Conference Paper

'Reintegrating socially excluded individuals through a social enterprise intervention'

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Abstract

This research project reveals participant perceptions of an employment enhancement programme, run by a social enterprise and designed to reintegrate socially excluded individuals into society. The research participants were the social entrepreneur, staff at the social enterprise, the programme attendees and a representative from an external referral agency. Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews with a researcher designed to elicit participant perceptions of the programme. Results of the analysis of the interviews revealed six emergent themes that were interpreted by the researchers as: 'social mission focus', 'heroic social entrepreneur', 'social impact', 'recidivism', 'the programme' and 'programme attendees'. Results of the analysis reveal that all research participants reported the programme helped to re-socialise the programme attendees and increased their self-confidence and self-esteem. Participants also believed programme attendees acquired important skills and qualifications in general warehouse activities and forklift truck driving, which would greatly increase their future employability. Programme attendees indicated the 'real world' working environment was important to their feelings of success on the programme. Social enterprise staff expressed concerns about potential 'mission drift' resulting from the demands of scaling up the logistics business to achieve the 'double bottom line'.

Introduction

Socially excluded individual's problems are often multi-faceted and it has long been recognised that a 'holistic' approach is required to assist them in their reintegration into society (Burnett, 2004; Cohen, 1985; Hannah-Moffat, 2005; McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Mawby, Crawley and Wright, 2010). As government increasingly looks towards social enterprises to provide some social services on a payment by results basis there comes with this policy direction an underlying need for evaluation of the social programmes private enterprises deliver. This paper begins with a review of literature that examines prior studies, which have undertaken the evaluation of intervention programmes with socially excluded individuals. Most of these prior studies have been conducted within a qualitative paradigm and the issues raised by this are discussed. The paper continues with an account of the potential problems of 'double bottom line' (i.e., balancing the pursuit of profit against fulfilling the social mission) and how this can lead to 'mission drift'. Following on from this, the role of the social entrepreneur is examined in particular the notion of the 'heroic entrepreneur' and his or her commitment to the social mission. In addition, the wisdom of relying on the social economy to return socially excluded individuals to the formal economy is questioned. The paper then reports the current research study, which investigated participant perceptions of an employment enhancement programme for socially excluded individuals delivered by a social enterprise. Finally, the current study's results are presented and discussed within the framework of the prior literature reviewed.

Literature Review

To date there is limited, methodologically sound, research on determining the efficacy of intervention programmes designed to support socially excluded individuals to reintegrate into society (Cleary *et al*, 2008). Socially excluded individual's lives are often described primarily in terms of expert discourses (Sullivan, 2005). An exploration of the socially excluded individual's experience of an intervention programme, within a qualitative paradigm, may uncover aspects not previously identified by experts as beneficial (Ritchie, Weldon, Macpherson and Laithwaite, 2010). Research (Ritchie *et al*, 2010) conducted within a qualitative paradigm, with five male patients who had completed a drug and alcohol relapse prevention programme in a special hospital, employed semi-structured interviews, which allowed the participants to reveal their own thoughts on the programme. Ritchie *et* al, (2010) reported that participants improved their communication skills, which led to increased self-confidence. The study also identified the aspects of the programme which were most beneficial from a patient's perspective. These benefits were reported by the patients as feelings of belonging with group members, developing a supportive 'therapeutic alliance', the learning, practice and implementation of coping, social and interpersonal skills. 'Staff attitudes' were also regarded as important to building a 'therapeutic alliance' and this drew attention to the need for staff to have adequate training and a positive attitude towards the patients to enable them to acknowledge the patients' specific needs (Rolfe and Cutcliffe, 2006; Ritchie *et al*, 2010). This latter finding is consistent with the findings of a study into offender rehabilitation (Ward and Brown, 2004). Results from Ritchie *et* al, (2010) are consistent with prior research by Finney and Monahan (1996), Ziedonis *et al*, (2005) and Horsfall *et al*, (2009), which all note the importance of developing social, conversational and problem-solving skills to improve quality of life and increase assertiveness to minimise future relapses into negative behaviours.

The above research by Ritchie *et al*, (2010) has limitations, which are acknowledged by the authors, and are based in the principles of subjectivity and reflexivity and the role of the researcher in the research process (Smith, 2004). In relation to reflexivity, Ritchie and colleagues acknowledge that the researcher's prior professional relationship with the participants could have influenced participants to give responses that would gain the interviewer's reassurance. In relation to subjectivity, association with the programme may have affected the researcher's interpretation of the results by the desire to portray the intervention programme in a positive light. Additionally, the artificial environment in a special hospital could have played a part in the participant's responses that would not be adhered to outside the confines of the special hospital.

It is generally acknowledged that evaluating the social impact performance of social enterprises is at least as important as measuring its viability but much more difficult to measure (Lane and Casile, 2011). When an organisation has two or three competing social missions, what to measure can be difficult to answer and should also take into consideration what would have happened without the social enterprise's intervention. Social enterprises also need to develop multi-dimensional performance measurement systems to evaluate the success of the specific environment in which they operate (Lane and Casile, 2011). McLoughlin *et al*, (2009) proposes the SIMPLE methodology (Social IMPact for Local Economies), which involves measuring *output, outcome* and i*mpact*. For instance, if the focus of the social mission is on prisoner rehabilitation, levels of recidivism (*output*), improvements in prisoners' psychological states of mind (*outcome*) and cost savings to society (*impact*) would all require measurement to be able to evaluate the success of any intervention

programme. In their conceptual paper, which maps out a framework for performance measurement in social entrepreneurship ventures, Lane and Casile (2011) report that of 14 empirical studies they reviewed, stories and testimonials of success were employed by 76 % of the social enterprises involved in their study, even though more rigorous evaluation tools were being experimented with. Lane and Casile (2011) propose this is because anecdotal evidence is easier to collect and interpret in situations when the definition of success is not clear or universally agreed upon. Lane and Casile, (2011) conclude that performance measurement for social entrepreneurs is fraught with complexity but should map the progress towards the completion of the social mission, which may require changes within the organisation and external constituencies (e.g. law makers and social opinion leaders).

Where profitability is necessary to fund the social mission there may be concern that the quest for profitability may detract enough from the social mission to deter its success, sometimes known as the conflict of the 'double bottom line' (Austin *et al,* 2006; Chell, 2007; Wallace, 1999). Profitability is important because it tempers the efforts towards the social mission and is a mediator between goals and performance (Alvord *et al,* 2004; Clark and Ucak, 2006; Light, 2008). However, if the social entrepreneur becomes too focused on financial goals at the expense of social goals this can result in the entrepreneur drifting away from the original social purpose of the enterprise, sometimes called 'mission drift' (Spear, *et al*, 2007; Heister, 2010; Mendel, 2003; Dart, 2004).

Attempting to reintegrate socially excluded individuals tends to be undertaken by compassionate, well-connected, persuasive, risk-taking social entrepreneurs (Leadbeater, 1997; Spinoza, *et al,* 1997). This type of social entrepreneur is often referred to as 'heroic', driving the social enterprise to tackle societal problems and being catalysts for social change (Dees, *et al,* 2001; Dart, 2004). Nicholls, (2006) describes these individuals as visionaries who will stop at nothing and he encourages their support. However, a cautionary note is proposed by Dym and Hutson (2005) who maintain that relying on an individual leader may not be as effective as having a group of people with varying aims. A prior study (Achleitner, Lutz, Mayer and Spiess-Knafl, 2013) examined the integrity of social entrepreneurs. This study reported five attributes for integrity, one of which was 'voluntary accountability efforts'. Achleitner, *et al* (2013) propose that openness to this attribute, especially in relation to willingness to allow outsiders to measure social impact, could indicate increased transparency in the social entrepreneur's commitment to the social mission. This finding supports Nicholls' view that disclosures of impact measurements serve to legitimize the existence of a social enterprise (Nicholls, 2005) even though it is acknowledged that social impact is hard to measure (Austin *et al,* 2006).

Prior ethnographic research, drawing evidence from a study of social enterprises in Bristol (Amin, 2009) raised the question of whether it was the role of the social economy to return the socially disadvantaged back into the formal economy. Amin (2009) concluded that this expectation could be misguided, unrealistic and overly ambitious. In Amin's study this viewpoint was exemplified by individuals with limited skills and experience, from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, volunteering for work experience as a way back into the mainstream economy. Many individuals were found to gain little from this experience in terms of motivation or employability because they lack interest, learn little and return to unemployment. Amin (2009) attributes this transition to work failure to their apathy and resentment, especially those who are there because they risk losing their benefits by refusing the opportunity. Examples of successful transition tend to be rare and mostly result when the venture itself is able to offer paid work (Amin, 2009).

<u>The current study</u>

The current study is conducted within a qualitative paradigm but addresses the issues of reflexivity and subjectivity raised by Ritchie, *et al,* (2010) through the interviewees having no prior relationship with the interviewers. The study investigates research participant perceptions of an employment enhancement programme delivered by a social enterprise.

The social enterprise (SE)

The SE provides a logistics service supplying affordable furniture to blue-chip companies in the UK. Financial surpluses made by the SE enable it to fulfil its social mission, which is to enable socially disadvantaged and excluded individuals to reintegrate into society and to provide financial support to local community projects. The SE helps excluded individuals increase their employability by engaging in an employment enhancement programme, which provides work experience/training in general warehouse skills. The social entrepreneur who founded the SE has recruited a team of employees, some of whom were employed after completing the employment enhancement programme, who share his vision for the SE.

The employment enhancement programme (EEP)

The EEP delivered at the social enterprise focuses on enhancing the employment prospects for its 'programme attendees' (PAs) by reintroducing them to the daily routine of work and the social interaction required in this 'real' working environment. The PAs engage in the work undertaken in the warehouse of the SE and learn by osmosis the skills required to be employed in this industry.

<u>Aims of the research</u>

The research seeks to reveal the research participants' perceptions of the EEP. Research participants include: the social entrepreneur, the EEP delivery team, the PAs and a representative from a local programme referral agency. The research participant perceptions will inform an evaluation of the EEP and examine the problems faced by social enterprises that base their social mission aims within their commercial enterprise.

<u>Method</u>

Participants

The total number of participants was twenty (N=20), consisting of 7 PAs; the social entrepreneur, eleven SE staff and 1 representative from a referral agency.

Procedure

All twenty participants engaged in an individual semi-structured interview with a researcher. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder, transcribed and analysed. During the semi-structured interviews, researchers developed conversations with the interviewees that covered subjects the interviewees regarded as important to them. This process was employed in order to allow the emergence of issues considered important by the interviewees not directly addressed by the researchers' original questions.

Analysis

The method employed to analyse the twenty transcribed interviews was 'Constant Comparative Method' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Constant comparative method is an iterative procedure designed for the qualitative analysis of text and is based on 'Grounded Theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory methodology provides a set of analytic techniques that have been assimilated into most approaches to qualitative research (McLeod, 1995). Writers such as Lofland & Lofland (1984); Yin (1989); Patton (1990) and Miles & Huberman (1994) have defined stages in qualitative analysis based on grounded theory that depend on the systematic application of five fundamental ideas: immersion, categorisation, phenomenological reduction, triangulation and interpretation. During immersion, 90 discernibly different concepts (units of analysis) emerged from the data, for example, 'pleasant working environment'; 'route to employment'; 'social mission alignment' (see Appendix A for a complete list). During categorisation, 18 categories emerged from the 90 units of analysis. During 'phenomenological reduction', six 'themes' emerged from the 18 'categories' (see Appendix B for a diagrammatic illustration of this process).

Results and discussion

The six participant viewpoint themes that emerged from the interviews were interpreted by the researchers as: 'social mission focus', 'heroic social entrepreneur', 'social impact', 'recidivism', 'the programme' and 'programme attendees'. Participant quotations supplied below are examples of statements that support researcher interpretations of the themes and are attributed according to the following 'key': SE= social entrepreneur; S= staff; PA= programme attendee; RA= referral agency representative.

Themes

Theme A: Social Mission Focus

All research participants had a very broad perception of the SE's social mission, which seemed to encompass everything from the reintegration into society of socially excluded individuals from a very wide range of exclusion backgrounds to giving financial support to community projects.

> '[Name of social enterprise] *is obviously developed to make sure that it's an operation that can also support community projects, so as long as we can continue to do that, then we carry on. I think the more that we can support, and the more help that we can give people, the better in my mind.'* (S5)

The very broad perception of the focus of the social mission contributed to difficulties in evaluating its success because of the wide variability of the success criteria. This viewpoint is supported by research, which reported the difficulties of measuring the success of social missions especially when an organisation has two or three competing social missions (Lane and Casile, 2011). At the current study's SE there was no real attempt to engage in objective evaluation.

> *'With people on the course we can't always tell exactly how well they've done, I don't really have a big de-briefing session with them, to ask the sort of thing that you were*

asking. In some ways, you would know more from speaking to the people here than I do.' (S4)

Also, the social entrepreneur did not understand the importance of keeping basic records on the numbers of attendees passing through the programme and preferred to rely upon his personal observations of the success achieved by PAs.

'I don't really understand fully what the measurements do. I'd rather see people changing their lives than statistics telling me whose lives have been changed.' (SE)

Reluctance on behalf of the social entrepreneur to engage in 'voluntary accountability efforts' by outsiders could be interpreted as potentially undermining the external perception of his integrity and the legitimacy of the social enterprise (Achleitner, *et al,* 2013; Nicholls, 2005).

The SE's unfocussed social mission also contributed to PAs, from hugely varied backgrounds, being enrolled on the programme. Enrolling PAs, some with very low levels of motivation and ability, caused problems for warehouse staff in balancing their dual roles of PA support/training and warehouse staff.

'Sometimes when you're busy it's worse because you've got to stop doing and show them, and then you've got to stop again and show them again, and you've got to get on, you've got too much to do and then it can be a pain.' (S7)

Prisoners on release were identified as good, highly motivated workers but the unemployed were perceived as unmotivated and difficult to work with exacerbating the staff's ability to balance their dual role.

'I think one of the best set of attendees we have are from the prison, spot on, absolutely brilliant. The lads [warehouse staff] *love to see them turn up in the morning, because they know they're going to work like anything.'* (S4)

Poor PA motivation and balancing staff roles discussed above supports prior research, which indicates social enterprises can have problems with achieving their 'double bottom line' resulting in 'mission drift' (Amin, 2009: Austin *et al,* 2006; Spear *et al,* 2007). Some of the staff also questioned the wisdom of trying to help PAs with severe mental health problems.

'I think some of them that have been here have got [mental health] *problems that I don't think working here would ever help. They've got problems deep down, and I don't think that would help, no matter what they done working here.'* (S7)

This issue highlights the importance of adequate training and positive attitude in building a 'therapeutic alliance' as reported by Ritchie *et al,* (2010).

The quotations presented above support the researcher interpretation of the theme 'social mission focus' and reveal that the social mission focus for this SE is far too broad. Trying to support such a wide range of socially excluded individuals would be difficult for a group of trained professionals. For warehouse employees, with no specific social support training, the task is monumental. Also, the warehouse staff still must perform their warehousing tasks at a sufficient level to ensure the financial success of the logistics business, which provides the financial surplus to pay for the social mission.

Theme B: Heroic Social Entrepreneur

During the interview with the Social Entrepreneur it became evident that he was a man of vision and passion. His vision was to scale up the logistics part of the SE, to provide profit and opportunity to develop the social mission, He firmly believes he is someone who can present his vision and inspire others to believe in it. He doesn't see the need to record any documented evidence that the social mission is succeeding. Indeed, the logistics business appears to be growing and the social mission is being engaged with but social impact was neither being evaluated nor documented. The quotations presented below indicate the social entrepreneur's vision and how his charismatic presentation of it inspires the staff to support the vision even though there was no objective, documented evidence that the social mission was being fulfilled.

> *'You know I want it* [SE] *to be a proper organisation that will develop and grow, and provide this type of benefit in different places. Is it ever going to be churning out thousands of people a week being retrained? No, because that is not what I believe. I don't just want to be another organisation out there chasing funding and producing certificates.'* (SE)

> *'I mean we're doing I think three or four lorry loads a week at the moment, but then we'll be looking at multiple lorries a day if all of* [the social entrepreneur's] *plans come in. The next months, are going to be very busy.'* (S3)

> '[the social entrepreneur] *talks about wanting to go national, so it will mean that there will be more* [name of social enterprise] *dotted around and about the country.'* (S5)

> *'Well it's only going to go up isn't it? I've known* [the social entrepreneur] *quite a few years, I knew him when he first started, and it was very, very basic, and it's gone from strength to strength, and I hope to be part of it.'* (S11)

> *'I think* [the social entrepreneur] *deserves a lot of credit for what he and the other guys have done. They've come in, they've set this up, and they're hell bent on making it. Certainly* [the social entrepreneur] *is like the Messiah,'* (S2)

> *'He's* [the social entrepreneur] *always had a passion for it, and I think he'll get knighted for it, I really do, honestly do.'* (S4)

> *'It is a fantastic idea,* [name of social enterprise], *and* [the social entrepreneur], *bless his heart, he's such a caring guy and he does so much for the community. I absolutely love working for* [the social entrepreneur].' (S6)

> *'I'm having conversations with* [the social entrepreneur], *I can see what he wants to achieve, and I think that's good. I started here as an agency temp because I was made redundant from my last job. I started here full time in December, and I'm still here and it's June.'* (S9)

It is clear from the above quotations that the SE's staff, believe in the social entrepreneur and his vision. The use of phrases like for example, *'is like the messiah'* and *'he'll get knighted for it'* reveal the extent to which the social entrepreneur is regarded as a 'heroic' figure. The participants' perception of the social entrepreneur resonates with descriptions in the reviewed

literature as a heroic figure that tackles societal problems by being a catalyst for change (Dees *et al,* 2001; Dart, 2004). However, as indicated in the literature there are potential problems for social enterprises that rely upon an individual leader rather than a group of people with varying aims (Dym and Hutson, 2005).The problem in this case is that this level of 'hero worship', based largely upon the social entrepreneur's descriptions of financial success and the fulfilment of the social mission is not being confirmed by objective evaluation conducted by outside agencies.

Theme C: Social Impact

In the case of this SE, the fact that there is no attempt to document the impact of the social mission doesn't mean that impact is not occurring. The intuitive anecdotal evaluations, made on a casual basis by the members of staff, the social entrepreneur and external agency, are supported by the evidence revealed through the current research process. The participant interviews revealed evidence of *'output', 'outcome'* and *'impact'. Output* is evidenced by PAs being awarded a forklift driving licence or acquiring warehouse skills. O*utcome* is evidenced by PA declaration of increased confidence, self esteem, work ethic and enhanced social skills. Also, the external agency representative alludes to *impact* (e.g. the impact on wider society that can be measured in financial terms) sometimes measured through SROI procedures. It is interesting to note that *output* is reported by staff but not by PAs, *outcome* is reported by both staff and PAs and *impact* is reported by the RA representative.

Output (staff)

> *'I think everyone who's come so far has had a fork lift license out of us. I think it's quite important to have a reasonably useful skill when you leave as well, Now they leave with a fork lift license, then they're much more employable.'* (S3)

> *'Never done it* [assembled flat pack furniture] *before, he's been shown the rudiments of how to do it, has picked it up. He's developed a set of skills that would be transferable to a job somewhere.'* (S4)

Outcome (PAs)

> *'I think the main thing I have is a confidence issue when I talk to people. A while ago it was really hard for me to just talk to a random person out of the blue. But at the moment, I'm ok for this. I didn't used to be able to get jokes at all, before I started, but now I think I understand a bit better, when people take the mick out of other people and when they take the mick out of me, I kind of originally didn't like that, I took offence to everything anyone would say to me. But now I understand when they're messing around or being serious.'* (PA5)

> *'From my perspective obviously being an ongoing prisoner, I feel like I've generated back into a social network, you know what I mean?'* (PA2)

Outcome (staff)

> 'H*e was from the prison and he came and he was a work shy, a lazy so and so and then over the time he sort of came to appreciate doing work. He sort of became, I*

don't know, addicted to work, for want of a better term. I think that's broadly really what happens here.' (S3)

'So you've got young lads, nineteen, twenty, who have never done a day's work since they left school. But you can see them changing and benefiting from it. They start getting a bit of a work ethic, and it's nice to see that by the end of the time they leave.' (S4)

'And the last four weeks, they [a group of PAs] *were part of a group of people, and everybody treats them as a part of a group. You can see them, like the shoulders go up and the heads go up. All of a sudden, amongst all these grown men they're standing beside them, doing the same as them and being appreciated for it. Which is nice, it's nice to see.'* (S10)

Impact (RA)

'[Name of prisoner] *is probably going to be leaving in a couple of weeks, going home, but this is a forty two, forty three year old fella that's had serious, severe previous history of criminality, but he's turned himself right around with four or five months at* [name of social enterprise] *fantastic.'* (RA)

The above quotations reveal the positive results being achieved through the social mission. It would be a relatively simple process for the social enterprise to record the number of PAs passing through their programme and the successes achieved in terms of *output and outcome*. The o*utcome* evidenced above could be collected in the future at the SE during an exit interview with the PA on the final day of the EEP. However, if interviews were conducted by staff members, the results could be open to criticisms of reflexivity and subjectivity (Smith, 2004). Perhaps employing an outside agency to conduct the interviews and collate the results would improve the validity of the evaluation. The *outcome* evidence revealed in the current study supports the results of prior research (Ritchie *et al,* 2010; Finney and Monahan, 1996; Ziedonis *et al,* 2005; Horsfall *et al,* 2009). *Impact* would be a more complex evaluation but an SROI evaluation could be commissioned in partnership with the external agencies involved. However, there is a problem at the SE because the social entrepreneur lacks the motivation to initiate these procedures. Also, his 'heroic' status may prevent staff perceiving the need for evaluation of the social mission, which is one disadvantage of relying on an individual leader as opposed management by a group of people with varying aims (Dees, *et al,* 2001; Dart, 2004).

Theme D: Recidivism

One anticipated result of prisoners completing the EEP is a reduction in their recidivism. This would be an *impact* measure and best measured through quantitative procedures. This would require a longitudinal study of the prisoners that pass through the programme to reveal their recidivism rate and therefore the potential success of the programme from an *impact* perspective. Although, to date, there has been no *impact* measure focused on recidivism initiated at the SE, the interviews with the prisoner PAs and the referral agency representative reveal their thoughts on this subject.

Prisoners' views

> *'I think it's got me back into the community, like rehabilitation, back into the community, that's the main thing innit? That's what I want to do, get back into the community. Yeah, it feels good, because the main thing is to get out of prison. If I could do weekends here* [at the social enterprise] *I would because I don't want to go back to prison.'* (PA4)

The prisoners at the SE expressed a desire to be reintegrated into society and not to reoffend. They maintained that support from prison and social enterprise staff is crucial to helping them achieve this goal. Prisoner PAs also indicate that fellow prisoners need to be ready to benefit from this support. This is what differentiates between them and those prisoners who are career criminals. This qualitative evidence is useful but would require the support of quantitative and statistical evidence produced from a longidinual quantitative study with a larger cohort of prisoner PAs to be persuasive in a bid for something like a social impact bond contract (Disley, Rubin, Scraggs, Burrowes, and Culley, 2011).

Referral agency representative's view

The RA representative indicated the multifaceted nature of the prisoners' problems and how a cycle of recidivism can be set in motion. He also indicated his support for the prisoners' notion of 'readiness' for reintegration programmes. In addition to this, the RA representative outlines some of the reasons why prisoners find themselves in the situation they are in and offers mitigating circumstances that should be taken into consideration. He advocates an early intervention system if the cycle of recidivism is to be broken.

> *'There are three or four key factors with the prisoner. Can't read, can't write, can't get a job, can't get a bank account, and can't get a house. So, if you can tap into any of those areas, you're breaking that cycle and making it immediately easier for that guy to settle down. He comes out of prison and he's got no idea how he's going to break that cycle, he doesn't know. So he goes straight back to the street, or he goes straight back to his mates, straight back to the peer pressure, and he's back on the cycle of re offending again. We've got to break those key factors.'* (RA)

> *'If a guy's doing a two year sentence, we've started to capture them as soon as they come in on induction, we formulate a sentence plan, which they start working on immediately, as opposed to in years gone by, you lock a prisoner up and you don't touch him until he's three months ready to go out, then you start looking at him, and actually he's wasted eighteen months of inside.'* (RA)

> *'And part of my role also is assessing their suitability for making that change, i.e., this prisoner might be eligible to go and work outside on a license, but is he ready to make the fundamental change of breaking the cycle of re offending?'* (RA)

The views stated above resonate with the findings of research that reported the multifaceted nature of prisoners' problems once on release (Burnett, 2004; Cohen, 1985; Hannah-Moffat, 2005; McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Mawby, Crawley and Wright, 2010). It is also interesting to note the agreement between the PAs and the RA representative relating to the readiness of prisoners to be able to benefit from this kind of EEP

Theme E: The programme

The EEP is very flexible with PAs engaged from a minimum period of two weeks up to, in one or two cases, six months. The average programme length is four to six weeks. There is no set curriculum and learning takes place in the warehouse environment. PAs are supported in their learning of warehousing and social skills by working alongside permanent warehouse staff. Some PAs also had the opportunity to study for and take an exam to gain a forklift driving licence and a health and safety certificate. The quotations below give an indication of how the programme was perceived by both the warehouse staff and the PAs.

Warehouse staff perceptions

> *'When they* [PAs] *start out they've no idea what we do here but as they come in and they do a days' work, it's the same as anyone else would. So they will obviously gain the skills for picking, packing, warehousing, receiving deliveries, checking stock and recovering product. It can be whatever's happening during the day, that's what they're involved in along with everyone else.....'It's more about the social side of it. It's just about communication and integration everyone's friendly, everyone's always there if someone needs some help and support. That's what we're here for.'* (S5)

The above response by a member of the warehouse staff indicates the importance that they put on the social communication aspect that the programme facilitates, which is supported by the findings of research by Ritchie, *et al*, (2010); Finney and Monahan, (1996); Ziedonis, *et al,* (2005); Horsfall, (2009) that indicated the importance of developing conversational and problem solving skills to increase assertiveness, which can reduce the risk of a relapse into prior negative behaviour patterns.

PA's perceptions

> *'Since I've been here, I've got a feeling of wantingness, someone wants me, someone needs me to do something and everything like that, instead of like, feeling that nobody wants me.'* (PA1)

> *'It's just being by the side of somebody as it's being done, and they're showing me, and I just took it from there. Since I've been here I've learned how to order pick, think ahead on, re palletising, think ahead of how to actually put a consignment together on the pallet so that it's easiest to be picked later on when you're picking. If you're willing to learn, there are more than enough people here willing to teach you.'* (PA2)

> *'They say that I'm a hard worker. The best one* [feedback comment] *I've had was "You're something special", so yes…… When they say comments like that, it makes me feel really good about myself. We have a laugh, we're all just in the warehouse, I do my job, and the time flies when you're doing it. It's all good in my eyes because it changed me for the good. I do* [feel part of a team] *because they actually respect me 'cos I'm a hard worker'* (PA3)

Although there is no formal structure to the programme the above quotations reveal how the PAs learn the warehouse skills, are re-socialised and are given confidence by interacting with the permanent warehouse staff in a 'real' working environment. Through receiving positive feedback and being treated with respect, a nurturing and supportive learning environment is

created. It is clear that the PAs welcome this and feel it brings about a change for the good in them. PA description of their perceived increases in confidence derived from developing their communication skills is supported by prior research (Ritchie, *et al*, 2010) where participants reported similar increases in self-confidence.

Theme F: Programme attendees (PAs)

The quotations that follow give an indication of the typical background of a programme attendee and how that background impacts upon their outlook on life. They also demonstrate how being treated with respect and given a job with some responsibility can raise a PA's self-esteem and begin to reintegrate them into society. PA1 describes his family background and how this background impacted on his self-esteem. He then describes how the impact of long-term unemployment exacerbates his situation. Finally, he indicates the very positive change in his outlook once he was given an opportunity to gain employment.

> *'I mean coming up with five brothers and three sisters, it's like a big massive family, and I took it bad when my mum and dad split up. I was kicking teachers, kicking people and everything else, and they said: "We'll have to put you into care". Being told you're a waste of space and you're a scrounger and all the rest of it, it don't feel good at all.'* (PA1)

> *'When I wasn't getting the work in, it felt as if: "what's the point in getting up, what's the point in life, what's the point of doing this?"......because living on the dole, it's not good. It's not good but that's what the dole does to you. It literally makes you, well times you literally want to kill yourself, because you feel worthless, you know, you don't feel like you've got a sense of being. I mean you haven't got the get up and go like you have now.'* (PA1)

> *'Since coming here, it's actually given me a purpose, I've actually wanted to do the work, wanted to get up in the morning, having something to do, instead of thinking, 'oh no, another boring day, let's play the computer'* (PA1)

The quotations above demonstrate the EEP has had a very positive influence on this particular PA and supports research that indicates developing a 'therapeutic alliance' between staff and PAs can result in increased coping, social and interpersonal skills (Ritchie, *et al*, 2010). But some of the other PAs describe the programme as a 'safe environment' and this suggests that for some PAs, although the programme works for them while they are at the SE, they may still have issues being reintegrated into wider society. PA3 (see below) describes a typical day prior to attending the programme and how he has transformed his outlook but he articulates an underlying dependence upon the SE.

> '[Before attending the programme] *I weren't that keen on getting one* [a job]. *I woke up, guaranteed I'd probably have a dodgy cigarette and then just not be bothered for the rest of the day, going out and looking for a job. And then, now, it's just like: "I want a job", and hopefully if it's here* [at the social enterprise], *it's here, cos I know everyone here, and they all get on with me, so we'll just have to see.'* (PA3)

This feeling of dependence is reinforced by PA5 and may indicate that expecting this type of programme to return the socially disadvantaged back into the formal economy is misguided, unrealistic and overly ambitious as reported by Amin, (2009).

> *'I've gotten used to being around here* [the social enterprise]*, I know how they operate, and I've gotten to know the staff and everything, and they know me. I think if I moved to somewhere else, I'd have to make new relationships with other people, which for me with Aspergers, that's quite difficult.'* (PA5)

Furthermore, Amin (2009) claims that examples of successful transition are rare and tend to only occur when the venture itself is able to offer paid work. This has been the case with several of the permanent warehouse staff who attended the current study's social enterprise's EEP prior to their employment by the SE.

Summary

The theme 'Social Mission Focus' highlights a major problem for the SE. Dual social aims of giving financial support to local community projects and supporting individuals with such a wide range of social exclusion problems, may not be a sufficiently focused social mission to result in the its sustainability. This very broadly focused mission undertaken with staff not trained in dealing with PAs with such complex problems, could produce difficulties for staff in balancing their dual roles of PA support and warehouse duties. Erring on the side of PA support could undermine the profitability of the logistics business (i.e. 'double bottom line' problem). Erring on the side of warehouse duties could lead to reduced PA support and 'mission drift'. The theme 'Heroic Social Entrepreneur' reveals how the social entrepreneur, described by one member of staff as a messianic figure, has gathered around him a group of 'disciples' who believe in his vision and the efficacy of social mission. This may be a situation that engenders cohesion and motivation to make the social mission succeed but is devoid of any sense of objectivity. The theme 'Social Impact' provides some empirical evidence of successful *outcomes* particularly from the perspective of 7 PAs attending the EEP during the period of the research project. The gathering and documenting of this evidence needs to be continued with future cohorts of PAs to ensure the social mission is being achieved. The evidence provided from the perspective of the social entrepreneur and the members of staff supports the PA's perspective and suggests successful *outcomes* have and will continue to result from the EEP. Another problem for the social enterprise is that *output* success is not being systematically recorded. In addition to this, there is no system in place to record the precise number of PAs attending the EEP. Recording this data is essential to providing continuing evidence of the success of the social mission. The theme 'Recidivism' although specific to only one section of the PAs (i.e. prisoners on release) provides some evidence of intent from the prisoner PAs and is supported by the RA representative. However, this needs to be verified through longitudinal quantitative research to prove reduction in recidivism rates for prisoners on this programme. This would require more precise record keeping to be initiated at the SE. The main barrier to this is the attitude of the social entrepreneur, who doesn't value these procedures. In fairness, the programme's strength seems to be the personal level of support given to PAs in a 'real' working environment, which will always require small numbers of individuals on the programme. It is doubtful that the numbers required to conduct quantitative research, with statistically significant results, could be achieved within this environment. The theme 'The Programme' demonstrates the difficulties that the members of the warehouse staff have balancing their warehouse duty workload with their 'teaching' roles. Nevertheless, the PAs report very

positive *outcomes* related to self-esteem, respect, and socialisation while learning warehouse skills. There is evidence that a 'real' employment environment is the only way to learn warehousing skills. This may be the case but it limits the potential to scale up the social programme. This system of delivering the programme would require a very large scaling up of the logistics business for the SE to be able to afford to support a significant increase in the numbers of PAs passing through the EEP. The theme 'Programme Attendees' demonstrates the success this programme can have with individuals who have experienced high levels of social exclusion. It also reveals the danger of PA dependence upon the specific SE and raises the question 'Are the newly acquired social skills and confidence transferable to different working environments? If not, this could seriously undermine the *outcome* benefits claimed for the EEP. The only way to test this hypothesis would be by continued monitoring of the PAs when they leave the programme. This continued monitoring would be a necessary part of evaluating the success of the programme but would require a commitment to evaluation that is not yet part of the future plans for this social enterprise.

Conclusions

The social enterprise should have a more focused social mission. Perhaps specialising in prisoners on release, who are reported in this study to have most success on the programme. Record keeping processes should be instigated to record the number of attendees passing through the programme. *Output* data for these attendees should be documented and *outcome* data recorded alongside this. By keeping these records over a number of years and periodically checking on the status of the PAs who have left the programme into different situations, statistically significant evidence based on large numbers of PAs could be accumulated. This statistical data could then form the basis of robust empirical evidence to validate the success of the programme and prepare it to apply for a SIB. The social enterprise should constantly monitor the balance between scaling up the logistics business and the delivery of the social mission to avoid the pressure from 'double bottom line' difficulties leading to the possibility of 'mission drift'.

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1. Pleasant working environment
2. Route to Employment
3. Social Mission Alignment
4. Employment Acclimatisation
5. Clean slate
6. Equality
7. Reform
8. Improved Employability
9. Office/Warehouse Disconnect
10. Double-bottom Line
11. Aligned Progression
12. Nurturing
13. Staff Mentoring
14. Belief in Business Plan
15. Re-socialisation
16. Confidence building
17. Work ethic
18. Monitoring
19. Warehousing Skills
20. Qualifications
21. Induction Policy
22. Output Success Criteria
23. Future Plans
24. Heroic Figure
25. Staff Motivation
26. Prior Experience
27. Motivation
28. Criminal Legacy
29. Job-seeking Self-efficacy
30. Benefits of Work Experience
31. Training Agency Support
32. Unemployment System
33. Sanctions
34. Criminality
35. Prison Support
36. Family Responsibility
37. Qualification Afterglow
38. Biographical Background
39. External Locus of Control
40. Psychological Effects of Unemployment
41. Rejection
42. Self-esteem
43. Inclusivity
44. Teamwork
45. Supportive Environment
46. Emotional Response
47. Self-evaluated Output
48. Learning by Osmosis

49. Sense of Responsibility
50. Aspiration
51. Dependency
52. Positive Experience
53. Lack of Acknowledgement
54. De-motivated Attendees
55. Dual Environment
56. Prison Regime
57. Training
58. Reoffending
59. Lack of Suitability
60. Suitability
61. Poor Communication
62. Programme Structure
63. Multiple Roles
64. Diversity of PAs Problems
65. Attendance Problems
66. Diversity of PAs
67. Outcome Success Criteria
68. Business/Social Mission Development Conundrum
69. Lack of Evaluation
70. Social Networks
71. Visionary Practicality
72. Unstructured Social Mission
73. Resource Management
74. University Relationship
75. PA Informed of Social Mission
76. Breaking the Cycle
77. Recidivist Readiness
78. Risk-assessment
79. Impact Success Criteria
80. Lack of Employer Engagement
81. Conflicted Mission
82. 'Siloed' Offender Management
83. The Economy
84. Personal Responsibility
85. Effects of Positive Feedback
86. Well-being
87. Vicious Circle
88. Low Cost of Learning by Osmosis
89. Lack of Accreditation
90. Financial Independence

Appendix B – Phases of CCM Analysis for the Goodwill Solutions Interview Data:
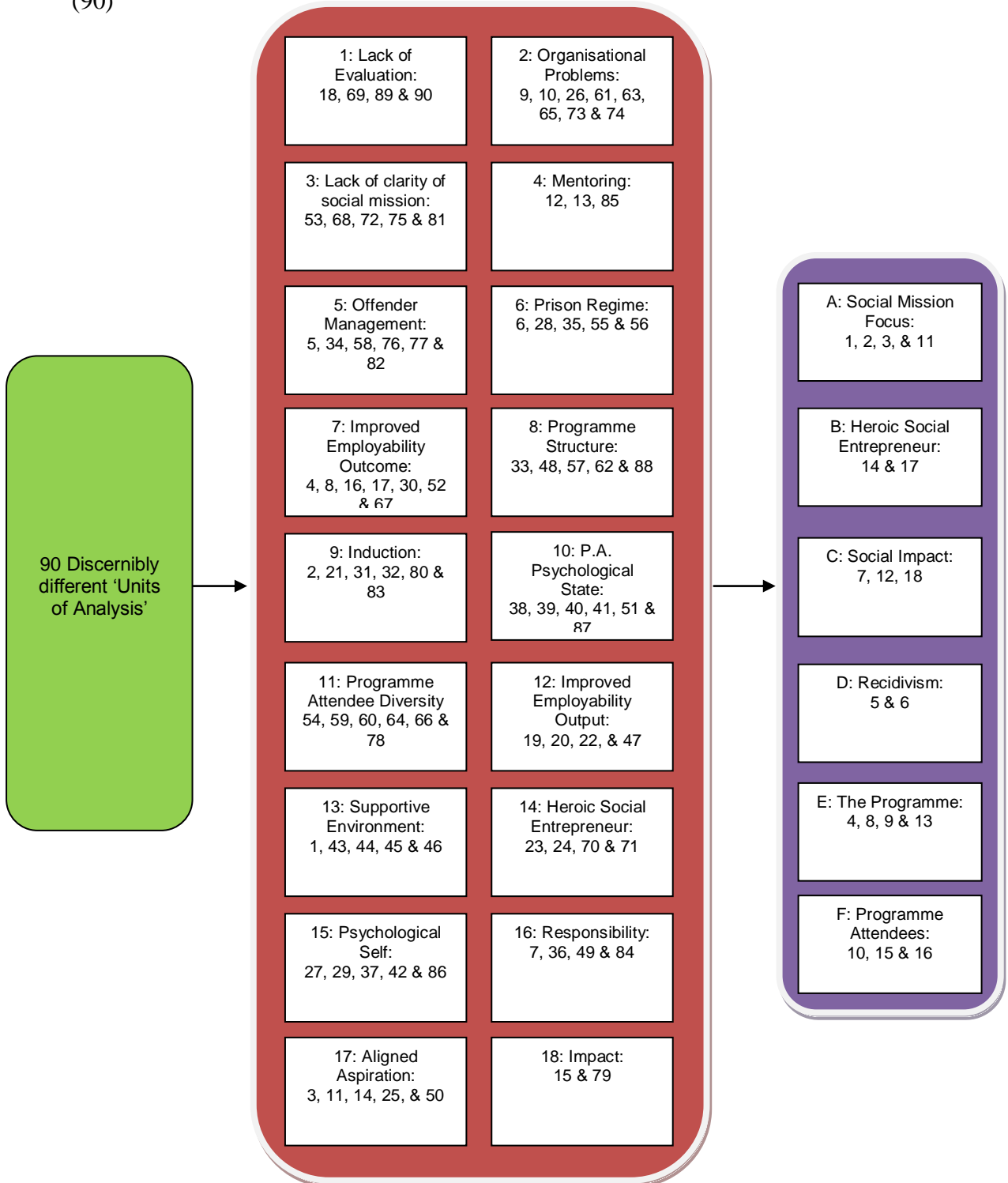
Immersion	**Categorisation**	**Phenomenological Reduction**
Units of Analysis (90)	Categories (18)	Themes (6)

90 Discernibly different 'Units of Analysis'

Categories:

1: Lack of Evaluation: 18, 69, 89 & 90

2: Organisational Problems: 9, 10, 26, 61, 63, 65, 73 & 74

3: Lack of clarity of social mission: 53, 68, 72, 75 & 81

4: Mentoring: 12, 13, 85

5: Offender Management: 5, 34, 58, 76, 77 & 82

6: Prison Regime: 6, 28, 35, 55 & 56

7: Improved Employability Outcome: 4, 8, 16, 17, 30, 52 & 67

8: Programme Structure: 33, 48, 57, 62 & 88

9: Induction: 2, 21, 31, 32, 80 & 83

10: P.A. Psychological State: 38, 39, 40, 41, 51 & 87

11: Programme Attendee Diversity 54, 59, 60, 64, 66 & 78

12: Improved Employability Output: 19, 20, 22, & 47

13: Supportive Environment: 1, 43, 44, 45 & 46

14: Heroic Social Entrepreneur: 23, 24, 70 & 71

15: Psychological Self: 27, 29, 37, 42 & 86

16: Responsibility: 7, 36, 49 & 84

17: Aligned Aspiration: 3, 11, 14, 25, & 50

18: Impact: 15 & 79

Themes:

A: Social Mission Focus: 1, 2, 3, & 11

B: Heroic Social Entrepreneur: 14 & 17

C: Social Impact: 7, 12, 18

D: Recidivism: 5 & 6

E: The Programme: 4, 8, 9 & 13

F: Programme Attendees: 10, 15 & 16

NB. The numbers displayed above in Figure 1 in the 'categories' boxes correspond to the relevant units of analysis contained in that category. The numbers in the 'themes' boxes correspond to the relevant category contained in that theme.