

**Border-less Classroom, an Experiential Approach to Entrepreneurial  
Education: A Pilot Study in Enhancing Chinese Students  
Entrepreneurial Skills**

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*The global economy is embracing more international collaboration as technology and communication have linked countries and made the world smaller. Business and government collaborations are not alone, institutions of higher education around the world have also moving closer to each other through varied cooperative programs. Some institutions of higher education are experimenting with new approaches to learning and teaching through a technology enhanced delivery method.*

*This paper offers an outcome assessment of a new method of an experimental/experiential pilot study where students from a university in Guangdong, China have created a small learning community and learned via WebEx technology varied topics in entrepreneurship including finance, management, and marketing. Facilitated by two faculty members from a private university in Southern California and a faculty member in Guangdong province, students were able to create a business plan, get a starting capital, started a small business, sold varied cosmetics' products, and made some money. The paper concluded that border-less cooperation coordinated through a web technology based delivery method helped make education relevant to students' understanding of the subject of entrepreneurship as well as helped motivated them to succeed as the U.S. faculty shared their entrepreneurial knowledge. Based on quantitative analysis of the results coupled with students' testimonials, the paper suggests that this border-less experiential learning collaboration has positive outcomes to students.*

## INTRODUCTION

The development and the emerging of the new economy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) over the past 40 years has been an unprecedented phenomenon that has impacted many nations as China became a production machine capable of exporting almost everything to the world. China has initiated new forms of entrepreneurship as a result of the gradual loosening of the central government control in the late seventies and the implementation of China's "Open Door Policy" of 1978 that facilitated the moving of its economy from a planned to a socialist market one (Anderson et al., 2003; Lin & Si, 2014; Lu & Tao, 2010). This transition facilitated and accelerated the starting and the acceptance of entrepreneurial roles and activities in the country and thus resulted in an unmatched job creation, production of goods and services, and unparalleled consumption-all resulted from entrepreneurs' initiatives (McMillan & Woodruff, 2002).

One important consequence of this shift toward more "socialist market economy" (SME) has been the relative decline of its large "State Owned Enterprises" (SOEs) and the mushrooming of the number of "small enterprises" {(SMEs) (Anderson et al., 2003)} as a result of privatization. According to state-run news agency Xinhua, the number of individually owned businesses and private enterprises in China exceeded 40.6 million at the end of January of 2013 (in Market Watch, 2013). The appeal of entrepreneurship has impressive momentum in the Chinese society, and in September 2014, China's premier Li Keqiang called for "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" as he issued the call for a new wave of "mass entrepreneurship and grassroots entrepreneurship" (English.gov.cn, 2015; Xuefeng, 2015).

Li (2002) suggested that the contemporary form of Chinese entrepreneurship originated from a variety of sources. During the eighties, the dominating forms of entrepreneurship were the township and village-based enterprises that were supported by local governments. Li observes that a second form of entrepreneurship came as a consequence of the first form when entrepreneurs started a small family-based business that employed a fewer than six employees, others have formed private enterprises that employed more than six people. Additionally, a few small state-owned enterprises existed and were subcontracted or managed by entrepreneurs. It is also important to clarify that other form of business were also existed, these were in the form of joint ventures and shareholding cooperatives. A case in point here, is that economic privatization is not any easy process, it requires a new set of government policies and tremendous learning and modifications of existing of both old and new business based policies to accommodate the unforeseen requirements and emerging needs. According to Dusan Triska, the principal architect of Czechoslovakia's privatization program:

Privatization...is not just one of the many items on the economic program. It is the transformation itself. Without a well-defined and feasible privatization strategy the program would become just another hopeless attempt to reform the unreformable. Privatization is the element that distinguishes transformation from reform. That is why privatization must be conceived of and viewed as an end in itself

(in Nellis, 2001, p. 32).

According to Triska (in Nellis, 2001), for privatization to be successful, the policy prerequisites include "price liberalization, bankruptcy law, and convertibility of the currency" (33). The road to privatization has two routes- privatizing the existing firms and creating new ones, and thus create a need to reform policies that would foster entry (McMillan & Woodruff, 2002).

At the time of this report, the Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation "MEI" is a national strategy in China, and entrepreneurship and innovation are nurtured as twin engines for substantial economic growth by the Chinese government (Song, 2015). As a consequence of this strategy, entrepreneurship education in universities became an important part underpinning the largest ever entrepreneurial boom in China. However, the approach to entrepreneurship education has long been criticized for its lack of practice and little relevance with real world (Bernhofer et al., 2014; Millman et al., 2008; Tang et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2012).

Research studies examining entrepreneurship in China have been mostly focused on entrepreneurial development and challenges (e.g. Ahlstrom & Ding, 2014; Child et al., 2007; He, 2009; Li & Matlay, 2006; Liao & Sohmen, 2001; Pistrui, 2001; Poutziouris et al., 2002; Puffer et al., 2010; Tsang, 1994; Yang & Li, 2008; Yu & Stough, 2005) or on peasants' entrepreneurs (e.g. Chen, 2002; Fan et al., 1996; Nee & Young, 1991; Peng, 1992; Tsang, 1994).

Research on entrepreneurship education in China - especially in institutions of higher education - is still limited and needs improvement (Li et al., 2003; Millman et al., 2008; Xiong & QIU, 2005; Zhi-rong, 2006); or needs to develop entrepreneurship education to make it more accessible and provide flexible approaches that meet different students' needs with varied academic backgrounds to make it more relevant (Wang, 1999; Wu & Wu, 2008; Xiaozhou & Zhiyong, 2010; Zhou & Xu, 2012).

This paper - based on an exploratory pilot study - is an attempt to fill some of the gap in the literature regarding entrepreneurship education in China. The paper offers a summary of the authors' experiential approach to teaching entrepreneurship to a small number of Chinese university students where the weekly instruction and interaction were provided through the use of WebEX technology connecting a private institution of higher education in Southern California and a university in Guangdong province. This study is significant in that it provides assessment of an alternative delivery approach to entrepreneurship education and by focusing on making skills' buildings more relevant, hands on, and challenging to the learners.

The paper is divided into six sections. After this introduction, section two develops the conceptual framework of the study and its research questions/propositions. In this section, the paper discusses the concepts of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education in general, followed by a chapter (i.e. three) on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education in China. Section four describes the "borderless program" as an experiential learning process used by the authors and discusses the research methodology. While section five presents the findings and discussions, section six provides conclusions, implications, students' testimonials and suggestions for future research.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

As a critical component of economic strategies for fostering job creation, entrepreneurship education was introduced in the US in the 1940s at the college level and witnessed a tremendous growth (Støren, 2014; McMullan, 1987). Since then, this concept has been adopted and integrated into many countries' educational system (Støren, 2014; McMullan, 1987). The success of this concept has eventually led UNESCO World Conference to recognize the importance of entrepreneurship education and call for other nations to cultivate it at higher educational level (UNESCO, 1998). According to Carayannis and Von Zedtwitz (2005:95), "entrepreneurship is at the heart of sustainable, organic growth for most developed, as well as transitioning and developing economies and incubators have often served as catalysts and even accelerators of entrepreneurial clusters formation and growth". Støren (2014) asserted that entrepreneurship education has been high on many countries agenda over the past ten years or so- as a few countries have launched action plans to promote entrepreneurship education at all levels especially at the college one. Accordingly, policy makers around the world started looking at entrepreneurship as the path to reach higher levels of economic growth and innovation. Evidence from empirical research provides support for the positive link between entrepreneurial activities with economic growth (that includes employment generation) and innovation (e.g. Charney & Libecap, 2000; Harkema & Schout, 2008; Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006; Van Praag & Versloot, 2007). According to Kuratko (2005), the US has witnessed the powerful entrepreneurial activities in the last 20 plus years as new business ventures (start-ups, expansions, and development) averaged 600,000 per year. As for employment generation; while Fortune 500 companies have lost more than 5 million jobs since 1980, more than 34 million new jobs have been created. In 1996, a small business has created 1.6 million new jobs (Kuratko, 2005). Additionally, in its fourth year of assessing entrepreneurial activity worldwide, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) estimated that more than 460 million adults around the globe were engaged in entrepreneurial activity in 2002 (Reynolds et al., 2002).

There is no widely accepted definition of entrepreneurship (e.g. Gartner, 1990; Reynolds et al., 2005; Thurik & Wennekers, 2004; Van Praag, 1999). While Thurik and Wennekers (2004) called it a behavior that is focused on opportunities, Gartner, 1985 used a broader definition by defining it as the creation of a new venture. This paper relies on a definition that is built on the combination of the aforementioned definition: *we define entrepreneurship as the creation of a new business venture that is founded on a readily available opportunity.*

In China, entrepreneurship is synonymous with “business start-up” (Zhou and Xu, 2012). Education is the means to develop the total person and help develops/enhances skills to create entrepreneurial opportunities and Zhou and Xu (2012) have determined that entrepreneurship education in China emphasized four goals: (1) To expose students to the challenging prospect for employment and raise their entrepreneurship awareness; (2) lay a solid foundation of knowledge on entrepreneurship; (3) improve college students’ entrepreneurial skills and abilities; and (4) to reduce entrepreneurial risks among college students.

Entrepreneurship education has also been a strong positive influence on individuals in terms of influencing them in becoming self-employed and successful (Robinson & Sexton, 1994). In an effort to close the gap between what colleges offer and what the ‘real world’ needs, many institutions of higher education resort to programs to enhance students’ applied learning.

Abbondante et al., (2014:14), noted that “the objectives of curricula are to not only enable students to apply knowledge directly to jobs, but to nurture an entrepreneurial spirit in students”. On the other hand, Vesper and Gartner (1997), asserted that the better approaches to accomplished these objectives is to offer a non-traditional program at both graduate and undergraduate levels that it encompasses concepts such as starting a new business, doing business consulting, managing a company, or engaging in a venture plan writing and financing.

Pittaway and Cope (2007) suggested that enterprise and entrepreneurship education had made a profound impact on institutions of higher education as these initiatives (i.e. enterprise education) started a ‘vibrant’ cultural shift in the United Kingdom.

“There are many educational aspects covered within the domain including: employability skills; social enterprise; self-employment; venture creation; employment in small businesses; small business management; and, the management of high-growth ventures ... institutional approaches to implementation have varied considerably.”

(Pittaway & Cope, 2007:3).

On the other hand, in their study of the impact of leading entrepreneurship educational program on college students’ entrepreneurship skills and motivation, Oosterbeek et al., (2010) concluded that results showed that the program does not have the intended effects on students’ self-assessed entrepreneurial skills and negative effects on the intention of the students in becoming entrepreneurs. A possible explanation of said result is that “students have obtained more realistic perspectives both on themselves as well as on what it takes to be an entrepreneur” (Oosterbeek et al., 2010:452).

Recognizing the fact that entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial experiences impact peoples’ attitudes towards starting own business, several scholars have researched the impact of entrepreneurship education-as distinct from general education, on students inclination to initiate their own entrepreneurship venture (e.g. Abbondante et al., 2014; Støren, 2014; Donckels, 1991; Fayolle et al., 2006; Hannon, 2005; Kirby, 2004; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Pittaway and Cope, 2007; Zhao et al., 2005). However; the literature regarding entrepreneurship education and its impact on students in China has remained relatively limited (Byabashaija & Katono, 2011; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Zhang et al., 2014).

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN CHINA

Encouraged by the global shift towards entrepreneurship education of the nineties and the challenges of its growing students' enrollments and its associated problems of finding jobs after graduation; the government of China took a leading role in promoting entrepreneurship education in 2002 (Zhou and Xu, 2012). Since then, China's entrepreneurship education emerged on some college campuses in the form of entrepreneurship competitions as "the growth of entrepreneurship education in other countries has served as a source of inspiration for Chinese universities" (Zhou and Xu, 2012:83).

According to Li et al., (2003), small business development started in rural China after the implementation of the "Open Door Policy." Its rural enterprises accounted for an unprecedented proportion of small firms in the country. To improve its performance and managerial competency, the ministry of agriculture coordinated short training and development programs for managers and key members of rural enterprises in 1990s. By the year 2000, 1.7 million individuals participated in these programs that were offered in 106 rural enterprise centers and colleges nationwide. These programs covered a few topics including business management, quality control, product development and other technical topics (Li et al., 2003).

The recent history of entrepreneurship education dates back only to 1997 when Tsinghua University started the Student Entrepreneurship Competition that was modeled after a similar competition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Li, 2012). A few years later, a few other universities have taken further steps towards entrepreneurship education and expanded entrepreneurship education-for instance, "Fudan University encouraged its faculty to integrate entrepreneurship basics into their daily instruction; East China Normal University was the first to offer a course on entrepreneurship education; Wuhan University offered a course on creativeness, innovation, and entrepreneurship; and Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics provided capital support to student entrepreneurs" (Li, 2012:85).

In April 2002, the Ministry of Education took a proactive role through the selection of nine institutions (i.e. Tsinghua University, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Renmin University of China, Heilongjiang University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Nanjing University of Finance and Economics, Wuhan University, Xi'an Jiaotong University, and Northwestern Polytechnic University) to participate in the National Entrepreneurship Education Pilot Program (NEEPP) with a purpose to explore a number of entrepreneurship education models including classroom-based model (to foster students' awareness and constructing their knowledge structure), a practice-oriented model (to enhance students' knowledge and skills through the support of institutional infrastructures such as entrepreneurship parks, capital support, consulting services, and incubators), and a hybrid model (that employs a combination of both classroom instruction and training in practical settings (Li, 2012).

In 2005, the Know about Business (KAB) program- a systematic entrepreneurship education program developed by the UNESCO labor organization, was introduced to students and in six universities (i.e. Tsinghua University, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, China Youth University for Political Sciences, Heilongjiang University, Tianjin Polytechnic University, and Beijing Youth Political College). This model provided an exceptional example of the collaboration among organizations and higher education institutions in promoting entrepreneurship education. Through teaching basic knowledge and skills about enterprises and entrepreneurship, the program uses psychological assessment and team-based games to help students understand entrepreneurs' general characteristics and quality and acquaint them with the whole process. The program also invites accomplished entrepreneurs to contribute to classroom instruction and discuss real-world case studies, a practice which is especially well received by students. "By 2009, KAB had provided training opportunities to 795 faculty members representing 318 higher education institutions in 25 provinces, and it had offered a course titled "KAB Entrepreneurship Basics for College Students" to over twenty thousand students in 100 universities" (Li, 2012: 86-87).

In 2008, the government has called for some government agencies, universities, and corporations to set up a pilot program to develop talents of innovation and entrepreneurship (Li, 2012; China Ministry of Education, 2009). Additionally, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology jointly initiated pilot programs for innovation and entrepreneurship such as Entrepreneurship Park and

Science Park in some selected universities. Similar initiatives were also initiated at the provincial level, and the corporate sector became an active player in education (Li, 2012; China Ministry of Education, 2009; China Ministry of Education, 2010a). According to Li (2012), these milestones marked the beginning of a China's entrepreneurship education that was characterized by the support of the government, active participation by institutions of higher education, and the unprecedented support by the society and the corporate sector. Finally, in early 2010, the Ministry of Education formed a national advisory committee that consisted of 41 college presidents, governmental officials, and successful entrepreneurs to provide consultation and guidance for colleges and universities regarding entrepreneurship education (Li, 2012; China Ministry of Education, 2010b).

## **BORDER-LESS CLASSROOM APPROACH: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### ***Program Initiation***

In December of 2015, an initial faculty exchange initiative between a Southern California University in the United States and a university from Guangdong in China. This exchange included an initial effort to connect students and faculty from both universities along common interests. The success of this initial exchange led to a proposal to design and implement a course of study focusing on entrepreneurship for students in China supported by faculty from both universities and where synchronic student-faculty interaction was supported with WebEx technology.

The mission of this entrepreneurship educational pilot class was to accomplish its goal of providing experiential learning to a group "cohort" composed of 9 students located in Guangdong, China; our global collaboration draws on the work and the foundations of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), its process was to provide a hybrid model of meaningful education that uses both classroom instruction (including remote instruction through WebEx) and simultaneously starting a business venture in China by students.

### ***Program Mission***

The mission of the "Border-less Classroom" was to enhance the entrepreneurship skill of the students at the Chinese university, and to further explore the benefits of cross-cultural education through distance learning. To accomplish this mission, a pilot program "Border-less Classroom" commenced in March 2016 and lasted for six months.

### ***Program Faculty***

The program was designed and supervised by three faculties: two faculty members from a Southern California university in the U.S. and another one from university in Guangdong, China. Because the faculty were trained and have expertise in different subject areas, each faculty contributed insight from their disciplines to the project. In addition, the local faculty member contributed contextual knowledge to the project so that entrepreneurial materials could be framed with meaningful local application. This knowledge was especially important in a number of steps in the curriculum. Overall program support was obtained through the Deans of the respective universities.

### ***Students***

Nine students were selected to join the pilot study based on their academic achievement and their expressed interest in this program and to become entrepreneurs. The selection process was established by the local faculty member and included an assessment of student achievement over a minimum of two years in coursework in business-related studies, student capacity in the English language (both written and oral communication), and interest in entrepreneurial study.

### ***Global Collaboration and WebEx Technology***

Global collaboration offers both challenges and opportunities to the problem encountered in the higher education in China (Zhiwen, 2008). While on one hand, it increases complexity; it permits Chinese universities to embrace more international collaboration to work out solutions (Chan et al., 2013; Li-Hua,

2007; Zhiwen, 2008). To overcome the challenges of location, distance, and time differences, modern communication methods were utilized including WebEx enabled video conference and in instances WeChat, a popular social networking application in China that permits instant text, voice, image and video sharing. Despite its tedious feature, email exchange between faculty members and the students provided an excellent opportunity for the Chinese students to practice their English writing skills.

The program employed a range of methods to enhance students' entrepreneurship skill. Apart from class teaching, experiential learning – discussed below - based on a practical e-Commerce project, group discussion, and presentation are also employed. To enhance students' learning and entrepreneurial skills, in-class meetings combined with WebEx enabled video conferencing presentation on subjects including: Business mission, vision, goals, organizational structure, small business finance, and products' promotion, pricing, and marketing were provided through the US faculty. To compliment skills building, an experiential learning component were added where the students form a company, selected cosmetics product to promote and sell for profit, and decided on their targeted market through e-commerce to other students throughout the semester.

### ***Experiential Learning as an Educational Approach***

The educational approach of the “Border-less Classroom” was intentionally designed around Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). The course architects established learning objectives based on the ELT approach as central to entrepreneurial education. Kolb and Kolb (2012) have defined Experiential Learning Theory as the one that “placed experience at the center of the learning process, envisioning an educational system that was learner centered. ELT is a dynamic view of learning based on a learning cycle driven by the resolution of the dual dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction. It is a holistic theory that defines learning as the major process of human adaptation involving the whole person” (Kolb & Kolb, 2012:43).

According to Kolb and Kolb (2012), as a holistic process of adaptation and not as outcomes, learning should focus on engaging students in a process that best enhances their learning, including the feedback on the effectiveness of their learning efforts. While experiential learning creates knowledge and results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment, it also requires the resolution of conflicts.

While institutions of higher education are racing to creativity in entrepreneurial education offerings, business plans today and business plan competitions dominate worldwide on many college campuses as means to provide experiential learning (Abbondante et al., 2014). These business plans allow students to apply learned skills when introducing new products or services while encouraging innovative behavior in students and bring about their passion (Chen et al., 2009; Russell et al., 2008; Wen & Chen, 2007). Additionally, simulation as often seen in senior seminar or capstone courses, is another effective method of having students integrate knowledge from various courses and use it in a computerized game environment (Vogel, et al., 2006). All of these approaches are focused on providing an experiential approach to learning through providing a theory-to-practice environment that is on specific objectives and available resources-known as “a learning community” (Abbondante et al., 2014). This concept of a learning community that portrays the ELT could be arguably linked to the ideas of educator John Dewey at the beginning of the 20th century (1916). Dewey suggested that a learning community is composed of a close relationship between the teacher and the learner, it must be focused on learning by doing, and must develop skills to enhance reasoning capabilities to promote lifelong learning (Dewey, 1916).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: EXPECTED PROCESS OUTCOMES AND RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS**

One objective of the pilot project included the development of cross-national connections between students and faculty through educational exchange efforts. A second program objective was to develop a project that provided a benefit to the university community in China while it serves as a learning

opportunity for its students and faculty. From these objectives, the program established a central proposition to examine along with three learning outcomes.

### **Study Proposition**

The central proposition the faculty were seeking to explore was that three learning outcomes' in entrepreneurial study can be identified with a curriculum that is based on experiential learning design AND the joint (international) faculty collaboration of entrepreneurial curricular – that embraces theory and participant context (practice environment).

### **Learning Outcomes**

The program identified three specific learning outcomes for students. When based on experiential learning approach and guided by local contextual knowledge:

#### ***Learning Outcome 1***

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the entrepreneurship process through the generation of an idea for a new business and/or recognition of an opportunity. The development of a business plan to serve as a blue print of the proposed venture is a key element.

#### ***Learning Outcome 2***

Students will assemble the needed resources (including financial, human, logistics) to develop this new venture or opportunity.

#### ***Learning Outcome 3***

Students will launch the new venture or develop this opportunity, manage its logistics and growth, and be able to make it profitable.

### **Procedure**

This study documents the learning outcomes of an experiential entrepreneurial program where students in China were exposed to an entrepreneurship through a hybrid method (a class learning environment that was complimented with video conferencing learning and venture creation exercise). It also investigates the impact of this borderless classroom on students' learning. Participation in this program and its study outcomes were voluntary. Its survey and reflection responses were confidential. Participants understood the purpose of this study and indicated their awareness that their participation in this study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

### **Measures**

A pre and post-tests survey to measure students' comprehension of the taught subjects were utilized in addition to the outcomes of students' venture creation, venture sales and profit, and business plan report and presentation were also complimentary learning outcomes.

### **Participants and Setting**

The sample in this pilot study included only 8 women and one man (n=9). All respondents to the survey have the knowledge to answer the survey. All respondents were juniors or seniors participating in an entrepreneurship course at one of Guangdong institutions of higher education in China. Participants returned their completed survey to their faculty member in Guangdong who is also a co-author of this study. The research method for this study was based on an empirical study and descriptive statistics.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

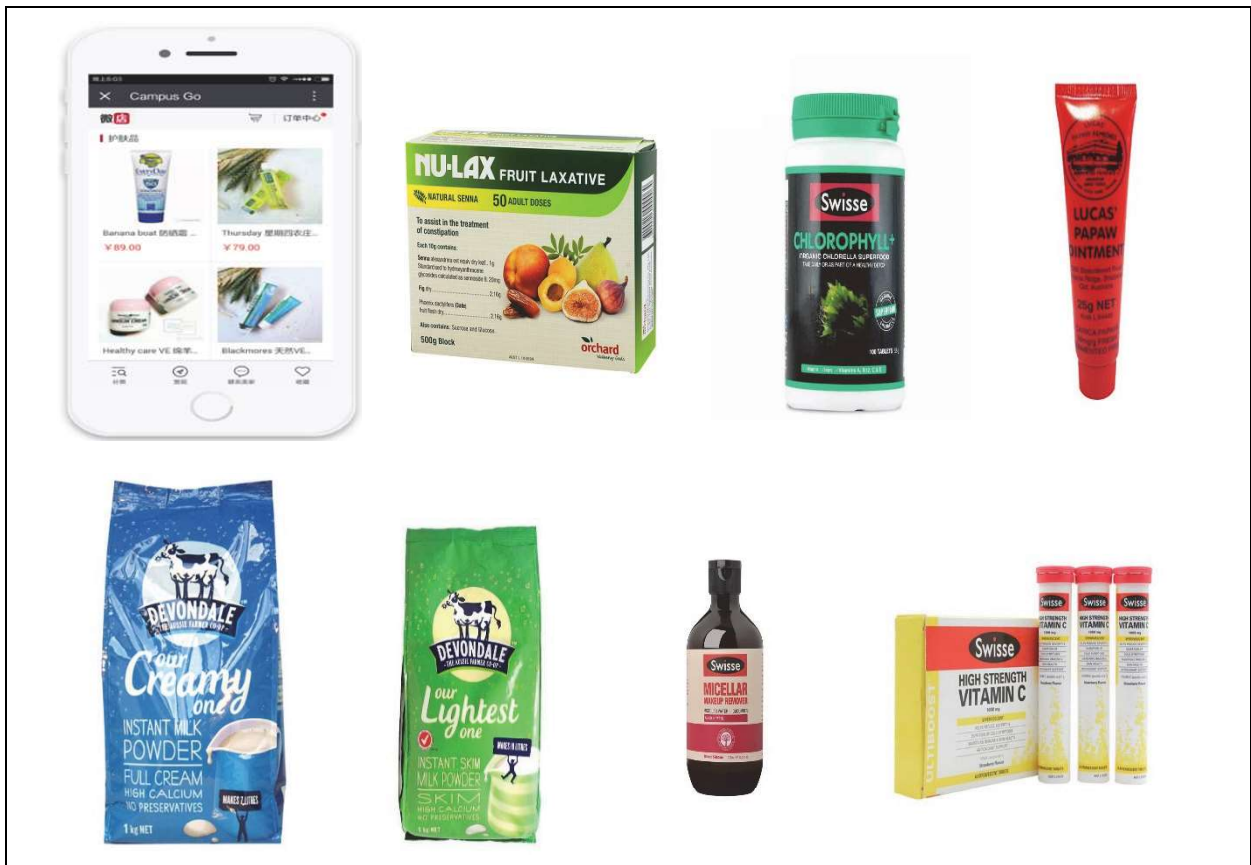
The expected outcomes from this experiential learning project is to ensure students ability to demonstrate an understanding of the entrepreneurship process through recognizing an entrepreneurial opportunity, getting the needed resources to develop it, and be able to launch it and ensure its financial health.

### *The Starting of a Venture: Campus Go Team!*

Identifying a need to fulfill or a product to promote and sell to a target market was the first key challenge for the participating students. Nine students started an e-commerce venture named “Campus Go Team” with a mission to provide the on-campus community with healthy food items and nature care products outsourced and delivered directly from Australia. Students identified the need for these items through a marketing survey, decided on the price after sourcing these products and factoring all related expenses and their profit margin. The vast majority of the Campus Go Team customers were college students from the same university. Please see Figure 1 for selected items from the company’s online store.

As the students had no prior experience in starting a venture, the second challenge for the new venture was to organize their functional activities and ensure accountability with respect to the key functional managers, quickly they have identified their CEO, the Vice President of Finance, the Vice President of Operations, and the Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Accordingly, they have designed an organizational chart.

**FIGURE 1**  
**SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE Campus Go TEAM ONLINE STORE**



Students were reminded that writing a business plan is an integral part of starting a successful business. Very quickly, the Campus Go Team were able to write a business plan comprised of an executive summary that serves as an introduction to their new venture in addition to detailed and supported sections regarding proposed products' description and its sources, targeted market, operations, management/organization, capital budget, and revenues and expenses projection.

Simultaneously, students were instructed to state their goals that include sales and profits' goals. They were also taught how to stay focused on their organization competitive advantage. Important to note that situational analysis (Strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) were emphasized and stressed during the learning process as students were instructed to ensure their organizational sustainability (profitable growth). A case-in point here is the fact that faculty has also stressed the importance of ethics and ethical practices with all stakeholders.

While the Campus Go Team investigated target market based on potential opportunities at the start, they have followed up with a secondary research concerning size, demographics, lifestyles, and purchase behavior of their identified target market (i.e. the campus community) to get a closer look at items that will eventually fill needs while adding value to their potential clients. They were also instructed to explain and justify the positioning of their products in the marketplace and ensure that the image is significant to their target market.

### **Business Plan Presentation via WebEx**

After the completion of their business plan, students e-mailed it to their faculty and provided a live presentation through WebEx to the two faculty members from California in the presence of their faculty in Guangdong.

While the business plan contained all the aforementioned components, students presented detailed information regarding their target market and positioning statement, their survey results, their sales forecasts, products' images, pricing, promotional plans, and financial projections. As their target market was their own college students', social media was at the center of the "Campus Go Team" promotional activities including QQ and WeChat.

Once the Borderless Program faculty members approved the business plan, "Campus Go Team" began the implementation phase and raises the initial startup capital to place the very first order and develop its business. An important note, students were constantly meeting among themselves to evaluate their business strategies and making adjustments as deemed necessary to meet their objectives.

### **Notable Achievements**

For the first two months' period, "Campus Go Team" has achieved an over RMB 7,000 in sales revenue with a net profit of about RMB 1,500. The sales revenue and net profit rose to RMB 80,000 and RMB 17,000 respectively over the next 8 months after the Korean supply channel has been incorporated. Please refer to Table 1 for Campus Go's Income Statement ending on December 31, 2016.

**TABLE 1  
STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 2016**

	RMB	RMB
<b>Sales revenue</b>		80,000
Cost of goods sold		(58,000)
<b>Gross profit</b>		<b><u>22,000</u></b>
Sales and marketing expenses	3,000	
Travel expenses	2,000	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>(5,000)</u></b>
<b>Net profit</b>		<b><u>17,000</u></b>

A survey was conducted by the students to evaluate customer satisfaction. Customers were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall experience with the “Campus Go Team” products and services based on five categories comprising an overall performance, product quality, packaging, logistics, and service. Said categories based on Likert scale and range from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). As illustrated in table 2 and Figure 2, more than 80% of their respondents rated them 4 or 5 for the four categories composed of: Overall performance, product quality, packaging and service. However, and due to the cross border delivery their logistics performance has not achieved reasonable result.

**TABLE 2**  
**Campus Go TEAM’S CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS**

Category	1	2	3	4	5
Overall Performance	3%	0%	17%	31%	49%
Product Quality	0%	3%	14%	24%	59%
Packaging	0%	3%	14%	38%	45%
Logistics	14%	0%	38%	0%	48%
Service Satisfaction	0%	0%	3%	31%	66%

**FIGURE 2**  
**Campus Go TEAM’S CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS**



Another method to assess students’ comprehension and understanding of the entrepreneurship process was evident through an increase of knowledge in all entrepreneurship education functions-namely: Management/organizing, marketing, finance, global business, and e-commerce. Said knowledge increase was measured through a pre and post relevant entrepreneurship survey. Please refer to Table 3 and Figure 3 for results illustration. In addition to the quantitative results, please refer also to Appendix I for students’ testimonials.

Lena, a member of Campus Go Team stated “before I attended the enterprise classes, I always think set up a business is really far from me. In my previous opinion, set up a business need a lot of money, wide networking and strong will. After the lessons, I found that my thoughts are just partly right... Because of this lessons, we have a try to set up our own

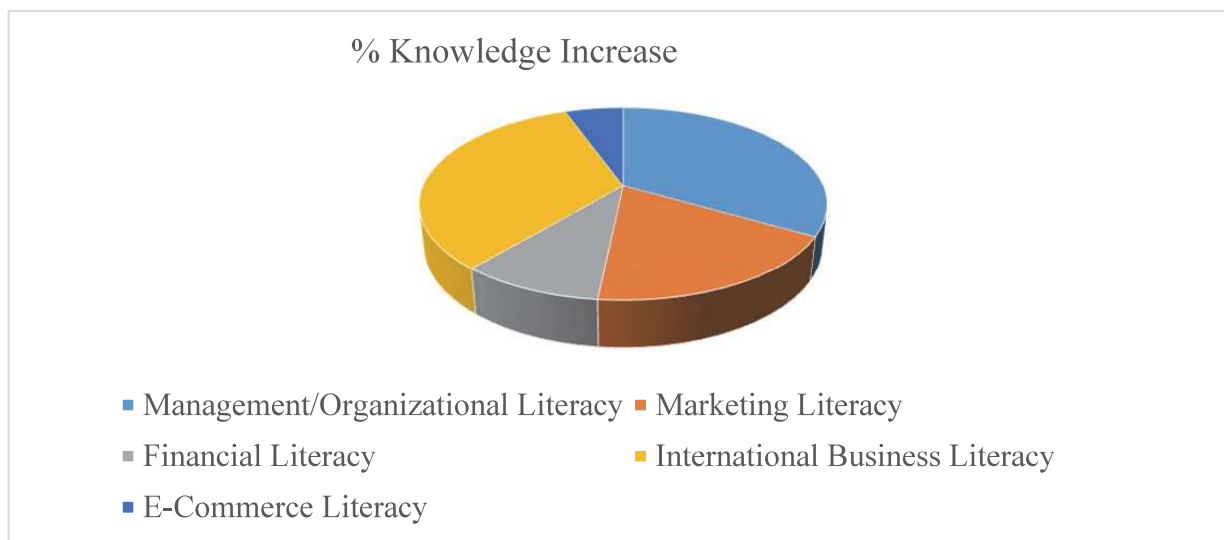
business--Campus Go. And that's the first time we put the theory into practice... (Lena, June 22, 2016). Another student added, "I really benefit a lot from these courses. That course about divisional structure was the most impressive for me, which was divided into three parts: product structures, geographic structure and market structure. In product structures, it's also divided into three parts: product division structure, multidivisional structure and product team structure...After the professor's guidance, we found that the right choice of organizational structure for their own business situation is also very important (Crystal, June 28, 2016).

**TABLE 3**  
**STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE INCREASE**

Category	% Knowledge Increase
Management/Organizational Literacy	90
Marketing Literacy	50
Financial Literacy	26
International Business Literacy	90
E-Commerce Literacy	15

On the other hand, Patty- another participating student added that "... I learned the details about how to run a new company, just like organizational design and structure, marketing research and so on. I learned something new as well as deepen something that I have known. The pre-class preparation and after-class homework improved my English written skills as well as ability of collecting information and critical thinking. Last but not least, our entrepreneurial practice made me grasp the ability to discover and solve problems" (Patty, July 2, 2016).

**FIGURE 3**  
**STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE INCREASE**



### Entrepreneurship Competitions

The Campus Go Team with its e-Commerce project is very competitive in Entrepreneurship Competitions. The team is under the process of transition that new members have been recruited to replace the senior members. It is also appropriate at this point to mention that during December 2016, the Campus Go Team also participated in the First Entrepreneurship Competition held by the School of Business at their university in Guangdong. The Border-less Classroom e-Commerce project won the

competition's first prize award competing with about 60 other groups. The organizing committee was made of 3 entrepreneurs and 6 faculty members. The students were awarded RMB 3,000 to support their business operation. This is second cash award won by the Campus Go Team after the first winning award of RMB 5,000 provided by the university.

### **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Most of the participating students had some comment regarding the interaction with each other and how they worked together as a team. Their testimonials reflected the importance of teamwork and collaboration to reach success as opposed to be a cohort in a traditional course. To them, it was a real-life venture where failure has no place. This sentiment was emphasized by faculty members during the learning period. As faculty members have observed their progress during their venture cycles of birth and growth, students became a tight net where they needed to closely work together for the success of their business. For them, slackers had no place! They collaborate and overcome some conflicts especially at the start as they were initially researching the viability of the products that they would have market.

Below are some selected students' testimonials:

*"First of all, this course improved our ability of solving problems. Because when we run our own company, we are sure to run into all kinds of difficulties, no matter how intractable it is, we have to overcome it instead of giving it up as we would in school if the exam is too difficult. Secondly, as the team leader, I have learned how to lead a team...What's more, when my teammates finished their work, I would firstly, appreciate their hard work and appraise them for what they have done well, then point out how it can be improved. I found later that many things I have done during the project were related to the knowledge I have learned in the course though I wasn't aware of it when I was doing that.*

*(Kelly, June 24, 2016)*

*"Through "no borderless" class, I meet the teammates and learn a lot of things from them. In two months of cooperation, I also know what kind of role should be played in a team. When falling into a trap we should maintain a calm attitude to deal with..."*

*(Ivy, June 11, 2016).*

*"...and the greatest achievement is I have learned how to find the key problem and solve it in my way. In addition, through the video conference, the eager curiosity urges me to focus on something that not around us but make a difference to us. It is also what I should strengthen. That is all."*

*(Lilly, July 8, 2016).*

*"...The other hand I think important is team work, everyone has other personal work to do, and so how to finish the work efficiently is very important. We have Assign tasks to everyone, and let them finish them in time. Finally, we will let other team member's double check or Propose different ideas. That is what I learn from the project"*

*(Lizzy, June 28, 2016).*

*"What I have learned from this course is that teamwork is very important. In addition, during the time we run our company, we have overcome many difficulties, which have improved our ability to find and solve problems. Furthermore, there is always a gap between theory and practice, so you can't just think it in your mind and don't take any action. What's more, when you put your heart into something and try your best, you will benefit from it"*

*(Vanky, June 26, 2016).*

## CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

### Conclusion

This paper offers an outcome assessment of a new method of an international experimental /experiential pilot study in entrepreneurship education where a cohort of Chinese college students has created a small learning community and learned via WebEx technology varied topics in entrepreneurship that was facilitated by two faculty members from a private university in Southern California and a faculty member in Guangdong province. Based on the results and its discussions, this paper concludes that border-less cooperation and technology based delivery method was instrumental in enriching students' entrepreneurship knowledge of understanding the subject of entrepreneurship and motivated them to start and successfully implementing a business venture for profit. Based on these findings, it is evident that the international learning process has created a positive learning environment and led to positive outcomes to students. In addition, the students' narratives support the project's central proposition was demonstrated: that three learning outcomes' in entrepreneurial study can be identified with a curriculum that is based on experiential learning design AND the joint (international) faculty collaboration of entrepreneurial curricular – that embraces theory and participant context (practice environment). Evidence listed in the results section demonstrate that: (1) Students demonstrated an understanding of the entrepreneurship process through the generation of an idea for a new business and/or recognition of an opportunity; (2) students assembled the needed resources (including financial, human, logistics) to develop this new venture or opportunity; and (3) students launched the new venture or develop this opportunity, manage its logistics and growth, and be able to make it profitable.

In short, the program has achieved the experiential learning goals of ensuring what Kolb and Kolb (2012) labeled as “dual dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction” (2012:43).

### Limitations

As this study attempts to contribute to the knowledge of the experiential entrepreneurship education and students' learning through an international collaboration, it has some limitations. One limitation of this study was that it used a convenience sample of well-motivated faculty members and a group of motivated Chinese students with a fair command of the English language. Future research might produce different results based on a different sample of both faculty members and students. Therefore, further research with a larger sample is required to assess the applicability of these findings to the general population of students who are interested in the subject of entrepreneurship.

Another second limitation of this study was the fact it has used modern communication technology. Therefore, we can make no claims to the generalizability or representations of these results where technological collaboration is limited or finding an institutional partner in the US with the will to collaborate is not feasible.

Finally, a limitation of this study was that it was limited to one group (i.e. n=9) and in one university. Accordingly, the study does not provide valuable implications for other students within the same university or in different universities. Based on that, the generalizability of these findings to other students and other settings are not reasonable.

### Implications for Future Research

This study offers some suggestions for future research. First and foremost, more research should be conducted, these authors posit that Chinese universities should seriously consider an *international collaboration* with U.S. based institutions of higher learning that emphasize alternative entrepreneurship learning through the use of the available technology. While current research of experiential learning is very limited and focuses on traditional learning, the above stated outcomes are very encouraging and require more research to enhance the literature.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I Excerpts from Students' Reflections

*"All testimonials have been reproduced exactly as written"*

(1) "I think I have gained a lot of experience and knowledge in this course.

First of all, this course improved our ability of solving problems. Because when we run our own company, we are sure to run into all kinds of difficulties, no matter how intractable it is, we have to overcome it instead of giving it up as we would in school if the exam is too difficult.

Secondly, as the team leader, I have learned how to lead a team. For example, I would coordinative designate each teammates' work so that everyone can exert their strengths to the best. What's more, when my teammates finished their work, I would firstly appreciate their hard work and appraise them for what they have done well, then point out how it can be improved. I found later that many things I have done during the project were related to the knowledge I have learned in the course though I wasn't aware of it when I was doing that.

Furthermore, I am studying in Korea now and selling Korean products to China via WeChat with my roommate, our total sales reached 5, 5000 RMB over the past 2 months. I think one of the most important reason that we can get such a big sale is that I have gained a lot of experience in CampusGo. Therefore, I think this course is useful and meaningful.

What impressed me most is that everyone has his strengths and weakness, some traits may seem common while it is quite precious, such as earnest and perseverance. Once you make your choice, all you have to do is to do your best and stick it out.

Finally, I would like to thank Jack, Issam, Steve and my teammates, the time we have spent together is memorable" (Kelly: June 24, 2016)

(2) "Through "no borderless" class, I meet the teammates and learn a lot of things from them. In two months of cooperation, I also know what kind of role should be played in a team. When falling into a trap we should maintain a calm attitude to deal with. And at this time the leader wants you to give is the solution, not the problem. In addition, you have also gave me a more comprehensive understanding of financial knowledge and the level of my English has also been improved" (Ivy, June 11, 2016).

(3) "Before I attended the enterprise classes, I always think set up a business is really far from me. In my previous opinion, set up a business need a lot of money, wide networking and strong will. After the lessons, I found that my thoughts are just partly right. Because I forgot an important thing--theory! Although theory is abstract, it can bring us ideas and thinking. We can learn the regularity from it and avoid making unnecessary mistakes so that we can advance more smoothly. Because of this lessons, we have a try to set up our own business--Campus Go. And that's the first time we put the theory into practice. That's so excited! The last but not least, I think that's an unforgettable and significant lessons and hopping more and more students like us can get benefit from this lessons and that would be really nice. Thanks for all teachers and teammates!" (Lena, June 22, 2016).

(4) "It was our pleasure to join in the video conference. Thanks for Steve striving for the opportunity for us. We were all glad to spend times with Issam and Jack. The video conference means a good chance for me to know about myself. Before that, I was too passive to express myself in my words. Communicated with teammates and professors, which encourages me to try to speak English and promoted me asking something what I want to know, and the greatest achievement is I have learned how to find the key problem and solve it in my way. In addition, through the video conference, the eager curiosity urges me to focus on something that not around us but make a difference to us. It is also what I should strengthen. That is all." (Lilly, July 8, 2016).

(5) “After weeks of Chinese and American classroom learning, not only understand knowledge starting a business better, the more I think is the way to how to put them in practice and the attitude. For example, at the beginning, we don’t know which transport companies is better, we search the information in Internet and consult the Customer Service staff. Even we have tried many transport companies. So from the class, I knew how to find the problem and find the way to solve them. The other hand I think important is team work, everyone has other personal work to do, and so how to finish the work efficiently is very important. We have Assign tasks to everyone, and let them finish them in time. Finally, we will let other team member’s double check or Propose different ideas. That is what I learn from the project” (Lizzy, June 28, 2016).

(6) “During the borderless course, I learned the details about how to run a new company, just like organizational design and structure, marketing research and so on. I learned something new as well as deepen something that I have known. The pre-class preparation and after-class homework improved my English written skills as well as ability of collecting information and critical thinking. Last but not least, our entrepreneurial practice made me grasp the ability to discover and solve problems” (Patty, July 2, 2016).

(7) “From this course, it’s my honor that you can give us some business course every week. I deeply have got hand of organizational structure. I really benefit a lot from these courses. That course about divisional structure was the most impressive for me, which was divided into three parts: product structures, geographic structure and market structure. In product structures, it’s also divided into three parts: product division structure, multidivisional structure and product team structure. According to the advantages and disadvantages of the three parts and the actual situation of our venture project us choice product team structure for the structure. At first, the definition of organizational structure is relatively vague, so the selection of organizational structure is chosen at random. After the professor’s guidance, we found that the right choice of organizational structure for their own business situation is also very important. In addition, communicating with your American students via remote video, It’s obvious, the differences between Chinese and Western culture. Your students are so enthusiastic and humorous, with sharp point of view. That prompted me to work harder to learn English, and they can be more in-depth conversation in future. Have a good time!” (Crystal, June 28, 2016).

(8) “What I have learned from this course is that teamwork is very important. In addition, during the time we run our company, we have overcome many difficulties, which have improved our ability to find and solve problems. Furthermore, there is always a gap between theory and practice, so you can’t just think it in your mind and don’t take any action. What’s more, when you put your heart into something and try your best, you will benefit from it” (Vanky, June 26, 2016).

**APPENDIX 2**  
**MORE ITEMS FROM THE Campus Go TEAM ONLINE STORE**

