



# Cross-cultural study of Asian and European student perception

## The need to understand the changing educational environment in New Zealand

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The paper seeks to explore educational objectives and attitudes to assessment methods between Chinese and New Zealand European students.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A conceptual framework developed from the literature and feedback from the pilot study, explains the impact of factors on curriculum development in this study. This conceptual framework was designed to give preliminary insights into the subject area and form the basis of the research. Curriculum development and teaching style are seen as the product of cultural impact. The cultural impact is made up of factor inputs from demands made on the educational system. The prime data collection method was a self-completion questionnaire. The population group was postgraduate management students at the Albany Campus of Massey University in New Zealand.

**Findings** – The responses from 110 postgraduate students in management studies at the Albany Campus of Massey University in Auckland, New Zealand, suggest that there is a relationship between culture and education. The study shows that the two student groups have different educational objectives and prefer different assessment methods.

**Research limitations/implications** – Since this research is exploratory in nature and is restricted by sample size, the analysis of the research data was restricted to univariate analysis. In developing teaching styles and assessment methods at tertiary educational institutions where there are students from other cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to understand the reasons why these students enrol in various courses. To develop assessment methods without taking into consideration the learning styles of a changing student population will limit the extent to which expected knowledge transfer takes place.

**Practical implications** – This study shows that postgraduate students in management studies from different cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and nationalities may respond to educational styles differently. To force students into an existing mould is problematic and does not serve well in a globalisation process that is now imposed on all nations.

**Originality/value** – The quality of postgraduate management courses rests in part on the diversity of the student population, which in turn enriches the educational contribution of students generally. It is left to the teaching staff and the tertiary institutions to decide how to harness this variation. Educational paradigm shifts in technologies, methods and perceptions are needed if changes in education styles are to take place. Re-allocation of resources to postgraduate education, in line with a dynamic and changing environment, is equally important.

**Keywords** Students, Educational development, Assessment, China, Europe, New Zealand

**Paper type** Research paper



In October 2004 the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation outlined three strategies that importing or exporting students nations have been engaged in as follows (Lauren, 2005):