



香港教育大學
The Education University
of Hong Kong

Research Brief
EPL IMPACT

Presented by
Dr Maxwell Ho

**Entrepreneurial Teachers and
their Innovation Advocacy**



hocs@eduhk.hk



www.eduhk.hk/epl



Faculty of Education
and Human Development
教育及人類發展學院



Department of Education Policy
and Leadership
教育政策與領導學系



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DEFINITION

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a rapid interest in teachers' entrepreneurial behaviour (TEB). This has, as a result, established its importance as being an effective response to the education system's changing, uncertain and increasingly demanding context. This research study sought to suggest a clear definition of TEB, identifying its conceptual components. A semi-systematic literature review of entrepreneurial behaviour was initially undertaken. Purposeful sampling and set semi-structured selection criteria were used in order to identify entrepreneurial teachers working in Hong Kong primary and secondary schools. To narrow the scope of selection, innovative teachers were identified from the list of the Hong Kong Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (CEATE) awardees. This award is held annually by the Education Bureau (EDB). A sample of awardees between 2014 and 2017 were drawn from a wide range of teaching domains. Then, a professional judging panel identified 15 who had demonstrated clear accomplishments in terms of their radical innovation. Finally, an external audit panel further ranked them based on two criteria: 1) practicing radical innovation in a changing environment; and 2) demonstrating managerial skills when collaborating with colleagues. Representatives from three schools who were ranked the highest by the audit team agreed to participate in the study. Entrepreneurial teachers, principals and colleagues were interviewed. Other evidence including school documents such as plans and reports, students' work and class observations triangulated the interviewees' statements. The data were analysed by using data reduction, data display and conclusions. Practically, the research findings are of help to clarify the professional standards that are related to teacher entrepreneurship in Hong Kong and beyond.



Key Issues and Significant Findings

- 1 The notion of entrepreneurial behaviour in the school context was clarified.
- 2 The concept of TEB was further reinforced by identifying three conceptual competencies (coordinating efforts, seeking resources, advocating information) and three conceptual attributes (ownership-enthusiasm, risk-taking, humanity-confidence).
- 3 A competency is an entrepreneurial teachers' explicit ability to put innovative ideas into action.
- 4 Attributes are implicit qualities that enable entrepreneurial teachers to have the belief that they can perform and complete specific tasks and have the ability to competently work with their colleagues.
- 5 The new attribute of humility-confidence was identified in this study; that is, respecting, appreciating and valuing colleagues and having genuine care for them and, simultaneously, defending their curriculum humbly but firmly when resistant teachers did not initially follow or respect them.
- 6 One of the objectives of the study, to define a clear conceptual definition of TEB was offered, namely: "Teachers' enactment of a series of competencies and attributes that enable them to seize innovation opportunities and scaling-up innovation in schools".
- 7 The findings contribute to the existing TEB literature with regard to how entrepreneurial teachers perform TEB in their development of innovative curricula and schemes.
- 8 With TEB defined and its components identified, a solid knowledge base for policymakers is, thus, provided to generate a practical indicator of the meaning of what being an "Edupreneur" entails.



Main Stakeholders and Engagement with Them

The following provisions to date have been provided by the research team to the main stakeholders:

- 2019-2020: School-based middle leader training (meetings, workshops, consultation and sharing sessions) for 2 primary and 2 secondary schools (204 teachers including 28 MLs)
- 2020-2021: Service leadership 3Cs (workshops and consultation sessions) for 7 primary and 11 secondary schools (33 leaders including 21 vice principals/assistant principals)

As a result,

- Participant educators now have a clearer understanding of their schools' strengths and weaknesses;
 - Their major concerns have been revised; and
 - They have formulated feasible and effective initiatives with an improved understanding towards their school.
- The research team also conducted social network analysis and discovered that from 2019 to 2020, teachers have significantly increased in their seeking of advice on teaching and learning matters from their leaders.



Implications and Recommendations

Theoretically, entrepreneurial teachers:

- Advocate innovation to create social value; they actively respond to policy initiatives (for example, school-based curriculum, catering for learning diversity); and are intrinsically motivated to improve their teaching and learning (learning orientation).
- Do not need to be the source of innovative ideas but need to be sensitive to useful and novel ideas that are emerging within and outside their school.
- Should consolidate innovative ideas into new pedagogies that address teaching and learning difficulties happening in their school.

Practically, the research findings:

- Are helpful in clarifying the professional standards that are related to teacher entrepreneurship in Hong Kong and beyond.



For more Information:

- 1 Ho, C. S.. M., Lu, J., & Bryant, D. A., (2020). Understanding teacher entrepreneurial behavior in schools: Conceptualization and empirical investigation. *Journal of Educational Change*. ([Click to read](#))
- 2 For enquiries, please contact Dr Maxwell HO by hocs@eduhk.hk.



Video Interview

