

# **Integrating Constructivist Pedagogical Approaches into Chinese Entrepreneurship Education through Value Creation Pedagogy**

## **Abstract**

The Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE) has directed higher education institutions to implement entrepreneurship education across all disciplines. Contemporaneously the MoE enacted reforms to encourage educators to use student-centred pedagogy, which encourages active participation, critical inquiry, problem-solving skills, and teamwork. This marked a shift from focusing solely on teacher-centred pedagogy, and a traditional emphasis on passive learning, with which educators and students were accustomed. It is common for both educators and students to prefer and gravitate to teaching approaches which they are familiar. Value creation pedagogy, where students seek to create something of value to external stakeholders and learn and develop entrepreneurial competences and behaviours from the experience, has been posited as an effective way to bridge the gap between traditional and progressive education. Value creation pedagogy offers structure, linkage to the entrepreneurial process, the opportunity for collaborative teamwork, and student engagement by allowing students to follow their interests and passions. This chapter discusses and espouses the potential for value creation pedagogy to offer students the opportunity to engage in more practical student-centred entrepreneurship, by mitigating challenges to the transitioning to constructivist entrepreneurship education and reducing tensions between traditional and progressive education that exist in the Chinese context.

## **Keywords**

Entrepreneurship Education, Value Creation, Value Creation Pedagogy, Constructivism, China, Stakeholders

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship education is becoming increasingly established in many countries around the world, with governments and policymakers rolling out entrepreneurship education in the hope and belief that it can function as a catalyst for economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship has long been proposed as an important contributor to sustainable economic growth (Singer et al., 2015) and that graduate entrepreneurship delivers benefits to both the entrepreneur and wider society (Greene and Saridakis, 2008). Entrepreneurship education has been posited as an important link in supporting entrepreneurship, as it can help to develop entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviours, and mindset, which in turn can lead to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial action (Cui and Bell, 2022; Cui et al., 2021; Dakung et al., 2022). This has led to entrepreneurship education being promoted throughout countries around the world (Crammond, 2020) to prepare graduates for their future careers (Hyams-Ssekasi and Caldwell, 2018).

Whilst entrepreneurship education can be traced back in some form to the 1940's in the United States and the 1970's in the United Kingdom (Wang and Ma, 2022; Watkins and Stone, 1999), the notion of entrepreneurship education was not discussed in China until 1989, following a range of enterprise reforms (Lin and Xu, 2017). However, the concept of entrepreneurship education was not mainstreamed until 2001, when the Chinese government started actively supporting and encouraging entrepreneurship education, through Ministry of Education (MoE) directives and policies (Zhou and Xu, 2012). These MoE directives were intended to help stimulate economic growth and develop China's competitive advantage as a manufacturing hub (Kriz, 2010) and break the middle-income trap by developing entrepreneurial talent to sustain a vibrant entrepreneurial economy (Mei and Symaco, 2022). The MoE directives also sought to address the increasing issue of graduate unemployment stemming from the massification of higher education (Anderson and Zhang, 2015; Zhou and Xu, 2012), which had resulted from the tremendous growth in higher education enrolment in the late 1990's (Wang and Ma, 2022). The promotion of entrepreneurship education in China was furthered by the 'Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation' initiative (State Council, 2015), which laid the foundation of a 'Golden Era' of entrepreneurship in China (He et al., 2019). This initiative required all undergraduate students to receive some form of entrepreneurship education and higher education institutions to increase resources and support for entrepreneurship (Wright et al., 2022). This resulted in entrepreneurship courses being offered to students from different disciplines and becoming more commonplace within Chinese higher education (Cui et al.,

2021; Wu and Benson, 2016). However, despite the mainstreaming of entrepreneurship education within China, Anderson and Zhang (2015) have suggested that disparities exist across the country in terms of the provision offered. Entrepreneurship provision has been hindered by monotonous teaching, unsound curriculum design, and a lack of qualified educators and support processes and systems (Li et al., 2016). Others have gone further to suggest that despite the promotion and fanfare around mass entrepreneurship in China, the development of entrepreneurship education often remains limited in practice (Wright et al., 2022). With some institutions adhering to entrepreneurship education initiatives only ceremonially, repackaging existing courses, rather than developing custom entrepreneurship teaching and providing limited new resources (Wright et al., 2022). This has led to educators following the path of least resistance in some cases, with educators falling back to the traditional teaching methods and approaches with which they are familiar and comfortable. This has the potential to stifle the development of innovative entrepreneurial pedagogy and leave students unprepared for the world of entrepreneurship. This has led to calls for the contextualization of entrepreneurship education in China (Bell, 2020; Lyu et al., 2021), which finds a balance between traditional didactic teaching and more progressive teaching methods (Bell and Cui, 2023). In addition, there are calls for further exploration of different pedagogical methods and approaches to entrepreneurship education (Cui et al., 2021), which support student-centred learning to develop deeper learning and student ability in the Chinese context (Wang and Zhang, 2019). This chapter addresses these calls by reviewing and discussing the potential value and suitability of value creation pedagogy in the Chinese entrepreneurship education classroom. This contributes by examining the appropriateness of this student-centred approach to entrepreneurship education in the Chinese context (Cui et al., 2021; Lyu et al., 2021; Wang and Zhang, 2019). The suitability and potential of value creation pedagogy is first assessed by reviewing entrepreneurship education and pedagogy in the light of Chinese educational reforms. Then, literature discussing the barriers and challenges that exist in addressing and achieving the educational reforms by developing and achieving more constructivist learning is presented. After providing an overview of value creation pedagogy, this chapter then analyses value creation pedagogy's potential to mitigate the barriers and challenges identified and support the development of entrepreneurship education in the Chinese context. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the potential that value creation pedagogy may offer for supporting the development of Chinese entrepreneurship education and presenting future research directions.

## **Chinese Educational Pedagogical Reforms and Entrepreneurship Education**

Pedagogical reforms were introduced in China and guidance provided in the Outline of the Curriculum Reform for Basic Education (MoE, 2001), contemporaneously with the promotion of entrepreneurship education within China in 2002 (Zhou and Xu, 2012). The pedagogical reforms sought to encourage active learning through participation and independent enquiry to promote the development of practical skills and problem solving and teamwork skills (MoE, 2001). This represented a transition from an emphasis on the passive delivery of knowledge from the teacher to students and promoting the rote memorization of knowledge through testing. Whilst the reforms did not explicitly detail the underpinning educational philosophy and pedagogic theory, they have widely been assumed to be underpinned by constructivist principles (Tan, 2017). This has led to the introduction and increased adoption of constructivist-based teaching approaches and practices in China (Tan, 2016; Tan, 2017). Constructivist based teaching empathizes the role of the learner in creating their own individual meaning from knowledge based on their own context and experience (Mueller and Anderson, 2014). The learner's construction of knowledge is an active and interpretative process, which is grounded in the learner's subjective understanding and experience, derived from past and present knowledge (Merriam et al., 2007). Constructivist educational approaches are grounded in teaching through active participation, where students can question and reflect on their experiences and learn through the process of discovery. The role of the educator within such a learning approach, is to guide and support students to construct and develop their own meaning and understanding of the world around them, rather than mirror the educator's views and understanding (Jonassen, 1991). A common theme running through constructivist approaches to teaching and learning is active learning, which can be delivered through approaches including problem-based learning, inquiry learning and experiential learning (Kirschner et al., 2006). The incorporation of constructivism in Chinese education, presents a transition from exam-oriented to quality-oriented education (Tan, 2017).

Teaching approaches rooted in constructivism have been posited as being superior for entrepreneurship education (Balan and Metcalfe, 2012; Kyrö, 2015) with constructivist approaches to learning being the only teaching approach that supports the development of the unique skills, competencies and qualities required by entrepreneurs (Kyrö, 2015). The subjective creation of meaning from experience and knowledge, aligns within how knowledge is created within the dynamic entrepreneurial process (Mueller and Anderson, 2014). Constructivist learning environments can act as a steppingstone to developing an

entrepreneurial mindset and mimic the learning, knowledge creation and problem solving required in the context of entrepreneurship (Bell, 2021). The acknowledgment that entrepreneurship education should prepare students for entrepreneurship, by developing the right skillset and mindset, and understand the nature of the entrepreneurial process, has led to calls for entrepreneurship education to include experiential learning to engage students in creative problem solving, and learning-by-doing (Bell and Bell, 2020; Jones and Iredale, 2010). This has led to a shift away from adopting teaching approaches focused on the transmission of objective knowledge, to more student-centred subjective learning through active and experiential learning activities, within entrepreneurship education. Accordingly, the promotion of entrepreneurship education and introduction of curriculum reforms has led to the development of more progressive and constructivist entrepreneurship education in China, to effectively prepare graduates for entrepreneurial endeavours. However, such a transition has presented some challenge and resistance (Wright et al., 2022). The next section reviews the challenges identified within the literature to the implementation of constructivist and more progressive entrepreneurship education in China.

## **Challenges to the Implementation of Constructivist Entrepreneurship Education in China**

Culture and educational tradition influence classroom culture, pedagogy, and practice (Tan, 2016; Tan, 2017), which in turn influences expectations as to what happens in the classroom, including what is delivered, how it is delivered, and who it is delivered by (Lyu et al., 2021). Chinese education has often been intertwined with Confucian tradition, whereby students seek to demonstrate mastery of a topic, through demonstrating the perfection of knowledge in line with teaching from an expert (Tan, 2016). Indeed, some Chinese educators still believe that an educator led approach is vital to allow students to learn from their expertise, as the basis for good teaching (Tan, 2017). This elevates the teacher into an authority figure, who presents the required knowledge to the class, and the knowledge they deliver is rarely challenged by students (Chan, 1999). This results in a highly structured classroom environment, build around limited participation and one way communication, where discipline and conformity are valued (Xiao et al., 2016). Within the Chinese educational system emphasis has historically been placed on a predominantly objectivist view of knowledge, the passive transmission of knowledge between the teacher and students, and assessment of the mastery of the knowledge imparted through tests. This approach to education is at odds with constructivist educational

approaches that promote the development of subjective knowledge. The introduction of progressive constructivist approaches to entrepreneurship education in China has been argued to have challenged the long-held traditional values and pedagogic practices in the Chinese classroom and the roles of the educator and students (Bell and Liu, 2019; Liguori et al., 2019). This has led to concerns being expressed regarding the erosion of content mastery, a lack of compatibility between traditional and constructivist methods, and misalignment between assessments of learning (Tan, 2016).

The transition to include more progressive constructivist education has led to tensions between old and new pedagogic approaches (Tan, 2016). Both entrepreneurship educators adjusting to new ways of teaching and students transitioning to learning in a different way have faced challenges within constructivist entrepreneurship classrooms (Bell and Liu, 2019; Bell, 2020). It is common for students to be wary about embracing new ways of learning, such as transitioning to more active student led approaches, as an adjustment in classroom routine and rituals is required (Neergaard and Christensen, 2017). In the Chinese context Bell (2020), found that students struggled with constructivist entrepreneurship education due to a lack of familiarity with the constructivist learning process, engaging with group work and group dynamics, perceived abstract linkage between taught knowledge and activities, and engagement with reflective learning.

Bell and Liu (2019) concluded that Chinese educators also found the transition to constructivist entrepreneurship education challenging and identified five main challenges. These were the role of the educator in the constructivist learning process and their ability to manage and control the class; the educators' perceived student reaction to the learning process and their engagement with the learning; the time and technology required to deliver constructivist education; developing a clear link between the constructivist learning and industry; and concern as to whether constructivist learning would meet the expectations of the institution. It has also been suggested that a lack of qualified entrepreneurship educators exists in China (Li et al., 2016; Wang and Ma, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022), which has the potential to amplify educators perceived challenges to delivering constructivist entrepreneurship education. To try and overcome and address deficiencies in educators' expertise, some institutions have collaborated with international partners and commercial organizations to try and develop educators' ability to develop and implement active and experiential curricula based on constructivist pedagogies (Zhang and Price, 2020). In some cases, this has led to a cultural collision and fusion of different pedagogic approaches in the Chinese entrepreneurship

classroom, some of which are not necessarily amendable and aligned with the Chinese context (Lyu et al., 2021).

Despite the promotion of entrepreneurship education, supported through progressive educational and pedagogic reforms and directives, challenges still exist in delivering efficacious courses underpinned by constructivist principles. Whilst, some institutions have turned to training faculty, this is not a panacea and is costly and will take time to implement. Therefore, there is a need to explore different pedagogical methods and approaches to entrepreneurship education, which are appropriate for the Chinese context (Cui et al., 2021). Having reviewed the context of Chinese entrepreneurship education in the light of educational and pedagogic reforms and challenges identified within the literature, which could hinder achieving the intended direction of entrepreneurship education, the next section discusses value creation pedagogy. Value creation pedagogy is a novel approach which seeks to teach the building blocks of entrepreneurship and has been posited as having the potential to bridge the gap and transition between traditional and more approaches to progressive entrepreneurship education (Lackéus et al., 2016).

## **Value Creation Pedagogy**

Creating value has been identified as an important part of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial process. Entrepreneurs create value in numerous different ways, such as economic, social, cultural, ecological, or emotional value, and this can be created in private, public or third sector businesses (Hindle, 2010). This rationale of the entrepreneur as a value creator aligns with the definition of the entrepreneur as someone who acts upon ideas and opportunities to transform them into value for others (Vestergaard et al., 2012). This represents the early stages of the entrepreneurial process, whereby an entrepreneur needs to identify how they can use their interests, resources, and skills to develop a concept of interest and value for a potential user or market. Being able to identify opportunities to add value is an important attribute for entrepreneurs, as users and customers commonly invest in products and services, which offers value to them and their needs. There is growing recognition within entrepreneurial education resources and guidelines that an important part of entrepreneurship education is supporting students to understand and be able to create value (Jones et al., 2021). For example, the QAA (2018, p. 7) defines entrepreneurship “as the application of enterprise behaviours, attributes, and competencies into the creation of cultural, social, or economic value”. It is acknowledged that the creation of value does not always lead to new business creation.

However, it has been highlighted that those with entrepreneurial ideas and entrepreneurial thinking are important in existing businesses (Pinchot, 1985; Bell, 2016), and these people, commonly labelled as intrapreneurs, play an important role in supporting competitive advantage in established businesses (Blanka, 2019; Guerrero and Peña-Legazkue, 2013). Additionally, there is a growing movement to shift the focus of entrepreneurship within higher education away from solely focusing on venture creation, to empathize social entrepreneurship and the benefits which entrepreneurship can bring to society through creating value and change through a humanist lens (Bell, 2022a). This emphasise on value has led to calls for entrepreneurship education to ensure that students are aware of the process of creating value (Aldianto et al., 2018; Blenker et al., 2012)

Value creation pedagogy is an educational approach centered around new value creation for others (Lackéus, 2018). It allows students to learn by applying their existing and future competencies to create something novel, which is of value to at least one external stakeholder (Lackéus et al., 2016). Engaging students in the process of creating value for others, situates students within part of the entrepreneurial process, and potentially allows students to engage with stakeholders within a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Such learning allows students to engage in learning about entrepreneurship, through engaging with part of the entrepreneurial process. This engagement allows students to engage in entrepreneurial activities to develop entrepreneurial competencies and identify and gain knowledge about the practices of entrepreneurship (Bell, 2015; Lackéus and Williams-Middleton, 2015). Value creation pedagogy has been found to be particularly efficacious in developing entrepreneurial competencies, skills, and motivation, and in supporting knowledge acquisition (Lackéus, 2020). Active engagement within the value creation process is underpinned by constructivist principles, as students construct their own learning and meaning through the process, drawing on their knowledge and experience (Bell and Bell, 2023).

Value creation pedagogy offers the educator a degree of flexibility as to how they design and contextualise the teaching, whilst offering some structure as to the emphasis of activities. Due to class sizes, it is common for students to work in groups to identify problems and needs, and ways in which students can add value for an external stakeholder. This is likely to involve meeting, researching, and engaging with the community, a process which can develop social skills and empathy which is important in understanding the needs of others. Having gained an understanding of a particular problem or need in the lives of others, students can consider creative solutions and opportunities to create value in helping to alleviate the problem. The



next stage involves creating what they have identified to create the value, which can develop students practice skills and competencies in this field. Once the value creation project has been completed, it can be presented to the external stakeholder targeted to provide feedback, and students can reflect on how it could be developed further and supported if appropriate. This process fits neatly with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, with students starting with reflective observation, reviewing, and reflecting on the needs of others. Once the needs of the external stakeholders being targeted have been reviewed and analysed, students can move to abstract conceptualisation, by developing and conceptualising ideas and the ways in which value can be created. Once an idea has been identified, students can move into active experimentation, and experiment how a product/service can be developed to achieve and create value. Finally, students can gain concrete experience, by developing their product/service and receiving feedback.

Lackéus et al. (2016) has suggested that value creation pedagogy can act as a bridge between traditional and progressive entrepreneurship education, thus potentially making it suitable for contexts unfamiliar or newer to adopting constructivist entrepreneurship education. The next section analyses the potential for value creation pedagogy to mitigate the challenges and barriers to the implementation of constructivist entrepreneurship education in China, discussed in the previous section. This identifies the potential suitability of value creation pedagogy in the Chinese context, and how it can support the achievement of pedagogical reforms and the transition towards the implementation of more constructivist and progressive entrepreneurship education.

## **The Potential for Value Creation Pedagogy in China**

Value creation pedagogy has the potential to address and mitigate some of the challenges identified by educators and students in the Chinese context and thus support the development of constructivist entrepreneurship education in China. One of the issues identified by both educators and students with constructivist entrepreneurship education is the link between learning and industry, with concerns as to whether constructivist activities are too abstract for students to make links. For students unfamiliar with constructivist learning approaches and used to being transmitted what teachers have already identified as important knowledge, making the links with practice and industry can be challenging through abstract activities. Value creation pedagogy moves away from adopting abstract activities to demonstrate entrepreneurship concepts and develop enterprising skills, such as designing and pitching paper

planes, to focus on part of the entrepreneurial process. Whilst, value creation is only an initial part of entrepreneurship, it offers the opportunity for greater linkage with the stages of the entrepreneurial process, rather than developing skills in isolation of the entrepreneurial process. This is valuable as most students come into entrepreneurship education with limited experience and potentially limited knowledge of entrepreneurship, so situated engagement with part of the process can further their understanding of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial process, as well as the development of skills and competencies. The entrepreneurship education literature has highlighted the importance of authentic entrepreneurial learning (e.g., Macht and Ball, 2016; Ramsgaard and Christensen, 2018), however, for many students they might need to build up to venture creation learning which offers them an opportunity to build skills and understanding and can help determine if entrepreneurship is of interest to them. Thus, value creation pedagogy can function as a steppingstone to entrepreneurship and engage students in the early stages of the entrepreneurial process.

A lack of training and qualified educators has commonly been put forward as limiting the development of entrepreneurship education in China (Li et al., 2016; Wang and Ma, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). It has been suggested that this has led to unsound curriculum design and educators reverting to didactic monotonous teaching (Li et al., 2016). A lack of clarity and discomfort with the adjusted role of the educator in constructivist learning has been found to be a challenge in China. Value creation pedagogy has the potential to mitigate some of these challenges, as it offers increased structure which may potentially run over an extended period of time. Lackéus et al. (2016) suggested that one of the benefits of value creation pedagogy is that it can offer some structure to progressive pedagogy, which can be perceived as lacking structure. The stages of creating value can be linked to the stages of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984), first engaging students in reflective observation of stakeholders needs, then conceptualising ways to fulfil the needs identified, engaging in active experimentation to develop a product/service, and then finally receiving feedback and gaining concrete experience of the value creation process. This link between value creation pedagogy and the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984), can structure and support educators in the maximisation of students learning and experience.

The process of teaching through value creation pedagogy can provide structure to sessions by going through the stages of creating value and following a similar session design each time. This can reduce the requirement for educators to bring together a series of disparate and abstract activities, resulting in different session structures each week. Adding more structure to learning

has also been suggested to help support students transition to constructivist learning environments (Bell, 2020). This has the potential to find a happy medium between highly structured teaching where the students remain passive and more unstructured constructivist teaching, which has been a challenge within the Chinese context. The inclusion of one extended activity creating value for an external audience, broken down into bitesize chunks, also has the potential to address a common challenge for educators, which is a lack of time. As this should be less time consuming compared to developing a series of independent activities.

Educators have highlighted concern around potential institutional non-acceptance of constructivist entrepreneurship education teaching approaches, despite promotion through government directives. This likely partly stems from worries as to the clarity of the link between constructivist education and industry, and the potentially unstructured nature of sessions and courses, leading to concerns being raised as to how institutions and administrators will perceive constructivist learning activities. The more structured and less abstract nature of value creation pedagogy has the potential to allay some of these worries, as a clearer case as to how the teaching supports entrepreneurship can be presented.

Teaching entrepreneurship through value creation pedagogy can also reduce educators' worries about teaching entrepreneurship with only a limited experience of entrepreneurship, as the focus is moved away from the process of starting up a business and educators' knowledge and expertise in this area, potentially reducing the chance of losing face. If educators and administrators have concerns about teaching unbridled capitalist principles, value creation pedagogy has the potential to reduce unease as it places less emphasis on venture creation and neoliberal principles (Lackéus, 2017).

Some educators have highlighted concern about potential student reaction and engagement with constructivist teaching methods. Providing students the opportunity to create value in an area of interest to them has the potential to increase student engagement, compared to disparate and abstract activities. Value creation pedagogy can allow students to follow their own interests and passions to find ways to create value. This can allow the development of positive emotions within entrepreneurial learning, which can support student engagement and effective learning (Lackéus, 2014; Loon and Bell, 2018). Value creation pedagogy can allow students to follow their own interests and passion to find entrepreneurial opportunities that align with their individual context and abilities, which is important for preparing students for entrepreneurship (Bell, 2022a). Creating value in students' own field of expertise can help students to develop a

sense of entrepreneurial purpose (Jones et al., 2021), and enhance students understanding of what entrepreneurs do in their field and context.

Both students and educators have highlighted concerns about students' engagement in group work and the subsequent group dynamics. This could stem from students not always being familiar and comfortable with group work in an educational setting and where comfortable interaction can take time for relationship to be established (Chan, 1999). However, team working and collaboration skills are commonly identified as important for entrepreneurship, so would benefit from being developed within entrepreneurship education. Whilst value creation pedagogy does not necessitate groupwork, value can be created by groups of students. Working in groups to create value can potentially be less competitive and support more collaborative engagement than focusing on profit and competitive business, due to a more collective engagement in a cause. Team based approaches to entrepreneurship education have the potential to be more supportive and have been found to elicit positive reaction (Crammond et al., 2023). Therefore, the adoption of team-based approaches to creating value could offer a good entry point for those unfamiliar with collaborative projects and groupwork to engage and develop teamwork skills.

Building on the proposition from Lackéus et al. (2016) that value creation pedagogy can act as a bridge between traditional and progressive entrepreneurship education, this chapter espouses that value creation pedagogy is particularly suitable for the Chinese context, as it has the potential to mitigate and alleviate some of context specific barriers to integrating more progressive educational approaches within entrepreneurship education. The Chinese educational context is distinct due to a long cultural heritage, the promotion of entrepreneurship education and educational and pedagogic reforms encouraging the inclusion of more progressive teaching approaches (Bell and Cui, 2023). The next section concludes by discussing the potential that value creation pedagogy may offer for supporting the development of Chinese entrepreneurship education and discussing directions for future research.

## **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship education has been promoted and supported in China through pedagogic directives and reforms encouraging the development of progressive educational approaches. However, the actual levels of adoption and implementation of such educational approaches has been questioned, with Wright et al. (2022) suggesting that in some cases institutions have only given lip service to entrepreneurship initiatives through ceremonial adherence. Previous

research has found that both students and educators in the Chinese educational system have reservations and perceive there to be challenges in adopting constructivist entrepreneurship education (Bell, 2020; Bell and Liu, 2019). However, it is common for there to be challenges whilst transitioning to new educational approaches, as new rituals and routines need to be learned (Neergaard and Christensen, 2017). The development of constructivist entrepreneurship education could be argued as representing a more challenging transition, due to the more ingrained and accepted traditional educational principles and routines in the educational system. Value creation pedagogy has been suggested as being a potential bridge between the traditional ‘chalk and talk’ approaches and the more loose and progressive approaches (Lackéus et al., 2016). A challenge with the introduction of constructivist entrepreneurship education in China has been finding a balance between the highly structured traditional didactic teaching approach and the less structured progressive teaching methods (Bell and Cui, 2023). Finding a path forward to support the increased implementation of progressive approaches to entrepreneurship education has the potential to achieve challenging educational and pedagogic reforms and upskill graduates, preparing them for a challenging job market (Hyams-Ssekasi and Caldwell, 2018).

#### *The Potential for Value Creation Pedagogy to Advance Chinese Entrepreneurship Education*

This chapter advocates the potential for adopting value creation pedagogy within the Chinese context, as it can mitigate some of the concerns and challenges identified by both educators and students. Value creation pedagogy can engage students in the early stages of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial process, potentially reducing concerns around the link between learning activities and industry and entrepreneurship. This offers authentic alignment with part of the entrepreneurial process (Macht and Ball, 2016) and reduces reliance on abstract learning activities. The focus on value creation is relevant for a diverse range of students, many of whom will not go on to launch ventures straight away, as it can lay the groundwork for entrepreneurship if required in the future whilst developing enterprise skills and competencies relevant for all. Value creation pedagogy can offer structure to sessions for both educators and students, potentially over an extended period compared to a series of individual unrelated abstract activities. Giving time for students to learn routines and how to learn within a constructivist approach to learning can potentially require less preparation time for educators. The structure of going through the stages of creating value for an external audience by teaching the knowledge required to complete each step, and then asking students to use this knowledge

to complete the step, has the potential to find a happy balance between highly structured teaching sessions and fully constructivist teaching sessions which can be perceived to be loose and unstructured. The increased structure and clearer linkage to entrepreneurship offered by value creation pedagogy can also address educators concerns as to how other stakeholders, such as administrators and teachers, will view the constructivist entrepreneurship education classroom. Additionally, the potential for value creation pedagogy to allow students to follow their interests, passion, and skills to create value for an audience of interest to them can help to increase student engagement in the constructivist learning process. This can allow students to develop a sense of entrepreneurial purpose (Jones et al., 2021) and make entrepreneurship relevant to them (Bell, 2022b). Value creation pedagogy can also offer students a gateway to developing teamworking skills, for those unfamiliar with groupwork in an education setting, through collaborative group projects, which might be less competitive than venture creation projects. Team-based projects can help to facilitate and enable supportive engagement with stakeholders and have been found to be viewed positively (Crammond et al., 2023).

Whilst, transitioning to new ways and processes of learning will always take some time and commitment from both students and educators, value creation pedagogy is potentially amenable to the Chinese context due to it offering clearer linkage to the entrepreneurial process and more structure, both of which are elements of teaching which educators have concerns regarding institutional expectations. Additionally, value creation pedagogy has the potential to support greater student buy-in and engagement by allowing students to follow their own interests and passion and utilise their own specific skillsets, and support collaborative teamwork.

### *Directions for Future Research*

Value creation pedagogy remains an underexplored and under researched approach to entrepreneurship education. Therefore, it would benefit from greater exploration to determine how it can be most effectively applied and structured within different situations and contexts. Given its potential to bridge the gap between traditional and more progressive approaches to entrepreneurship education, understanding how educators, students, and other stakeholders, such as administrators and policymakers view and respond to it would further our understanding of its potential application. For example, how willing are educators to embrace value creation pedagogy, as whilst it might bridge the gap between traditional and more progressive teaching, it still represents a movement away from traditional didactic education.

The type of value creation chosen and its impact on students understanding and development could also be further explored to help identify if types of value creation are more efficacious and beneficial for developing entrepreneurial skills and competencies. Additionally, the ideal age to engage students in value creation could be explored, as value creation pedagogy could potentially be applied in numerous settings and age groups, depending on its complexity and scaffolding available. Indeed, the concept of value creation pedagogy should maybe not be seen as a singular pedagogic intervention, but something which students should be introduced to at an early stage and then built on and expanded on within the curricula as it represents a potential starting point for entrepreneurship. It would be beneficial to have additional understanding of how students can be effectively transitioned from creating value to creating a venture and how value creation pedagogy can be integrated into an educational pathway leading to business and venture creation. Understanding more about value creation pedagogy has the potential to increase its usage and application in a range of contexts and support the inclusion of more practical and progressive entrepreneurship education, capable of developing the practical skills and competences required for entrepreneurship.

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