

# Student Diversity in Tertiary Institutions Deterministic Demographic Characteristics in Tertiary Education: An Exploratory Study

---

5th Annual Hawaii International  
Conference on Education

January 6th – January 9th 2007

Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa, the Radisson Waikiki  
Prince Kuhio, and the Pacific Beach Hotel,  
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Lise Morton and Charles Lamb

# Introduction

---

1. Introduction: Research Aim  
The Model  
Theoretical Perspective
2. Methodology and Data Collection
3. Analysis and Results
4. Management Implications
5. Future Directions
6. Conclusions
7. Discussion

# Research Aim

## Purpose of study

- To determine whether or not there is an association between certain demographic characteristics of students (in particular *ethnicity, gender and age*) and their beliefs and values towards learning and assessment

## Study Focus

- Examine factors critical to *educational culture* within Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)

# A Model of Educational Culture



Figure One: Model of Educational Culture

# Theoretical Perspective

## 1. Purpose

Rowley (2000), Singleton–Jackson and Newsom (2006)

## 2. Management

Marginson and Considine (2000), Johnson and Rush (1995)

## 3. Student Access and Support Systems

Faris (1998), Smith and Webster (1998), Starr (1999), Young (2004)

## 4. Student Learning Experience

Dewey (1938), Bloom (1956), Rogers (1969) and Trompenaars (1993)

## 5. Assessment

Biggs (1999), McLaughlin (2001), Stapleton (2001) and Prime (2001)

# Methodology and Data Collection

The research consisted of a three-stage approach:

- |                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Qualitative Phase: | Focus Group  |
| 2. Pilot Test:        | Survey       |
| 3. Survey:            | 235 students |

Sample:

60% New Zealand/European students and 40% Asian students from Lincoln University (LU) and, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT)

# Analysis

---

1. Coded data analysed using SPSS software package
2. Data edited and tabulated using marginal frequency analysis on individual variables
3. Bi-Variate analysis in the form of cross-tabulations using the Chi Square test
4. Factor Analysis
5. Multiple Regression Analysis
6. Logistic Regression

# Results

## European/Pakeha Students

- Demonstrate a more heterogeneous approach to living, thinking and learning
- Tend to be less conformist
- Less concerned with lecturer impartiality
- Prefer group work

## Students from Asia

- Demonstrate a more homogeneous approach to living, thinking and learning
- Tend to be more conformist
- More concerned with lecturer impartiality
- Prefer to work on their own as opposed to group work

## Results...continued

### Female students

- Less concerned than males about lecturer impartiality
- More likely to be concerned with preparation towards learning and assessment

### Older students

- As the age of students increases, so too does their enthusiasm towards learning and the desire to do more than the minimum that is required
- Older students prefer to work on their own
- Older students are less concerned about lecturer impartiality

# Management Implications

---

1. Heterogeneity
2. Integration
3. Managing Students' Expectations
4. Inclusive Curriculum
5. Individual and Collective Learning
6. Students' Learning Experiences
7. Ambiguity Tolerance

## Management Implications

---

“I never teach my students; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they learn.”

Albert Einstein

# Future Directions

## Further Research Questions:

1. What are the management implications of differences across learning and assessment styles in a heterogeneous population?
2. How can New Zealand HEIs better meet the needs of the changing student population in an evolving global economy?
3. To what extent are HEIs in New Zealand prepared to revise their traditional products to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse educational market?

# Conclusions

---

1. Empirical evidence confirms that there is an association between students' *ethnicity, gender and age* and their beliefs and values towards learning and assessment
2. Whilst significant, demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and age are not the only factors that determine students' beliefs and values
3. We think that qualitative analysis would be useful to obtain a greater understanding of the issues explored

## Discussion...

