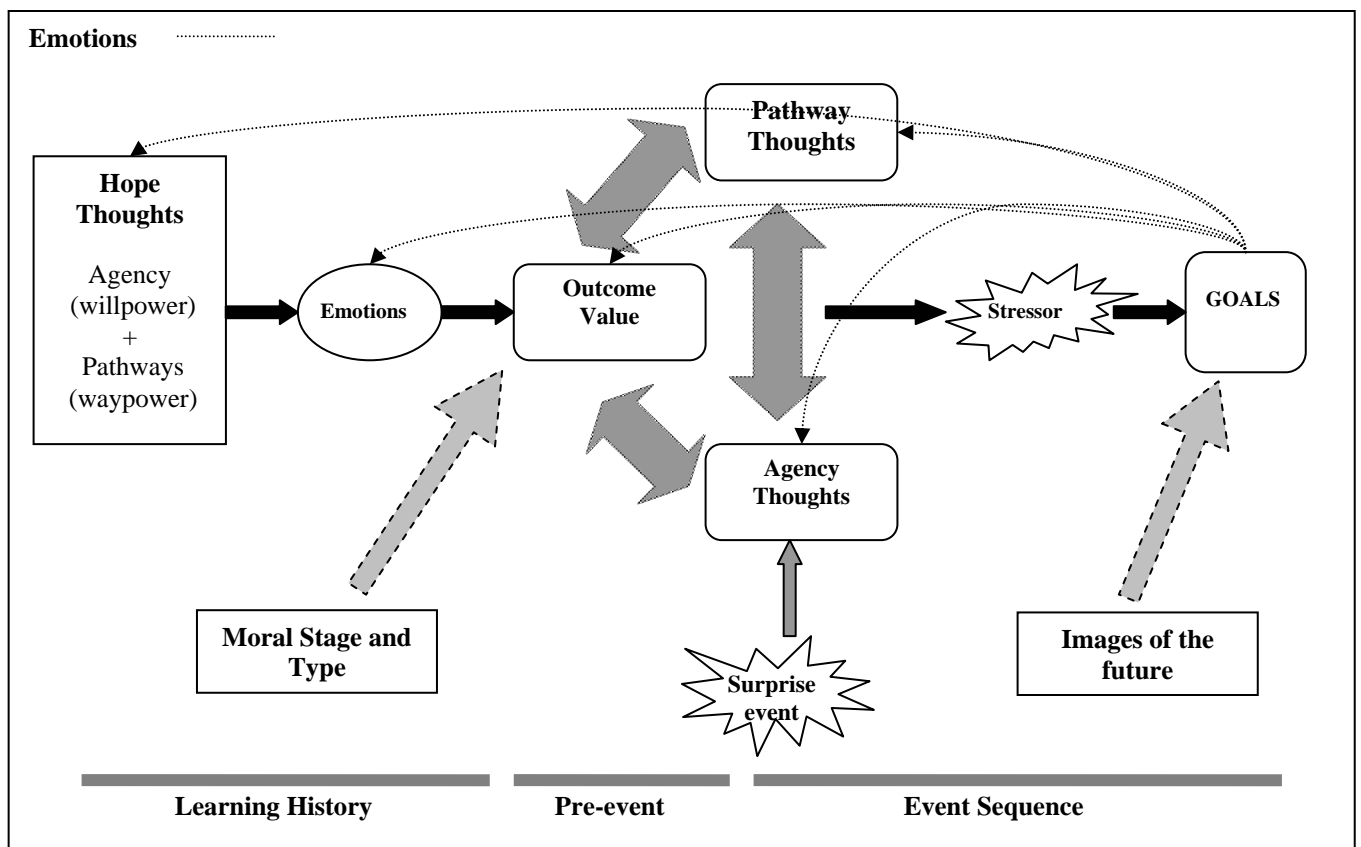


Figure One: Hope Theory, images of the future and moral stage (adapted from Snyder 2002)

Hope Theory operates in the following manner. Firstly, there are pre-existing levels of willpower and waypower due to previous experiences, these have some emotional affect. During the pre-event phase the outcome value of the goal is determined. This relative importance will influence the amount of mental attention expended and will activate the pre-event analysis phase. (Snyder 2002, p253) The moral stage and type of the individual influences this decision (see discussion below).

There is then a three way iterative process between pathway thoughts (waypower), agency thoughts (willpower) and outcome value. At some point during these iterations, there is a check back to the

perceived outcome value, if the amount of effort being expended does not match the perceived value of the goal, the individual ceases cognitive processing of that goal.

Once the goal pursuit has begun, feedback loops begin to develop through the process of pathways and agency thinking. As the process moves forward, goal directed cognitions are eliciting the particular emotions, and those emotions are in turn shaping and informing the cognitions of the person who is in the throes of goal pursuit. During the process a surprise event may take place and the reactions to this will be different dependent on the level of Hope. In addition, there may also occur a stressor, this represents any “impediment of sufficient magnitude to jeopardize hopeful thought.” (Snyder 2002, p254) Once the stressor has been dealt with, or if no stressor appeared, then “pathways and agency thoughts should continue to alternate (as shown in the bidirectional arrows) and aggregate through the event sequence.” (Snyder 2002, p255) Having attained (or not) the goal which was pursued, emotional energy (positive or negative) will flow back through the process to inform the next pursuit.

Having a high Hope score has been shown to positively affect health, athletic outcomes, college scores, and better psychological adjustment, amongst others things. (Snyder et al 2002; Snyder 2002) Hope correlates with many other psychological concepts such as optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem and problem solving ability (Snyder 2002). However, whereas many of these are in the present time, Hope has a strong future orientation “as a positive future is made more likely by goal directed thoughts and actions occurring in the present moment”. (Shorey et al 2002, p326) Satterfield argues that Hope is “most adaptive when combined with integrative complexity, that is, the capacity to contemplate the complexity of problems, seeing them from multiple perspectives.” (in Braithwaite 2003, p7)

As a psychological concept, Hope Theory is value neutral, as an individual’s values are expressed through the held goal rather than the cognitive and emotional construct. This paper suggests, however, that the judgement about the value or moral attractiveness of the goal or vision is made at the outcome value stage of the process.

Hope is a learned thinking pattern which “should have manifestations in overt behaviours that can be objectively observed.” (Shorey et al 2002, p323) There are two types of goal outcomes that can be held: positive goal outcomes and negative goal outcomes. Positive goals can be envisioned for the first time; pertain to the sustaining of a present goal; or be the desire for a further goal once one goal has been achieved. Negative goal outcomes are about forestalling or delaying a negative event. Snyder suggests that there are various types of Hope – repair Hope, goals held to repair a void in someone’s life; maintenance goals, or those that are part of daily living; and enhancement goals, the big hairy audacious goals that have moved humans throughout history. (Snyder 2002, p250)

In addition to the differences in goals held, there are also three levels of Hope: global or trait Hope; domain-specific Hope; and goal-specific Hope. Global Hope is a dispositional measure and evaluates an individual’s belief about achieving goals in a general sense. Domain-specific Hope measures the situational Hope state in contexts such as social, academic and family. Goal-specific Hope, or State Hope scale, measures Hope in relation to a particular goal at a particular time. (Snyder, Feldman et al 2002) It is possible to have reported Hope scores which are different at the three levels of abstraction. Thus young people could be low Hope in a general, global sense, but have very high Hope in a situational context.

MORAL BASIS OF PREFERRED FUTURES

Wendell Bell (2003, p73) states that “the goals of futurists are to contribute toward making the world a better place in which to live”, hence the moral and values basis of the work they do must be explicit and shared. One way in which foresight is useful is to allow individuals and groups to examine their values and explicitly accept them or take the opportunity to realign or even change them. So how do we know what are preferred futures and what are not? Bell has an improvement in the world as the basis, but what does this ‘better’ world look like? Who is it better for? For all or just those doing the imagining?

It is this aspect of the image of the future that has most particular relevance to entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship has a goal of making society a ‘better’ place (Gillin and Hayward, 2005). Hope Theory presented takes this image (or goal) and proffers an explanation as to the cognitive processes that surround the choice of whether or not to enact the vision. The ability of the entrepreneur to appreciate the

moral basis of the image s/he presents and the effect this will have on the outcome values of the individuals around them will be central to their ability to influence action.

In *The Image of the Future*, Polak (1973) states that “awareness of ideal values is the first step in the conscious creation of images of the future...for a value is by definition that which guides a ‘valued’ future”. (p10) Hekman (1995) asserts that morality and subjectivity are inseparable, that to be subjective is in fact to express a moral stance. Hence, “just as there are multiple subjectivities, there are multiple moralities...we acquire a moral voice from social, cultural, historical setting that also constitutes our subjectivity; moral voices vary with race, class and gender.” (p160)

This is not the place for a drawn out discussion of moral judgement in modern societies, suffice it to say that part of the process of imagining a future state is to examine the underlying values, morals and ethics and whether these are shared, or not.

The reason such an exposition is of interest is when examining the theory of moral action and stage structures. Kolberg and Candee argue that moral actions involve “an internal moral cognition” (1984, p55); that different stages of moral cognition will be influenced in two ways: “through difference in dedontic choice (should or ‘rightness’) and through judgements of responsibility (commitment to follow through)”. (1984, p62) The following model in Figure Two illustrates this.

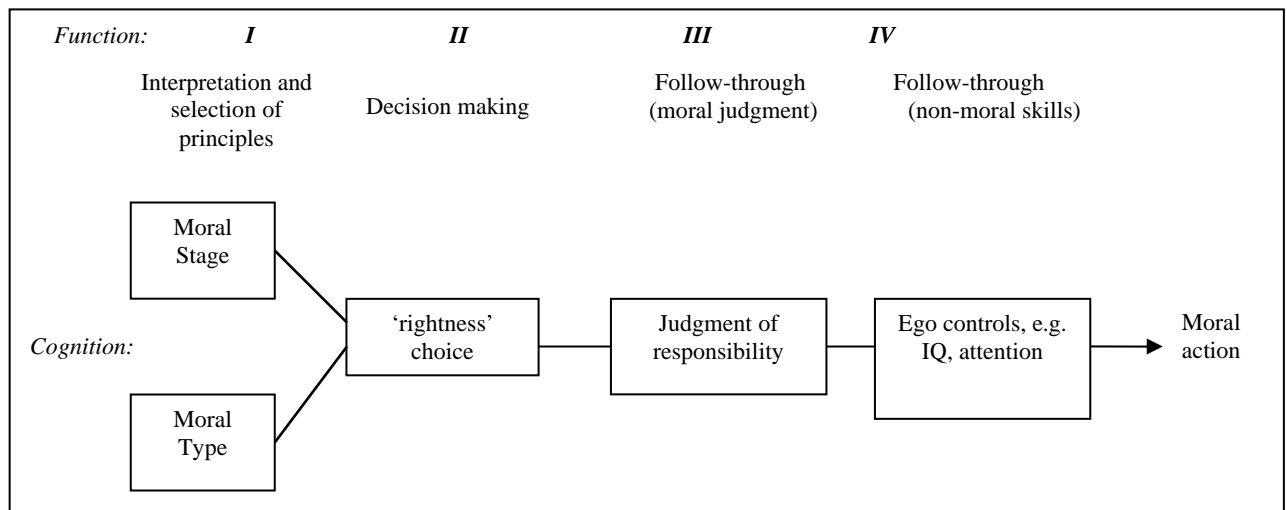


Figure Two: Kolberg/Candee Model of Moral Action (1984, p71)

Kolberg and Candee argue that moral stage and type will impact on the decision made as to the ‘rightness’ of a particular value or stance. This rightness will then impact on the responsibility to act and then non-moral skills such as attention and persistence will interact before action takes place. This theory fits well into the Hope model as shown in Figure One. It may be that the journey through Functions I to III, occurs during the outcome value phase of Hope Theory. The interactions that Kolberg and Candee (1995) ascribe to Function IV such as planning, persistence and goal focus are available to the individual through Hope. The suggestion therefore, is that when an individual is judging the outcome value to him/her of a particular goal, they are engaged in a moral judgement that will use an interaction of their moral stage and moral type. Understanding that people will have different outcome values due to their moral development levels should flag to entrepreneurs that multiple ways of presenting their vision would be appropriate.

USES OF HOPE

Prevention and Enhancement

Hopeful thinking can be aimed at either prevention or enhancement. Hope is useful in primary prevention i.e. preventing something that has not yet happened, or secondary prevention, interceding once

something had occurred. Hope Theory “provides a framework for both understanding and implementing effective prevention activities.” (Snyder et al 2000, p256)

Likewise Hope Theory can be used to undertake enhancement activities “aimed at making desired psychological or physical outcomes happen.” (Snyder 2000, p260) Primary enhancement activities are those which increase psychological and physical health. For example, hopeful thinking increases performance which in turn increases self esteem. On a societal level, “although hopeful thinking reflects a personal stance about a desired, changed future it starts from a base of perceived stability. (Rituals) all sustain hopeful thinking by reaffirming knowledge that one is part of a community.” (Snyder 2000, p262)

Secondary enhancement “refers to activities aimed at further enhancing the already positive levels of functioning and satisfaction which occurs at a temporal point after a primary level of enhancement has been obtained.” (Snyder 2000, p262) One of these secondary enhancements is the search for meaning. Hope Theory postulates that “a person constructs meaning in his or her life through self-reflection about important life goals and the perceived progress towards these goals.” (Snyder 2000, p262) This relationship between meaning and Hope has been tested psychologically and holds true.

False Hope

Some criticisms of Hope Theory are concerned with false hope. This can be broken into three parts, that:

- the expectations set by an individual or group rest on illusions rather than reality;
- unsuitable goals are being pursued; or
- the strategies to achieve the desired goals are poor. (Snyder 2002, p264)

Studies have shown that people with high Hope set their expectations in line with the boundaries that exist for them at the time. For example, as a patient’s disease progressed to a more deadly stage the level of hopeful thought abated, thus dispelling that notion that they were indulging in “wishful” thinking. Interestingly, Snyder has found that people with extreme reality distortion are very low in Hope, and that their illusions interfere with the attainment of desired goals.

Regarding the second criticism, the choice to set goals which are unobtainable is actually symptomatic of being low in Hope. Research has found that low Hoppers will set absurdly difficult goals in some parts of their lives, whilst setting very easy goals in most other parts. High Hope people will also set difficult goals, but they are just as likely to reach these goals. (Snyder, 2002)

False hope is defined by Kwon as “the state of having a desired goal and the motivation (i.e. agency) but not the plans to reach the goal.” (Snyder 2002, p268) Snyder’s research has consistently shown that high Hoppers will choose pathways that are good for the achievement of their goals; on the other hand, low Hope people will become avoidant, confused and ineffective in finding routes. Both behaviours become more pronounced under times of stress or surprise events.

A critique of Hope Theory rests upon the theory’s assumption of personal mastery of the world around us. There is little discussion of how individual goal setting and Hope levels impact in a collective sense, except where Snyder states that Hope Theory itself is value free and that it is the set goals that may be anti-social. (Snyder 2003, Snyder et al 2002, Snyder 2002) However, he says “the overwhelming majority of citizens are brought up so as to pursue goals that reflect the positive, accepted standards for society.” (Snyder 2002, p267) One could argue that this does not go far enough in a collective sense, that the setting of goals in this setting requires explicit discussion of the values which underpin them. A theory of Collective Hope would require a mechanism to resolve the inevitable conflicts that arise from competing hopes. (Braithwaite 2003, p10) Hence the need to link the decision about outcome value to the moral basis of the image or goal held.

In the POB arena there have been some moves towards testing Hope Theory in an organisational setting. Peterson and Luthans (2002) undertook research in a chain of fast food restaurants to evaluate the impact of a manager’s Hope score on his/her direct reports and work unit profitability. They measured the State Hope score of the manager prior to the monthly results for each work unit being released. At the same time, they asked the manager’s sub-ordinates to complete a job satisfaction survey. The results of the research showed that managers with high Hope scores reported better work unit results, and their

subordinates reported higher satisfaction measures as well. In addition, those managers with higher Hope scores had better staff retention than their low Hope counterparts.

HOPE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Jensen and Luthans undertook some exploratory research into entrepreneurship and Hope Theory. They wanted to evaluate the following propositions:

1. Hope levels can be used to distinguish between individuals who currently own or desire to own a business from those who express no interest in entrepreneurship.
2. Training interventions can enhance the Hope levels of entrepreneurs.
3. Entrepreneurs who possess higher Hope levels experience greater satisfaction and success with business ownership. (Jensen and Luthans 2002, p1698)

They make the point that entrepreneurship, as an area of study, has traditionally focussed on what is “wrong” with entrepreneurs and how to fix their weaknesses, rather than on what they do “right”. As in the positive psychology and organisational behaviour movements, they wanted to bring a new view to the entrepreneurship area.

The design of the research was based on a sample of individuals who were currently business owners, or expressed an interest in starting a business within 12 months. All participants took part in an eight hour training session, before and after which, they were asked to complete the Dispositional and State Hope Scales and items which related to their entrepreneurial experience and demographic questions. These scores were compared to a group of students in a business management course at a University, who were given the same instrument. What they found was:

1. Hope levels do distinguish entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs from others.
2. Hope levels were impacted by the training intervention.
3. Expressed business satisfaction is greater for entrepreneurs with high Hope levels.

Given the small sample sizes, thirty five in the first sample and seventy in the second, care must be taken when extrapolating results. There was, however, a statistical correlation in the levels of Hope reported and levels of entrepreneurship. The authors suggest that “research of the Hope construct may enhance our understanding of the entrepreneurial process by identifying individuals who may be better equipped to handle the rigours of business ownership”. (Jensen and Luthans 2002, p1700) It may also point to the relevant interventions in training and assisting entrepreneurs, to ensure that their goal setting, willpower and waypower are supported and developed.

TYPES OF HOPE

Individual Hope

Research has shown that Hope can be developed within individuals. High Hope thinking has positive effects on people’s relationships, health and self regard. Developing hopeful futures for individuals can utilise the insights from Hope theory to develop high hope thinking. The theory of Hope identifies low hope instead of hopelessness and has behavioural and cognitive methods for dealing with this. Unlike optimism/pessimism, Hope theory is not a disposition that can be positive or negative, it is a way of thinking that can be learned or not. This has implications for the individuals wishing to be entrepreneurs. As research has shown that having a high Hope score can lead to greater success, then it is the interests of would-be or budding entrepreneurs to ensure that they have developed their Hope levels.

Organisational Hope

Like individual Hope, groups can also exhibit high or low hope dependent upon the interiors of its members. A group of high Hope individuals will be more likely to work together and take into account the balance of individual and group goals. The shared goal is one which comes naturally to people who demonstrate high Hope thinking; in contrast, people with low hope will pursue their individual goals to the detriment of the group. Thus, it is in the best interest of organisations for the majority of their staff to be higher on the Hope Scale than not. High hope adults show greater sociability and enjoy interactions and networks. They are more able to take the perspectives of others. (Snyder et al 1997) Entrepreneurs who are

setting up or working with organisations need to be aware of the role Hope can play in the success or failure of their ventures. Teaching Hope building strategies to entrepreneurs can support this process.

LEARNING HOPE

If the individual does not have a high level of Hope, there are ways of engendering hopeful thinking in adults.

1. Goals

Goal directed thinking can be generated through making certain the goals being set are important to the individual rather than something set by others. The individual can then be sensitized to the decision making processes that surround the identification of important goals. There should be an array of goals, including those which stretch the abilities of the individual. These goals should be prioritised from least to most important in order to focus effort and enough time given to focus on the important goals. The moral basis of shared goals should be made explicit to assist the individuals within an organisation to align to them.

2. Agency

This is developed through the use positive self talk. Individuals should be encouraged to think of problems as challenges. They could be instructed to call upon past experiences to inform present challenges. An ability to laugh at one's circumstances is a useful tool especially at times when blockages appear. People with low levels of Hope need to learn to enjoy the process of goal attainment, and not just focus on the goal itself. If a goal is truly blocked, they should be encouraged to switch to a substitute goal which is more reachable.

3. Pathways thinking

The first step in this type of cognition is the ability to break a long range goal into smaller, short range goals and begin on working on the first most reachable goal to trigger positive emotions. Once the first goal has been achieved use a mental road map and include alternate routes to the goal in case of blockages or stressors. This can also entail mentally rehearsing successful pursuit of goals in order to anticipate blockages. If the goal pursuit is not successful, the individual should be encouraged to attribute this to strategy and actions rather than self blame and self doubt. They need to realise that self reliance can stifle pathways thinking, and remember to ask for help if it is needed.

HOPE THEORY AS A TEACHING TOOL

The development of successful entrepreneurs can be informed by Hope Theory by using the theory as a insight into how people cognitively set goals and work to achieve them. Whilst it may not correctly be called a methodology, Hope Theory, as presented here, can be used as a tool to frame teaching methods and processes, in the sense of acting as a contextual framework and as a process design check. It is also useful to investigate the behaviours being demonstrated by teachers of entrepreneurs: Are high Hope and attitudes being demonstrated? Are the academics involved in the development of entrepreneurs actually illustrating low Hope?

Framing

Teaching potential entrepreneurs to develop a powerful vision of a preferred future, that can act to energise the individuals around them to believe they can achieve it, will be far more enduring than simply articulating a goal with no way of identifying the pathway to achieving it or why it is important to move in the particular direction. Similarly, if an entrepreneur is to succeed in the present then s/he needs to have an outcome value for each individual involved in the venture which is greater than the effort expected to be expended to achieve it. This may come down to making sure that the people tasked with particular elements have an affinity to those elements and have not simply been given something to do because of their status or job description.

Hope Theory illustrates that a person's interiors will drive their exterior behaviour and performance irregardless of externalities in the organisation, and unless entrepreneurs take these interiors into account, their ventures may not reach their full potential.

Process design

Hope Theory used as a framework for designing curriculum and classroom delivery is valuable for academics and educators. Hope, with its three strand approach; goals, pathways and agency, can act as a template for processes both at a macro and micro level. Questions that could be asked to potential entrepreneurs cover issues such as: what are the pathways to achieving your goal? How are these contextualised? Where does your goal sit in the broader picture of society's values and goals? How will you sustain your high levels of empowerment?

Macro processes

An educator who is designing a program for delivery at any level can utilise the Hope generating techniques above to inform their selection of methods, processes and discussions utilised in the teaching format. If they understand that high Hope people will tend to act in certain ways when pursuing goals, this can inform their design process. Similarly, the research into low Hope behaviours is also illuminating and can be utilised to ensure that low Hope thinking behaviours are not encouraged through the design of the units and delivery of the classroom materials.

Micro processes

The strands of Hope Theory can be useful in process design for classroom activities. Utilising a design which identifies goals for the group or individuals, taking into account the differences in high and low type behaviours, then moving to a method which identifies pathways and helps students articulate their future visions will result in superior outcomes for students.

For example, a process that includes many low Hope students would need to take this into account when first conceiving of goals in a classroom or assessment setting. Those who are high Hope will take a goal and start to work out for themselves pathways for achieving it and will be energised by this process. Those who are low in Hope will find the goal setting process frustrating and uninspiring as they find themselves unable to either identify with the agency required or identify possible paths to follow. The educator can take this into account and work to ameliorate the effects of the low Hope thinkers through utilising the methods for generating pathways and agency thought. Entrepreneurs in the classroom need to be made aware of where they may be lacking in the Hope area – then focus in on what they do well, for instance their high energy and empowerment levels, and then suggest areas for improvement whether it be goal articulation or pathways development.

SO WHAT DOES HOPE THEORY AND AN IMAGE OF THE FUTURE BRING TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

The classic entrepreneur is resilient, energetic and driven. They have an idea, even one which may counter-intuitive to many around them and they pursue the opportunity. Hope Theory and foresight, through the image of the future, can help inform and support this process through buttressing the individual capabilities of entrepreneurs. Developing high Hope levels and an image of the future which they can share with others is a further step along the road of success, and educators of entrepreneurs are in the position to assist them in this endeavour. Once entrepreneurs understand that the main basis through which they communicate their vision is the shared moral basis of the image – values become central to the discussion.

One of the most attractive aspects of Hope Theory is that it can be learned at any age. Interventions designed to increase either pathways, willways or goal articulation will act in concert to deliver more successful outcomes. In addition, an appreciation by entrepreneurs that their actions and images of the future have a moral dimension, will assist them to more easily communicate their goals to others.

This paper has illustrated that Hope Theory has a high resonance for those individuals engaged in entrepreneurial endeavours. The theory can also inform curriculum and process design in the classroom, as well as indicating that there are some areas in which entrepreneurs can be assisted to develop in order to ensure their future success. The introduction of the role of the image of the future is also useful as entrepreneurs, in most cases, will attempt to influence those around them to support them or work with them in achieving their stated goals.

RESEARCH

This research generates a number of questions for future inquiry, some of which are discussed below.

Do Australian entrepreneurs have high hope?

Can the success or failure of entrepreneurial ventures in Australia be linked to Hope levels? Do Australian entrepreneurs have high Hope scores? If not, how can using Hope theory help address this issue?

Do entrepreneurial teaching programs attract high hoppers?

A useful question for research would be to investigate whether academics who teach entrepreneurs are showing high hope levels. Does the pattern they are portraying to their students indicate high or low Hope behaviour?

Does using high hope teaching methods increase hope levels in would-be entrepreneurs?

Can the methods indicated above, of designing curriculum and classroom processes with the factor of Hope in mind; have an effect on the Hope levels of the students? Can students who have an entrepreneurial idea and low Hope be coached into high Hope and therefore given a better start to their venture?

Can an installed foresight capacity raise Hope levels in entrepreneurs?

Are foresight and the development of images of the future, one way in which Hope levels can be raised in people generally, and entrepreneurs in particular? An installed foresight capacity allows an individual to choose to construct robust forward views, identify possible pathways, and to act with wisdom. Research into the effect of foresight education on the Hope levels of entrepreneurship students could be of interest to both fields.

Does having high hope result in more positive images of the future?

Is the ability to set goals and achieve them going to impact on the dystopian nature of visions of the future? Do high Hope visions of the future, if more positive; influence others with low Hope to have more positive visions? Can entrepreneurs encourage those around them to more positive images of their future?

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