

INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES ACROSS NATIONS

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Abstract: Understanding global business trends and the need to acknowledge cultural differences due to the melting of national boundaries has implicitly increased the need to address diversity and cross-cultural issues to comprehend why and how people behave across cultures during the conduct of their business. Consequently, international entrepreneurship calls for a deeper understanding of managerial behavior that distinguishes the vigorous and active intent of undertaking entrepreneurial activities across cultural boundaries. The risk taking abilities as well as innovation in the businesses is truly observed from the cultural perspective like what do individuals consider while starting a new venture, how do they view business success or failure. In this paper, we offer a qualitative analysis of the current prevalent studies in the domain that are aligned to determining the relationship between two of Hofstede's culture dimensions and psychological traits associated with entrepreneurial potential across Asian and European nations. It is anticipated, through this piece of research, that an internal locus of control orientation is more prevalent in European nations than in Asian nations. Likewise, it is also expected that an innovative orientation is more prevalent in Asian nations than in European nations. However, as neither of the personality traits can independently explain entrepreneurial motivation across nations, it is also hypothesized that precisely those individuals with both an internal locus of control along with an innovative orientation should appear more frequently in highly individualistic and low uncertainty cultures. Thus, the research paper attempts to portray the potential pattern of relationships pertinent to cultural values over the spectrum of personal as well as contextual factors while focusing on entrepreneurial outcomes across Asian and European nations. Also, based upon the Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the research paper builds upon the underlining rationale behind undertaking the kind of entrepreneurial activities across the Asian as well as European nations focusing upon the entrepreneurial aspirations, attitudes and social influences, as a contribution towards the literature on entrepreneurial potential across nationalities and cultures.

Keywords: Culture, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, International entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial education.

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding global business trends and the need to acknowledge cultural differences due to the melting of national boundaries has implicitly increased the need to address diversity and cross-cultural issues to comprehend why and how people behave across cultures during the conduct of their business. Managers not just restrain themselves to their own cultural spheres but infact look for opportunities of investment. Consequently, international entrepreneurship calls for a deeper understanding of managerial behavior that distinguishes the vigorous and active intent of undertaking entrepreneurial activities across cultural boundaries. The risk taking abilities and incorporation of innovation in the businesses is truly observed from the cultural perspective like what do individuals consider while starting a new venture, how do they view business success or failure.

Interestingly, the perspectives of individuals in terms of the kind of entrepreneurial behavior presumed by them heavily rely upon the way culture shapes their behavior. Cultural differentiation in terms of values, norms, attitudes across nations widely influences the entrepreneurial activity within a country or region (Morris 2005). Essentially, the impact of cultural values in shaping the behaviours of individuals reflects in the way the entrepreneurial activities are undertaken in different societies (Turker 2009). As culture comprises of patterned ways of thinking that are reflective through the values, ideas and symbolic features that facilitate in shaping the human behavior, it becomes necessary to distinguish varying cultural groups relational to the value systems held by them (Mueller 2000).

Also, a significant question that arises apparent to undertaking entrepreneurial activities aligned to economic growth and development across nations addresses the fact as to whether the motivation and performance theories that are developed by the American researchers can find their applicability to varying cultural contexts (Adler 1991; Boyacigiller and Adler 1991; Thomas, Shenkar, and Clarke 1994). The answer to these questions can primarily be obtained by conducting cross-cultural research. However, despite a few exceptions to the case (Shane 1992, 1993; McGrath, MacMillan, and Scheinberg 1992; Huisman 1985; Baum *et al.* 1993), international studies in the context of international entrepreneurial potential and attitudes are rare due to a number of reasons like greater costs involved in conducting such research, difficult access to international entrepreneurs, and others. In spite of such limitations, international entrepreneurial research seeks greater significance in relation to identifying various factors that encourage entrepreneurial behavior across nations (Pennings 1980; Bruno and Tyebjee 1982). Also, it becomes necessary to quote at this juncture the characteristics of entrepreneurs which differentiate them globally in terms of their risk taking abilities, potentialities, innovativeness etc., and the kind of training programs that are required to encourage entrepreneurial activity in a given nation.

The present paper aims at identifying the relationship between national culture congruent to two personal characteristics associated with entrepreneurial potential, i.e., internal locus of control and innovation by analyzing both cross-cultural management and international entrepreneurship literature and offer several hypotheses relational to national culture and the facilitating entrepreneurial traits that can be used as a base framework for conducting future research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Understanding Entrepreneurial Potential Across Nations

Joseph Schumpeter explained entrepreneurs to be those individuals who aimed to “. . . reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention . . . or untried technical possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way . . . [This] requires aptitudes that are present in only a small fraction of the population . . .” (Schumpeter 1934, p. 132). This observation made by Schumpeter put forth the idea that apart from the presence of an entrepreneurial climate, new venture creation as well as entrepreneurial activity are dependent upon the presence of prospective entrepreneurs essentially those who possess the requisite personality traits and the appropriate personal circumstances which facilitate the formation of a new venture.

In fact, characterizing the motivational aspects for individuals aspiring to take up entrepreneurial positions across nations can be seen across the personal characteristics held by individuals or their situational factors. Research provides that new venture creation is seen as a resultant of varying situational factors like family, level of education, age, lifestyle, work-history, role models, etc. (Hisrich 1990; Martin 1984; Moore 1986; Krueger 1993; Scheinberg and MacMillan 1988). There are even negative factors creating a push entrepreneurial situation that impinges upon individuals to take up entrepreneurial initiatives like dissatisfaction with existing employment, loss of employment, and career setbacks (Brockhaus 1980; Shapero 1975; Kets de Vries 1977; Gilad and Levine 1986) which generate a mindset amongst researchers to reflect upon entrepreneurs to be misfits, rejects from society, or displaced individuals.

On the contrary, entrepreneurship calls for situational pulls like as early training and exposure to business which encourage the search for business opportunities (Krueger 1993; Mancuso 1973; Gilad and Levine 1986; Scheinberg and MacMillan 1988).

Additionally, the personal characteristics also known as the personality traits also play an eminent role in new venture creation. Exemplary of these personality traits can be seen from McClelland's (1961) theory wherein traits associated with a high need for achievement like accepting challenges and personal responsibility

for delivering outcomes, as well as innovativeness, are presumed to be characteristics of successful initiators for new business ventures. Even other studies like those conducted by Dunkelberg and Cooper 1982; Hornaday and Aboud 1971; Timmons 1978 not just indicate the personality traits but also indicate the characteristics necessary for venture success. Despite the fact that many of the trait theories have received a lot of criticism (e.g., Brockhaus and Horwitz 1986; Carsrud, Olm, and Eddy 1986; Gartner 1988), there are still others that generate continued interest in determining those factors that portray motivation towards initiating a new venture while those that do not (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, and Carland 1984; Carland, Hoy, and Carland 1988; McClelland 1987; Solomon and Winslow 1988; Winslow and Solomon 1989).

An eminent piece of work conducted by Brockhaus (1982) put forth three consistent attributes aligned to entrepreneurial behavior namely need for achievement, internal locus of control, and a risk-taking propensity, by extensive review of literature. Keeping into consideration, the recognition received by this research, the present research paper concentrates on two frequently used personality characteristics coupled to entrepreneurial behavior namely internal locus of control and innovativeness and reflects upon them using the Hofstede's dimensions across Asian and European nations.

Internal Locus of Control

Despite the fact that no universally acceptable definition of entrepreneur has been established (Perry 1990), some acceptability yet assumes clarity in defining an entrepreneur as an individual who is independent and self-motivated to start and establish an enterprise/business on his own rather than anyone else. In fact, personal characteristics like independence, need for control, self reliance, confidence, initiative, and resourcefulness have generally been linked to entrepreneurial behavior (McClelland 1987; Hornaday and Aboud 1971; Solomon and Winslow 1988; Timmons 1978).

Rotter (1966) made a significantly contributed to the development of a "locus of control" construct in psychology literature. Rotter establishes that the outcome of an event depends upon an individual's personal control and understanding that lie either within or beyond his own person self perception. While an 'internal' puts forth that individuals control outcomes primarily through their ability, skills and effort; an 'external' relies upon outside forces beyond the control of the individuals to determine outcomes (Rotter 1966). The adaptations and refinements of the Rotter's construct have been widely used by researchers (Durant and Nord 1976; Kets de Vries 1977; Spector 1982; Jennings 1983).

Noteworthy of mentioning here that the internal locus of control is assumed to be one of the most significant psychological traits studied in entrepreneurial

research (Perry 1990). An alliance between both entrepreneurial behavior as well as internal locus of control orientation holds immense significance. Going by the definition of entrepreneurs, they are considered to be those who initiate entrepreneurial activities for their own betterment while not being reliant on others (McClelland 1961). Furthermore, individuals who are unwilling to accept that personal initiatives and efforts affect outcomes associated with a business venture can delimit their risk taking propensity. Additionally, a combination of both the capability to take up risks as well as ability, affect the decisions aligned to new venture creation, it is expected of entrepreneurs to have an internal locus of control orientation (Brockhaus 1982; Brockhaus and Horowitz 1986).

Numerous empirical investigations were put forth to deliberate upon the concept of internal locus of control to explain it as an entrepreneurial trait. For example, Borland (1974) explained internal locus as a significant component for numerous school students who wished to start up an business venture/company someday. Even Brockhaus (1975) illustrated through his work that those business students who held entrepreneurial intentions displayed higher levels of internal locus of control than other who did not have such intentions. The studies conducted in 1970's demonstrated high levels of internal locus of control relational to entrepreneurial intentions whilst studies conducted in 1980's showed mixed results (Ahmed 1985; Begley and Boyd 1987; Brockhaus 1980; Cromie and Johns 1983; Venkatapathy 1984) that used the Rotter's (1966) I-E scale. The focus of the current studies reflect that for entrepreneurial behavior to occur, internal locus of control is more important than for non-entrepreneurial behavior (eg. Bonnett and Furnham 1991; Levin and Leginsky 1990; Shaper 1982 and Krueger 1993).

Innovativeness

Innovation is the defined as the “. . . process that turns an invention . . . into a marketable product” (Gabor 1970). In relation to entrepreneurship, Schumpeter's (1934) description aligned to innovativeness can be used to explicitly explain it as a catalyst of change, defining him as “. . . an idea man and a man of action . . . instrumental in discovering new opportunities” (Schumpeter 1965). Drucker (1985) discussed the role of entrepreneur as an innovator to describe innovation as “the specific tool of entrepreneurs . . . [and] . . . the means by which they exploit change . . .”. Carland, Hoy, Boulton, and Carland (1984) have facilitated in differentiating an entrepreneur from a small business owner by incorporating innovative strategic practices as a necessary component for new ventures to ensure that they are profitable and sustainable. They have defined the entrepreneur as “. . . an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purposes of profit and growth . . . [and] . . . is characterized principally by innovative behavior . . .” (Carland *et al.* 1984, p. 358).

Thus, a successful entrepreneur who can apply innovative procedures and adopt and simultaneously implement such innovative and competitive strategies while introducing new and innovative products and services, can be seen as reorganizing the entire industry (Bird 1989; Carland *et al.* 1984). However, the entrepreneurs must be capable of pre-designing and formulating such strategies that use creativity and innovation as a potential factor of concern. Infact, evidence suggests that those entrepreneurs who reflect upon growing entrepreneurial set-ups/ enterprises are practically those who are innovative and thus may be differentiated from non-entrepreneurs (eg. Sexton and Bowman-Upton, 1986; Carland, Carland, Hoy, and Boulton 1988; Carland and Carland 1991).

As entrepreneurial traits, particularly the locus of control, have been studied extensively in the United States, not much has been studied in the non-U.S. context and finds its limitations in relation to fewer country comparisons (e.g., McGrath, MacMillan, and Scheinberg 1992; Tuunanen 1997; Koiranen, Hyrsky, and Tuunanen 1997; Tuunanen and Hyrsky 1997). Therefore, it becomes necessary to recognize locus of control and innovativeness as significant personality traits that require comprehensive investigations to analyze if their applicability can be seen across an array of cultures. Significantly, thus the question remains if entrepreneurial skills vary across cultures and their explanation. Furthermore, if differences occur, what implications can be seen for new venture formation? The following section deals with the development of hypotheses for future investigations in Asian and European nation context discussing the impact of national culture prevalent contextual to internal locus of control and innovativeness using the Hofstede's dimensions.

The HOFSTEDE'S Dimensions of Culture

Geert Hofstede (1980), an eminent Dutch management researcher, conducted an attitude based survey of over 1,60,000 employees of a large U.S. multinational corporation (IBM) covering 40 countries at the outset and later extending to 70 countries around the world (Adler, 1997; Hodgetts & Luthans, 1994; Thomas, 2008). Hofstede found significant differences amongst the employees working for IBM based upon their national cultures that explained the variation in the work related values and attitudes. Despite the fact that Hofstede's work does not indicate the association between culture and entrepreneurship, these dimensions facilitate in identifying key characteristics necessary for relating to entrepreneurial orientation.

In the following sections, two of Hofstede's culture dimensions, namely individualism and uncertainty avoidance, are used and interlinked to the internal locus of control and innovativeness traits with a view to offer hypotheses for future research in the Asian and European context.

INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism talks about those societies wherein the social ties and bonding is loose whilst collectivism pertains to societies wherein individual are integrated as strongly bonded groups, since their childhood, which they portray throughout their lifetime through exchange of unquestionable loyalty (Hofstede 1991, p. 51).

In individualistic cultures, certain characteristic features that are well observed are the loosely knit bonds, achievement orientation pertaining to self, independence, pleasure, personal security as precedent over groupings. Consequentially therefore, high individualistic societies like in most European nations, there seems to be immense employment mobility in terms of individuals visualizing their own personal interests (Hofstede 1980, p. 235).

In collectivistic cultures, contrastingly, as people are born and brought up in extended families, they protect one another in exchange of loyalty towards one another. Group membership reflects their social identity and status. Belonging is the keyword for them in contrast to personal interests. Social identity is based on group membership. Group decisions are considered to be superior over individual decisions in collectivist cultures (Hofstede 1980, p. 235).

As mentioned previously, entrepreneurs tend to build upon characteristic features to exhibit an internal locus of control. As 'internals', for that matter, entrepreneurs talk of their own capabilities to achieve and subsequently, pay lesser significance to fate and luck, or powerful others (Rotter 1966). In highly individualistic countries (e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Australia, European nations), the sense of individualism and independent action take precedence and display individual decision making and strengthened risk taking abilities (Busenitz and Barney 1997).

Looking at the current scenario based upon literature, it provides that as the individualistic cultures support individual action and are seemingly more tolerant of independent action in comparison to collectivistic cultures, it is expected that an internal locus of control orientation would be prevalent in individualistic cultures than in collectivist cultures.

Also, as new venture formation clearly requires initiative on part of the responsible promoting team, be it an individual or a small group of individuals, it requires of them to be independent, self-reliant, and self-confident. As individualistic societies like the European nations reinforce and reward independent action and initiative whilst collectivistic cultures are seen to act in an opposite fashion, thus,

H1: The internal locus of control orientation is more prevalent in European nations than in Asian nations.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede defines uncertainty avoidance as “. . . the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations” (Hofstede 1991, p. 113). Low uncertainty avoidance cultures are those wherein the members are able to handle uncertainty to the greatest possible extent. Contrarily, high uncertainty avoidance cultures try and bring out such facilitating structures which help in minimizing the level of uncertainty faced by individual members. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures, individuals act spontaneously, greater willing to take up risks, and achievement is often seen as a pioneering effort (Hofstede 1980, p. 184).

On the other hand, in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, greater concern for security in life along with associating security with achievement is seen to a much greater extent. They presume that conflict and competition lead to destructive aggression and must be avoided as far as possible. Younger people in such societies are seen to have deviant attitudes and behavior, which leads them to be seen with suspicion. Hofstede also reflected that in such societies, there is a greater fear of failure, a lower willingness to take risks and subsequently, lower levels of ambition, and low tolerance for ambiguity (Hofstede 1980, p. 184).

As innovativeness trait is used to define entrepreneurial behavior (Schumpeter 1934; Carland, *et al.* 1984), creativity and innovativeness also tend to establish linkages with high tolerance for ambiguity, another common characteristic of entrepreneurs (Schere 1982; Begley and Boyd 1987). As low uncertainty avoidance cultures like the Asian nations frequently accept non-traditional behaviors, it provides that entrepreneurs here enjoy greater authority than individuals in high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Thus,

H2: The innovative orientation is more prevalent in low uncertainty avoidance cultures (Asian nations) than in high uncertainty avoidance cultures (European nations).

DISCUSSION

Relationship Between Culture And Entrepreneurial Orientation

It is important to comprehend the fact that there is no single trait that can clearly define or indicate entrepreneurial behavior. It is basically an amalgamation of behaviors and personality traits that distinguish potential entrepreneurs from others. Also that neither of the personality traits discussed above: internal locus of control or innovativeness can be independently used to deliberate upon entrepreneurial orientation.

Thus, based upon the kind of theoretical as well as empirical evidence provided in context, it is expected to put forth a combination of minimum levels of both

internal locus of control and innovativeness to generate entrepreneurial behaviors and outcomes. Reflecting upon entrepreneurial orientation in broader cultural contexts implies that those individuals who are independent, confident, self-reliant as well as hardworking are primarily the ones who can grow an enterprise in comparison to others. Therefore, those individuals who possess both these personality traits would be seen to be more prevalent in highly individualistic societies that encourage independence and other supporting aspects of behavioral activity in entrepreneurial context.

Consequently, extending to H1 and H2, another hypothesis that may be put in line can be for countries that are both low in uncertainty avoidance and high in individualism would result into greatest entrepreneurial orientation thus inviting international entrepreneurship. Thus,

- H3: An entrepreneurial orientation (i.e., internal locus of control combined with innovation) is highly prevalent in individualistic, low uncertainty avoidance societies than in collectivistic, high uncertainty avoidance societies.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Entrepreneurial Education and Training

The present qualitative research study advances entrepreneurship research by demonstrating the necessary personality traits that can be adopted across cultures and nations differentiating the kind of traits that Asian and European entrepreneurs may take up in facilitating entrepreneurial behavior, towards new venture establishment as well as creating potential entrepreneurs in nations. However, the present study offers hypotheses that may be used on the basis of the available literature to bring to focus on practical research that must be conducted across the European and Asian nations to verify such assumptions. Also, the testing of these hypotheses across the nations calls for recognizing the commonalities and differences that exist across cultures.

This study examined the relationship between only two entrepreneurial personality traits (innovativeness and internal locus of control) relational to two of Hofstede's dimensions of difference for the purpose of explaining entrepreneurial behavior across nations. At this point in time, it becomes necessary to indicate the type of training and development programmes that must be necessary to educate entrepreneurs across Asian and European nations in order to educate them to understand their own cultural orientations and use them appropriately in order to facilitate growth of economy whilst building upon the slackening behaviors of individuals across nations to pursue entrepreneurial behaviors.

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