The Application for NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp

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EDUCATION

- **School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University**

Ph.D. Candidate in the department of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, expected 2013

Advisors: Yunhuan Tong, Xudong Gao

- **Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

Visiting Student in Technological Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Strategic Management, 2010-2011

Advisor: Michael Cusumano

- **School of Economics, Nankai University**

Bachelor's Degree in Economics, 2007

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Innovation, network embeddedness

PUBLICATIONS

- **Zhang, L.,** Tong, Y., and Gao, X. Case Study on the Core Competence and Competitive Strategy of Chinese Enterprises in the Perspective of Resource-Based View, *Science of Science and Management of S. & T*.[B], Vol.30, No.11, 2009.
- **Zhang, L.,** Tong, Y., and Gao, X. Social embeddedness and BOP-oriented innovation initiatives: a multi-case study of four Chinese agribusiness firms, Studies in Science of Science [A], Vol.29, No.11, 2011.
- **Zhang, L**., Tong, Y., and Gao, X. Product Innovation of China Enterprises towards the Base of the Pyramid: the Shanzhai Phones Case, *Chinese Journal of Population Resources and Environment* [B], forthcoming.
- Hao, X., **Zhang, L.,** Chen, X., and Tong, Y. Research on BOP-oriented business model innovation: from the theoretical framework to the decision support model, *Chinese Journal of Management* [B], forthcoming.

A=A level Journal in China; B=B level Journal in China

WORKING PAPERS

- Why companies go BOP: an exploratory study in Chinese context, with Yunhuan, Tong.

Will be presented at*: the Portland International Center for Management of Engineering and Technology Conference*, 2012

- Social Embeddedness and BOP-Oriented Initiatives : a Multi-Case Study in China, with Yunhuan, Tong & Xundong, Gao.

Will be presented at*: the AOM Annual Meeting*, 2012

- An exploratory study on the characteristics of BOP network and BOP strategies: from the social network perspective

Presented at: *The Annual Conference of the Academy of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 2010

The Taiwan and Beijing Tsinghua PhD Workshop on Technology Management, 2010

- Study on key successful factors of Sustainable innovation, with Gordon K. Adomdza

Work in progress

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Teaching Assistant of:
  - Tsinghua-MIT International MBA program: Strategic Management; Managerial Thinking
  - Tsinghua Part-time MBA program: Corporate Finance
  - Tsinghua-HP CATALYST Social STEM-preneurs: social entrepreneurship
- Instructor of Case Study Method in Graduate and Ph.D Courses (one section)

HONORS, AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

- The Ph. D Joint-training Fellowship of Tsinghua-MIT, Sloan China Program, 2010-2011
- The Scholarship for Overseas Graduate Studies, Tsinghua University, 2010-2011
- The AEGON Scholarship, Tsinghua university, 2010
- Doctoral Student Travel Grant, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, 2009
- Excellent Bachelor's Thesis, Nankai University, 2007
- "Outstanding graduates" awarded by Tsang Hin-chi Education Foundation (only two graduates of Nankai University were awarded), 2007.
- "TOP 10 outstanding students" awarded by Nankai University, 2006
- "Excellent female college students" awarded by Tianjin CPPCC National Committee (only 10 undergraduates awarded in all 43 universities in Tianjin), 2005.
- The First-tier Scholarship, Nankai University, 2004, 2005
- The National Scholarship for Undergraduate Students, Nankai University, 2004

PAPER ABSTRACTS

- **Why companies go BOP: an exploratory study in Chinese context (with Yunhuan, Tong)**

"Alleviating poverty through market-based approach" is increasingly capturing the attention of academia and practitioners. However, there remains a lack of empirical and theoretical work on why companies are interested in exploring BOP market. We conducted a multi-case study of the motivations and contextual factors that induce firms' BOP initiatives. Based on the analytic induction on eight companies in China, three motivations were revealed: legitimacy, corporate social responsibility, and competitiveness. These motivations are influenced by three level of contextual conditions: the institutional context, the organizational context and the individual context. Our research has made insightful expansion and contributions to the existing BOP literature.

- **Social Embeddedness and BOP-Oriented Initiatives : a Multi-Case Study in China (with Yunhuan, Tong & Xundong, Gao.)**

Embedded into the local society has been identified as a critical success factor for companies tapping into the low-income markets. Following this logic, this study examined the Social embeddedness in the context of China by applying relational and structural embeddedness contingent on distinct BOP-oriented Initiatives—exploration innovation and exploitation innovation. Based on the case study of four companies from the agribusiness, The results showed that the establishment of social relations with non-commercial stakeholders is the essential to succeed.

- **An Exploratory Study on BOP-oriented Business Model Innovation: from theoretical framework to decision support model (with Yunhuan Tong, Xiuqing Hao & Xiaopeng, Chen)**

'The Base of the Pyramid' (BOP) strategy is a worldwide operational philosophy concerning both economic interests and social problems, and has increasingly gained popularity in recent years. However, there remains a lack of empirical and theoretical work on how enterprises should tap into BOP to meet the dual needs of the society and the firms. Based on BOP-related literature review, this study proposed a five-dimension theoretical framework to analyze this BOP-oriented business model innovation. These five dimensions include BOP characteristic, value creation, social embeddedness, sustainability, and scalability. Then, following by a multiple case study on six BOP businesses within Chinese context, this study inductively specified this framework to a decision support model. This research has made insightful expansion and contributions to the existing BOP research and provided strategies implications for management practice.

TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY STUDENT RECORD
(ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Name: Zhang Liping **Department:** School of Economics and Management

Student Number: 2007310893 **Major:** Business Administration

Date of Birth: May 2, 1985 **Degree Pursued:** Doctorate

Course No.	Course Title	Credit	Grade	Semester	Examination	Degree Course	Remark
80510053	Socialist Economy Theory and Practice	3	91	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
70510123	Advanced Econometrics	3	72	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
70590383	Regional Economics	3	85	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
80510073	Management of Technology	3	86	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
80510862	Consumer Behavior	2	89	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
80512772	Guided Study on Literature in Economics and Management	2	90	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
90510053	Advanced Micro-Economics (I)	3	83	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
90640012	English for Doctor Candidate	2	Exemption	2007-2008-1	Y	Y	
80511493	Strategic Management	3	82	2007-2008-2	Y	Y	
80511533	Corporate Finance	3	95	2007-2008-2	Y	Y	
80512403	Business Research Methodology	3	89	2007-2008-2	Y	Y	
90510143	Economics of Technological Innovation II	3	87	2007-2008-2	Y	Y	
70510013	Organizational Behavior	3	90	2008-2009-1	Y	Y	
90510172	Special Subject of Management	2	87	2008-2009-2	Y	Y	
90510283	Corporate Strategy	3	95	2008-2009-2	Y	Y	
99990061	Comprehensive Examination in the Major Field	1	90	2009-2010-1	Y	Y	
69990041	Social Investigation	1	Pass	2009-2010-2	N	Y	
90510312	Organizations, Environments and competitive advantage	2	90	2009-2010-1	Y	N	

Total credits: **45** Total degree course credit: **43** Course credits through examination: **44**

Official Seal:

Date: March 22, 2012

Brief Instruction of the Course Code

The code for each course has 8 digits, with the first of which showing the program type, namely:

0—5: courses of the undergraduate program.

6—9: courses of the postgraduate program.

Y: courses offered by the overseas academics for the postgraduate program.

Brief Instruction of the Academic Transcript for Undergraduate Program

1. There are 3 systems for student academic record:

(1) 100-point system: with the passing mark at 60 points. Academic credits are given for 60 points and above.

(2) Distinction, Pass and Failure system: Academic credits are given for distinction and pass grades.

(3) Exemption: Academic credits are given.

2. Re-taken course:

Only the latest academic record for a re-taken course will be shown in the Academic Transcript. The times of taking the course will be marked following the record. For example: "** R n", with the mark of "**" standing for academic record; "R" meaning re-taken or re-examined; and "n" referring to the times the course was taken.

3. The dates for graduation and degree conferment:

(1) The column of "date of graduation" is blank for the currently enrolled students. The column of "degree" is "**********".

(2) For students already graduated, the date of graduation and degree conferment will be showed in the columns respectively.

4. The mark of "**********" means the record ends here.

Brief Instruction of the Academic Transcript for Postgraduate Program

1. There are 3 systems for student academic record:

(1) 100-point system: Academic credits are given for 60 points and above.

(2) Pass and Failure system: Academic credits are given for pass grade.

(3) Exemption: a. The credits of the subject are given on condition that the requirements of exemption are satisfied.

b. No credits are given if the exemption is approved by the Postgraduate Program Office, and another subject is required as a substitute.

2. Re-taken (or re-examined) course:

Students are given only one more time to re-take the course or re-sit in the course examination if they fail in the course. Only the latest academic record for a re-taken or re-examined course will be shown in the Academic Transcript. The times of taking the course will be marked following the record. For example: "**R n", with the mark of "**" standing for academic record; "R" meaning re-taken or re-examined; and "n" referring to the times the course or the examination was taken.

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APPLICATION ESSAY

By Liping Zhang

The theme of NBER Entrepreneurship Boot Camp is not only of particular interest to me, but it also perfectly fits my background.

My post-graduate research interests have focused on sustainability, innovation and entrepreneurship. Since scoring in the top percentile on my doctoral qualification exam in 2009, I have been exploring the social dimension of sustainability. Upon discussing dissertation projects with my supervisor, I developed a profound passion to this issue. This natural connection was in no small part due to my humble upbringing from a poor family in the rural countryside of Henan Province.

Today, sustainability-related innovation and entrepreneurship is emerging as a important field of study on the corporate level. Existing literature on corporate sustainability, however, mainly focuses on its environmental dimension. These studies usually fall into one of three areas: developing typologies of environmental strategies, explaining the external and internal drivers of why companies adopt environmental practices, and examining the causal relationships between proactive or reactive environmental practices and company performance. While these studies reveal glimpses of why and how organizational sustainability strategies evolve, we still lack a comprehensive theory of corporate sustainability. Penetration of social principles such as justice, equity and inclusiveness into the practice of sustainable development from either a corporate or research perspective is still too limited. Thus, a potentially fruitful area of research exists by integrating these social dimensions into studies of sustainability, innovation and entrepreneurship. For example, how can sustainable innovation-related concepts be operationalized and measured to examine companies' entrepreneurial activities towards sustainability? Furthermore, what role should public policy and regulations play in creating business incentives for companies undertaking sustainable models that generate competitive imagination for disruptive innovations simultaneously that might alleviate global social problems such as poverty?

Emerging research perspectives in the Base of the Pyramid recognize that the private sector can play a fundamental role in achieving social objectives like inclusive development, poverty reduction via multi-stakeholders, and cross-sector collaborations between firms, governments, communities and NGOs. However, how should companies

be embedded into this network in order to explore the low-income market successfully? Also, how does this social embeddedness and network structure impact a company's overall performance?

Since 2009, I have fully committed and dedicated myself to collecting data both by conducting interviews all over China and reviewing second-hand materials. So far, my colleagues and I have accumulated roughly 80 cases. These companies, mostly start-ups, cover a wide range of industries including agriculture, microfinance, mobile phone manufacturing, mobile communication, home appliances, and solar energy. Based on the inductive analysis on some of these cases advised by my supervisors in Tsinghua and MIT Sloan, I have published four papers in high-level Chinese academic journals and presented another three written in English at high-level academic conferences. However, my primary desire is to make the best use of these unique cases under the guidance of theoretical perspectives. This way, I can develop more interesting work and contribute more to sustainability related entrepreneurship research. Ultimately, this will allow me to introduce Chinese corporate practices on sustainability to the international community. Reading and reviewing around 50 papers carefully selected by the experienced and active professors in such an intense and dynamic period and environment will help me build a more solid theoretical foundation to further facilitate my research. In addition, learning from the preeminent professors in the field while training together with high-potential young researchers from all over the world in the midst of one of the world's most dynamic academic centers will significantly benefit me in many ways. I will refine my research questions and establish more suitable research approaches. The NBER Entrepreneurship Working Group has always done exciting work, and its Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp offers a rare research opportunity combined with abundant resources. This would definitely be one of the greatest experiences I could ever imagine!

If admitted to the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp, I am confident that my strong academic background, innovative mindset, positive research attitude, relevant experience, great passion, determination, and desire for knowledge and improvement will help add great value to the event. Personally, I am excited to see how it will contribute to my academic career and future in sustainability transformation.

Finally, sincerely thank you for your attention and consideration!

清華大學 经济管理学院
School of Economics & Management, Tsinghua University.

Recommendation Letter

To whom it may concern:

It is a true pleasure for me to write this letter to recommend Liping Zhang, who is one of the best students I have ever supervised and worked with, into this NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp.

I know Liping very well. After she joined my department as a Ph.D. candidate, especially after taking my "Technology Strategy" course in the fall of 2007, Liping has been actively involved in my research projects and been served as my Research Assistant.

Liping's research is in the area of sustainability, innovation and entrepreneurship, and has made impressive progress. For example, as one of the key members of our research team, she has played a leading role in collecting data on about 80 cases in this area. She has published four papers in leading Chinese academic journals in the area of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Liping is very capable and fully engaged with her intellectual curiosity about academic research, and certainly has proved herself to be a "model student" I wish my other students to achieve. I strongly recommend her as a prospective candidate for your program. If there is any question, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Yours Sincerely

Xudong Gao
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Vice Director, Tsinghua University Research Center for Technological Innovation
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March 28, 2012

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