

## ≈ SUMMARY ≈

**TEACHING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS TO CONFUCIAN HERITAGE CULTURAL BACKGROUND STUDENTS***Ravi Bhat & Alex Maritz**School of Management & Entrepreneurship, Unitec, Auckland.***Principal Topic***Entrepreneurship theory and practice*

The significant growth in one knowledge-driven service industry, ie tertiary education, has resulted in Universities seeking international students not only for financial awards but also to bring in a diversity of norms and cultures to enrich the learning experience. The increase in migration from Asian countries as per Legat (1996) in the mid-nineties, has resulted in non-English speaking background (NESB) students entering Tertiary Institutes in large numbers, more so in the Australian and New Zealand market. This trend continues with more international fee paying students (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998). More than 75,000 foreign students studied in New Zealand last year, earning the country \$2.5 billion and making education the fourth-largest export earner. Nearly 80% of all foreign fee paying students are from Asia and as described by Biggs (1996) of Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC).

At Unitec in Auckland, more than 60% of the students enrolled in the Business Faculty are international students. With this dramatic increase in our classrooms of international students, the challenge for educational institutions and teachers is to be able to adopt innovative teaching strategies that meets the legitimate needs and expectations of this group of international CHC students. This is even more so pronounced in the entrepreneurial programs at Unitec like the Bachelors (BBIE) and Master of Business in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MBIE), because as social scientists have postulated (Weber, 1964), Confucianism is hostile to entrepreneurship. Schaper and Volery (2004) highlight factors that are most commonly cited for entrepreneurship to occur, being an individual, an act, an organization and innovation. International students with a CHC background belong to collectivist societies (Hofstede, 1991) where personal relationships and contacts, the much cherished “guan-xi” play an important role. This conflicts directly with the definition of an entrepreneur (Hisrich, 2004; Kurato & Hodgetts, 2004; Kao, 2002) where individualism, self reliance and self-interest are emphasized. Therefore does overcoming the mindset of CHC students towards learning via academic programs on how to be an entrepreneur become a challenge in the classroom? This paper sets the base for further discussion and research on this issue.

**Methodology/Key Propositions**

This paper suggests that teaching entrepreneurship programs specifically to CHC students in a “Western” academic environment could be a challenge and a literature review is conducted to determine if differing cultures result in dissimilar attributes that identify an entrepreneur and the ides of entrepreneurship. Literature is reviewed in the areas of:

- Definition of entrepreneurship
- Western concepts of entrepreneurial traits and psychology
- Chinese entrepreneurial values and differences in the idea of entrepreneurship between the West and the East.

### **Results and Implications**

Findings from a review of literature on the differences in traits and the idea of entrepreneurship in the Chinese culture, result in the dilemma as to how we develop teaching and learning strategies to suit CHC students of entrepreneurship programs? Kuratko and Hogetts (2004) claim that it is a myth to assume entrepreneurs are born and not made and as a discipline entrepreneurship can be taught and mastered like any other. But does this apply to only individualistic societies? The CHC student certainly is used to learning environments that Ashman and Conway (1997) refer to as “teaching-centered” that commits students to rote and reproductive learning. Since CHC students are lecture driven as opposed to learning through problem solving, how do we design teaching and learning strategies to facilitate CHC students developing a more entrepreneurial and independent approach to learning? The authors of this paper suggest that further research is required and maybe a starting point could be a cross cultural survey of students of entrepreneurship programs and their evaluation of them.

**CONTACT:** Ravi Bhat. School of Management & Entrepreneurship, Unitec, Pvt. Bag 92025, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: (649) 8154321 Extn. 7046, E-mail: rbhat@unitec.ac.nz