

**TEACHING INTERNATIONAL MARKETING TO CHINESE STUDENTS:
EXPERIENCE FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM**

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ABSTRACT

Many British universities have experienced a significant increase in the number of Chinese students studying in their systems during recent years. The impact of the growth on academic work is significant, in particular in subject areas popular with Chinese students such as business and management notably marketing. It is important that research shed light on understanding the relative influence of the learning characteristics of Chinese students on studying marketing using British learning and teaching conventions.

The traditional Chinese way of learning has long been seen by many as content-based, tutor-centered and passive. Some compare Chinese students to empty vessels to be filled up with the knowledge of teachers (Friere, 1972). Students' experiences are devalued since it operates on a clear distinction between the knowledgeable (teachers) and the ignorant (students) (Sinclair, 1997). The major problems caused by the Chinese learning style include lack of student participation in classroom activities, limited use of management training techniques such as case studies, and inefficiency of group discussions as a result of face and shame (Bu and Mitchell, 1992; Chan, 1999). The problems form a sharp contrast with the skills and knowledge requirement of today's marketing students. It was pointed out the differences in learning must be addressed if Chinese students are to reach their full potential on courses offered by the British universities (Nield, 2004).

This research is a small-scale exploratory enquiry using questionnaires and focus groups for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from the Chinese students studying international marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University Cheshire. A total of 35 completed questionnaires were analysed using a simple percentile method producing a dataset of 945 pieces of information (35 respondents x 27 questions). Two focus groups were conducted in addition to the questionnaires.

Results from this study show that while the Chinese students studied do respond well to structured learning, they have started to appreciate and in many cases are making a significant transition from their memory-oriented and tutor-centered passive learning approach to a more student-centered and process-based active one as a result of their exposure to the marketing education conventions in the United Kingdom. However, the transition is not obstacle-free as many are still held back by their cultural background and in particular lack of confidence with their English language abilities. These findings appear to conflict the traditional view of Chinese students as passive learners and consolidate the use of active learning in teaching marketing to an increasingly diverse student audience in the United Kingdom.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.