



The impact of social motivation on cooperative learning and assessment preferences

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the assessment preferences of 453 postgraduate business students in New Zealand, Australia, and Thailand using a survey linking motivational and educational preferences. This study compares the needs of Western students (Australian and New Zealand), Asian (Thai) and international students (predominantly Chinese and Indian students) in Australia and New Zealand (ANZAC). One major finding is that students from these three countries who are socially motivated prefer 'cooperative learning'. Further, the study specifically shows that students from Thailand are more socially motivated than students from Australia and New Zealand (ANZAC) while International ANZAC students have the greatest desire for cooperative learning. It also shows that group assessment poses quite significant challenges for local ANZAC students and therefore, remedial intervention from universities is essential if group assessments are to remain relevant and useful in achieving meaningful teaching and learning outcomes.

Keywords: assessment preferences, social motivation, cooperative learning, international students, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand

Put random collections of people into groups – for instance on a management training course – and they will, if they wish to be a group ... start to find a name, or a private territorial sign, or a ritual, which will give them an independent identity. If they do not do this, it often means that membership of such a group is not important to them, that they are happy to remain a random collection of individuals. (Handy 1985: 155)

In the tertiary education context over the past fifteen years or so, group working methods and more specifically group work that is assessed