

## The Role of Schools Co-Operative in Cultivating Entrepreneurship Culture and Mind among Chinese Students

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### Abstract

*Entrepreneurship is very important in the development of human capital and the development of the country. The objective of this study is to explore the role played by the Co-operative activities in school in cultivating entrepreneurship culture among Chinese students. Eight dimensions of entrepreneurial tendencies were selected and divided into external and internal factors. The external factors included future orientation, social network and the external environment. The internal factors are motivation, creativity and innovation, self-esteem, locus of control and lastly risk-taking. According to McClelland's Theory of Motivation Achievement, individuals with high potential energy and how this energy is released and developed depend on the individuals' strength or motivation and also the opportunities available. A total of one hundred students from a Chinese national type secondary schools in the District of Manjung, Perak were randomly selected for this study. They were studying in Form 4 and Form 5 who might or might not involve in the school co-operative activities. The questionnaire used was tested with the Cronbach Alpha and the reliability valued was 0.931. The results showed that the school co-operative activities did not play a significant role in instilling entrepreneurship among Chinese students ( $r = -0.029$ ,  $p = 0.771$ )  $p < 0.05$ . Despite coming from a business family, the students did not show any tendency to engage in entrepreneurship which was shown by the t-test result ( $t = 98$ ,  $p = 0.511$ ) = -0.660 and therefore  $p > 0.05$ . Besides, the studies also showed that there are no correlation between the family sizes and the hierarchy of students in the family with entrepreneurship. As a suggestion, the school co-operative society should develop students internal locus of control through activities that could strengthen and enrich them in order to build the personality of a good entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial Policy Development in Higher Education Institutions of Malaysia should also consider its implementation at the school level. With the continuity between school and higher education institutions, it is hoped that the number of successful entrepreneurs among students are enhanced.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneur, external factors, internal factors, culture Chinese students

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is important to the world today. It is a catalyst for change and growth in a country's economy. This is in line with the opinion of Vinten et al., (2004); Aini Hayati et al., (2005), who stated the field of entrepreneurship is very important in the economic development of a country. Kamarulzaman Ismail and Ab Amaludin. Rahman (2009), said that individual entrepreneurship culture can be nurtured and educated. Yusof Boon and Sapiah Bohari (2010), had the opinion that school is the most appropriate starting point for students to take the opportunity to nurture their interest in entrepreneurship. This is in line with the personality of the students who show interest operating in the co-operative work in school.

Various attempts have been made by the government to develop the objectives of the school co-operative. SKM is always making sure that the school co-operatives can achieve the objectives listed. Among the objectives are to;

- Develop the practice of thrift and self-reliance among the students.
- Sowing the attributes and elements of democracy among the younger generation.
- Encourage an attitude of cooperation and mutual help among each other.
- Produce generation leaders of the intellectual caliber and vision.
- Provide supplies and services needed by the student.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the olden days, when mentioned only entrepreneurship, many would associate it with the Chinese community. No doubt at that time, Chinese people had been involved in the business world and they were marked as leader in this field where by the locals were still working as fishermen, farmers and rubber tappers. According to Noor Zalika (2013), such conditions caused a notable economic gap between the races at that time due to the British policy of 'divide and rule'. However, this scenario is no longer applicable today.

In this modern era, the Malays and other races are more advanced and competitive in the field of entrepreneurship. The question that arises is whether the Chinese children are no longer interested or they lack support and encouragement from their parents to start their own business. Through the observation done these days, Chinese parents with business background had given less encouragement to their children to venture into business.

Chin Yee Whah (2003), explains the influence of family background as a contribution in influencing the success of an entrepreneur. Continuing their parents' business have a positive impact on an entrepreneur because parents can help to influence patron suppliers and buyers. According to Hisrich (2000), entrepreneurial career is influenced by the parental occupational background of an entrepreneur and the family plays a role in promoting entrepreneurship as a career. This is supported by Nor Aishah (2002) who found that there is a fairly strong correlation between family career and career choices of their children.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Specifically, this research is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify if Chinese student participation in co-operative activities enhances entrepreneurship.
- ii. To identify the differences in family background towards influencing entrepreneurship.
- iii. To identify the differences in attitude towards entrepreneurship among Chinese students pertaining to gender.
- iv. To identify the relationship of family size with entrepreneurship involvement.
- v. To identify the student hierarchy in the family with entrepreneurship indulgence.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is conducted to answer the following questions:

- i. Are Chinese students' participation in co-operative activities a factor that enhances entrepreneurship?
- ii. Are there any relationship between Chinese students' background with entrepreneurship?
- iii. Are there any differences towards entrepreneurship based on gender of students?
- iv. Are there any relationship between the family size with entrepreneurship?
- v. Are there any relationship between the student hierarchy in the family with their entrepreneurship?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The null hypotheses were formed to answer the research questions. Among them are:

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Chinese hierarchy student participation in co-operative activities with entrepreneurship.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant differences between family background among Chinese students with entrepreneurship.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant differences of interest in entrepreneurship among Chinese students by gender.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between family size among Chinese students with entrepreneurship.
- H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the students hierarchy in the family with entrepreneurship.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

History has shown that countries with many entrepreneurs are forging ahead in their economic development. A country that is progressing or regressing is highly dependent on the dynamics of the entrepreneurs and their vision to achieve. According to Nabi & Holden (2008) and Norasmah & Halimah (2007), a career in the field of entrepreneurship is one of the best jobs that can be pursued by individuals. This is supported in Norash & Salmah (2011) research which stated that an individual should think as the creator of a job instead of finding a job. In this regard, the government has initiated the establishment of the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development in 1995 as a body that managed the development of entrepreneurs. Through this ministry, the government has established various programmes to improve the skills of entrepreneurship for entrepreneurs in order to compete in this era of globalization.

McClelland (1978); Abdul Rahman (1997), says that individual motivation will increase if, first and foremost, one is motivated. Secondly, he understands the elements of motivation. Thirdly, he is actively involved in the effort. Motivation is a set of processes that provide energy to the person's behavior and behavioral goals that lead to achieving the goal. A motivated person will make a positive choice to do something, because he knows what this action means to him, therefore can also satisfy his needs. In addition, McClelland (1978) also stressed that the motivated individuals have high achievement. This is because these individuals have a desire to overcome obstacles and hassles in order to achieve something worthy. Thus, The Theory of Motivation Achievement is giving hope for success and fear of failure is embedded in the psyche of the individual.

Entrepreneurial culture is positive properties owned by an individual such as courage, determination and enthusiasm. The properties can also be capital and assets for trading and convincing others. Entrepreneurial cultures should be nurtured starting from primary school through entrepreneurship programmes conducted by students and supervised by experienced teachers. This culture also needs to be nurtured at a higher level of education by offering courses, programmes, seminars or activities that encourage them to venture into entrepreneurship. Culture is important and needs to be nurtured continuously so that interests and solid foundation can be achieved.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher chose the survey method of using questionnaires. This questionnaire has been redesigned and adapted from a study conducted by Khalid (2013). The questionnaire contains 55 items and is divided into two parts. Part A consists of 10 items related to student demographic. Part B consists of 45 items related to motivation, creativity and innovation, self-esteem, locus of control, the willingness to take risks, future orientation, social networking, the environment and involvement in co-operative society in school.

There are two main types of data used in this study. Primary data is obtained from respondents through questionnaire while secondary data is obtained through literature review. Quantitative method was chosen because it was more convenient and easier to obtain data and besides it facilitates researcher to analyze data.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviations for the variables which influence entrepreneurship. Of the eight variables studied, the mean for the creativity and innovation is 3.94, the mean for future orientation is 3.97 and for risk taking is 3.74. All three of these variables showed a high level of mean. Moderate mean levels are shown by motivation with mean 3.62, social networking 3.58, the external environment 3.59, self confident 3.48 and locus of control 3.37.

Table 1 Mean And Standard Deviation For Variables Which Influence Entrepreneur

Item	Mean	SD	N
Motivation	3.62	0.59	100

98

Creativity and innovation	3.94	0.55	100
Self confident	3.48	0.49	100
Locus of control	3.37	0.5	100
Risk taking	3.74	0.54	100
Future orientation	3.97	0.57	100
Social networking	3.58	0.62	100
External environment	3.59	0.56	100

Note: lowlevel at 1-2.33, moderate level at 2.34-3.67, High level at , 3.68-5.00

Table 2 shows the correlation between student participation in co-operative with entrepreneurship.

		Co-operative activities	Entrepreneurship	Working in school co-op
Co-operative activities	Pearson Correlation	1.0	.506**	-0.233*
	Sig. ( 2 -tailed)		0	0.02
	N	100.0	100	100
Entrepreneurship	Pearson Correlation	.506**	1	0.029
	Sig. ( 2 -tailed)	0.0		0.771
	N	100.0	100	100
Working in school co-operative	Pearson Correlation	-0.233*	0.029	1
	Sig. ( 2 -tailed)	0.2	0.771	
	N	100.0	100	100

Nota : \* correlation significant at 0.05 ( 2 tailed)

\*\* correlation significant at 0.01 ( 2 tailed)

In the first research question , the study examined whether the participation of Chinese students in school co-operative can influence their tendency in entrepreneurship . Here the null hypothesis has been formed to examine the relationship between the two variables. The result is shown in Table 2. Pearson correlation tests conducted showed no significant relationships between the Chinese students who were involved in the school co-operative and entrepreneurship. The test results recorded (  $r = -0.029$  ,  $p = 0.771$  )  $p < 0.05$  . This has indicated that the school co-operatives as a platform for the students to familiarize with the entrepreneurship world has not play an effective role among Chinese students. This is because they can get experience in entrepreneurship either by their family background or working with others. Most Chinese students gain experience in entrepreneurship through retail shops, food stalls and supermarket stores that are abundant in this area. In addition, the activities carried out by the schoolco-operative in the study are limited to the stationary only. This has limited their exposure to entrepreneurship. Students are not involved in the transaction to buy stock, setting the selling price of goods and management experience like accounting. These alone showed that the experiences received by students is rather inadequate.

Table 3 T-Test between Family Background and Inclination toward Entrepreneurship

variable	t	df	Sig ( 2 tailed)
Entrepreneurship	-0.66	98	0.511

The second question is whether the family background influence entrepreneurial among Chinese students . Here, the researcher divided the parents occupation into two categories: business and non-business. The results show that only 30% of respondents had business background and 70 % of the parents work for the government , private sector and others. The t tests results showed  $t(98, p = 0.511) = -0.660$  and the value of  $p > 0.05$  . So it may be concluded that there is no significant influence on entrepreneurship in terms of differences in the parental occupational. The results are shown in Table 3. This also implies that parents are not necessarily encouraging the children to follow in their footsteps. The findings are consistent with the problems posed by the researcher studies in which researcher found that the Chinese parents nowadays do not encourage their children to be active in the business. The reason given include the high risks involved and the benefits derived are not so lucrative. Working as an entrepreneur also requires high resilience and self-confidence in order to continue to be active in this field. Although the study also found that Chinese students dare to take risks, but they do not want to venture into entrepreneurship because they want to live in comfort without working for long hours. In Manjung District, small businesses have to compete with large supermarkets such as AEON , Giant , Tesco , Billion , The Store , Econ Save and Rapid Supermarket . Their existence has resulted in small businesses gain decreases and difficult to continue their business.

Table 4 T-Test For Entrepreneurship Tendency Based on Gender

variable	t	df	Sig ( 2 tailed)
Entrepreneurship	0.633	98	0.528

Next to answer the question of whether the Chinese students' gender has a significant relationship with entrepreneurial tendencies, researchers randomly selected Chinese students in terms of gender distribution. Researchers found that 51% of respondents were female students and 49% of them are male students. Thus, the distribution of respondents are considered fair to test the question above. The researcher also conducted a t-test on the dependent variable, entrepreneur and independent variables of gender and the findings are listed in Table 4.

T-tests conducted showed differences in gender among Chinese students do not play a significant role in entrepreneurship. The results of the t-test ( $t(98, p=0.528) = 0.633$  where  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus gender is not a determining factor for entrepreneurship among Chinese students. The finding is consistent with the research conducted by Rosli (2013) who found no significant differences between mean scores of entrepreneurial tendencies based on gender. This study is also consistent with Davidson (1995) who found that gender has little or no influence on entrepreneurship.

Table 5 Correlation Between Family Size And Entrepreneurship Tendency

		Family sizes	Entrepreneurship
Family sizes	Pearson Correlation	1	.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.131
	N	100	100
Entrepreneurship	Pearson Correlation	.152	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.131	

N 100 100

Table 6 Correlation Between Student Hierarchy In The Family With Entrepreneurial Tendencies

		Student hierarchy in the family	
		Entrepreneurship	
Entrepreneurship	Pearson Correlation	1	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.740
	N	100	100
Student hierarchy in the family	Pearson Correlation	-.034	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.740	
	N	100	100

To answer the fourth question, the researcher has used Pearson correlation. Here the question is whether the size of the family played a significant role in entrepreneurship. The null hypothesis was rejected because the results show that ( $r = 0.15$ ,  $p = 0.13$ ),  $p > 0.05$ . From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the size of Chinese families has no significant correlation with entrepreneurship. In ancient times, the size of the family is important as parents need help from their children to keep the business going. But now the situation does not exist anymore because many traders are hiring foreigners from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and others.

This study differs from Hisan (2007) that indicates the size of the family influence entrepreneurial among Malay students in Lambor Kiri. The same opinion is also given by Sodri (2002) which stated family environment influence the children attitude.

Finally, the question presented is whether there is a relationship between the students hierarchy in the families with entrepreneurship. Does the eldest more interested in doing business compared with the other children. Referring to the findings in Table 6, Pearson correlation  $r = -0.34$ ,  $p = 0.74$  showed that the two variables have no significant relationship because the value of  $p > 0.05$ . The results also show that many Chinese families have fewer children and they are less likely to distinguish affection for their children, teach them to be more independent and cultivate positive attitude to all their children regardless of their hierarchy in the family. This finding is in line with Chin Yee Wah (2003) who stated that the role of parents in bringing up and educating their children is important for the children character building. A study conducted by Hisan (2007) on the Malay students in Lambor Kiri, Perak reported that the eldest son showed greater devotion to duty, initiative and confident in a job compared with the middle and youngest child.

## SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

The study was an effort to improve the school's co-operative role in fostering entrepreneurship culture among Chinese students. The study is based on Chinese students, co-operative teachers, the schools involved and the Co-operative Commission of Malaysia. Several suggestions have been proposed to improve the co-operative role and also as a guide for future studies.

Based on the results, the variables with the lowest mean value is the locus of control. Therefore it is proposed that locus of control should be cultivated and strengthened among Chinese students. This is also true, based on the report submitted by academicians with entrepreneurial mastery like McClelland, Litttunen, Rotter, and Schumpeter. In their research, they found that locus of control is a major factor of personality formation of a good entrepreneur. Rosli (2013) has argued that individuals with internal locus of control, self-reliance, risk-taking, self-confidence, self-control have the ability and desire to materialize their ideas. Thus the Chinese students have to be exposed to activities that could strengthen and enrich their experiences in order to become good entrepreneurs.

School Co-operatives are more focused on business activities such as selling stationery items, exercise books, sports t-shirt, and other small items. This function can actually be expanded to the sale of daily necessities such as rice, soap powder, cooking oil, dry stuffs such as dry noodle, beans and others. By selling grocery items, it will not only increase its income but also provide services to the surrounding community. In addition, school co-operatives are also encouraged to host the Co-operative Tourism to enable the members of the society to gain knowledge pertaining to tourism. Datuk Haji Abdul Fattah (2014) from ANGKASA has called on the students and teachers to venture into tourism activities. This could give the students a chance to learn the management entailed in tour packages besides helping the school co-operatives to generate profits.

In line with the government's goal to produce quality human capital who are innovative and creative, to transform the nation's economy, education and other programmes and activities of entrepreneurial culture among university students should also be extended to students in school. A more organized and integrated step should be taken by the Ministry of Education in providing programmes to enhance entrepreneurship and infrastructure and a conducive environment to the students who really have a passion and desire to become an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial Development Policy in Higher Education Institutions should also consider its implementation at the school level. With the continuity between school and higher education institutions, it is hoped that the number of successful entrepreneurs would increase.

The process of entrepreneurial culture is a long-term process and requires continuous effort. In our country the process of entrepreneurial culture has become a major focus, therefore it has to start early when the students are still in primary and secondary schools. Consequently it should be expanded to students in higher education irrelevant whether they belong to the private or public institutions. Given the importance of establishing entrepreneurial culture, the school co-operative has taken the initiative to expose the students to the business world as early as possible.

From this research, more effort should be taken to strengthen the school co-operatives so that it can function properly. School co-operatives should take more initiatives and grab the opportunities provided by the Co-operative Commission of Malaysia to conduct appropriate programmes for its members. Co-operative activities should no longer be limited to retail sales only. It should take up creative and innovative steps to participate as hosts in the Tourism Co-operative Young Entrepreneur Programme and other projects to open the eyes and minds of the students.

Finally, all students should seize the opportunity to gain the competitive and entrepreneurial knowledge provided at the school through co-operative or through the subjects taught. In doing so, they will be better prepared to face the future with hope to become a successful entrepreneur.

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