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How does culture affect the entrepreneurial process?
A comparative analysis of Gulf and European Countries

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to determine if culture as represented by countries from the Gulf and Europe affects the entrepreneurial process. Entrepreneurship is important for wealth creation, job creation and improving economic prosperity. By better understanding how culture affects the ability of entrepreneurs to prosper, business and government policy can be designed to facilitate this. This study therefore aims to fill the gap in knowledge which currently exists on the effects of culture on the entrepreneurial process. The relationships between cultural dimensions, individual entrepreneurial talent and entrepreneurial outcomes were tested using a cross-sectional self-report survey design among a sample of European and Gulf-based entrepreneurs (n=84). Previously validated scales were utilised to elicit ratings for cultural-orientation (CVSCALE) and individual entrepreneurial tendencies (META). ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of culture on entrepreneurial outcomes, but regression analysis confirmed the positive association of individual abilities on business longevity, size and growth in the European context. META was found to have a positive effect on revenue and profit in both regions, although this was only significant in respondents from Europe. Regression analysis confirmed a moderating effect of culture on the relationship between entrepreneurial talent and business success. Whereas uncertainty-avoidance emerges as the main moderator of this effect in the European sample, the collectivism cultural-orientation is found to strongly moderate the relationship between META and business size, history and growth in the Gulf region. These mixed findings are interpreted as supporting the proposition by Shane et al. (1995) that entrepreneurial success is contingent on the match between background culture and individual propensity. In line with Ajzen's (1991) Planned Behavior Theory these findings are explained in terms of the direct and indirect impact of culture on entrepreneurial intentions and behavior.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial potential, Cultural dimensions, Propensity, Gulf and European countries.

كيف تؤثر الثقافة على عملية ريادة الأعمال؟
تحليل مقارن بين دول الخليج والدول الأوربية

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الملخص: هدفت هذه الدراسة للتعرف ما إذا كانت الثقافة تؤثر على عملية ريادة الأعمال. ريادة الأعمال مهمة لتكوين الثروة وخلق فرص العمل وتحسين الازدهار الاقتصادي. من خلال فهم أفضل لكيفية تأثير الثقافة على قدرة رواد الأعمال على الازدهار، يمكن تصميم سياسة الأعمال والحكومة لتسهيل ذلك. لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى سد الفجوة المعرفية الموجودة حاليًا حول تأثيرات الثقافة على عملية ريادة الأعمال. تم اختبار العلاقات بين الأبعاد الثقافية والقدرة على ريادة الأعمال، ومخرجات ريادة الأعمال على عينة من رواد الأعمال الأوروبيين والخليجيين (العدد = 84)، (44) منهم أوربي، و (40) خليجي. تم استخدام المقاييس التي تم التحقق من صحتها،

(CVSCALE) لقايس الميول الثقافي، و(META) لقياس القدرة لريادة الأعمال. لم يكشف ANOVA عن أي تأثير رئيسي مهم للثقافة على نتائج ريادة الأعمال، لكن تحليل الانحدار أكد ارتباط إيجابي بين القدرة على ريادة الأعمال وطول عمر المشاريع الريادية، وحجمها، ونموها في العينة الأوروبية. وجد أن القدرة على ريادة الأعمال (META) لها تأثير إيجابي على الإيرادات والأرباح في كلا المنطقتين، على الرغم من أن هذا كان دال احصائيا فقط في العينة الأوربية. أكد تحليل الانحدار أن الثقافة وسيط بين القدرة على ريادة الأعمال ونجاح الأعمال. بينما يظهر تجنب عدم اليقين باعتباره الوسيط الرئيسي لهذا التأثير في العينة الأوروبية، وجد أن التوجه الثقافي الجماعي يعمل وسيطا دالا احصائيا بين القدرة الريادية وحجم المشاريع الريادية ونموها في العينة الخليجية. يتم تفسير هذه النتائج المختلطة على أنها تدعم الاقتراح بواسطة Shane et al (1995). أن نجاح ريادة الأعمال يتوقف على التوافق بين ثقافة الخلفية والميل الفردي. تماشيًا مع نظرية السلوك المخطط لأجزن (1991)، يتم شرح هذه النتائج من حيث التأثير المباشر وغير المباشر للثقافة على نوايا وسلوك ريادة الأعمال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إمكانية ريادة الأعمال، الأبعاد الثقافية، دول الخليج والدول الأوربية.

Introduction

The process of entrepreneurship is understood to involve numerous stages in which the personal qualities of the individual entrepreneur play a key role (Acs & Audretsch, 2010). The kinds of characteristics and behaviors that associate with the entrepreneurial process involve a range of activities that may occur inside an organization (corporate entrepreneurship) or independently of any existing organization (individual entrepreneurship). Furthermore, the enterprise may include non-business activities (e.g. in public, charity or voluntary sectors) as well as for-profit opportunities (McKenzie et al., 2007).

The upshot is that entrepreneurship hinges on individual behaviors and actions that are directed at creating value through identifying and addressing a variety of opportunities (Ahmetoglu et al., 2011). The positive economic outcomes of these activities include improving competitiveness, job-creation, wealth creation and a general stimulus to the economy (Spencer et al, 2008) – which means that there are valid reasons for researchers, theorists and policy-makers to understand the motives of entrepreneurs as well the nature of and potential for entrepreneurial activity in their respective domains. As a result, one aspect of research has focused on the role of individual characteristics (such as personality and talent) in predicting and mediating entrepreneurial outcomes in particular contexts (Kuratko, 2007).

In the light of these current policy concerns and initiatives it seems both timely and beneficial to investigate the extent to which local culture has the potential to either enhance or restrict the European and Gulf regions in developing the entrepreneurial potential of their organizations and citizens. These societies were selected for the present study in order to contrast the collectivist, high power-distance orientation of countries in the Persian Gulf with the individualist, low power-distance culture which is characteristic of European societies (Hofstede, 2010).

As a result, the purpose of this study is to explore the nature and impact of regional cultural dimensions and individual entrepreneurial talent on the potential success of entrepreneurial ventures among respondents from both Europe and the Gulf. Particularly.

Questions of the study

1- Does culture affect the entrepreneurial process?

2- How does culture mediate this effect in countries from the Gulf and Europe?

Hypotheses of the study

- Diverse cultures will vary in the quantity and quality of entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes.
- Societies, which vary in terms of national or regional identity, ethnicity, religion and language affiliations will show divergent patterns of entrepreneurial activity.
- Significant differences will be found between participants from societies that vary according to Hofstede's culture dimensions, and entrepreneurial potential.

Objectives of the study

1- To measure the impact of the following traits on entrepreneurial abilities and tendencies:
   - Individualism/collectivism
   - Power distance
   - Uncertainty avoidance
   - Long-term orientation
   - Masculinity

2- To measure entrepreneurial outcomes based on an individual's past to ascertain how this has affected their abilities and tendencies to be successful.

3- To make a comparative analysis of cultural traits on power distance between Gulf and European countries.

4- To make a comparative analysis of entrepreneurial abilities and tendencies between Gulf and European countries.

5- To make a comparative analysis of the impact on entrepreneurial outcomes between Gulf and European countries.

6- To draw conclusions regarding the impact of national cultural dimensions on entrepreneurial abilities or tendencies and the effect that entrepreneurial potential has on success and how culture mediates this effect in Gulf and European countries.

Importance of the study

1. Entrepreneurship is important for wealth creation, job creation and improving economic prosperity. By better understanding the characteristics that make successful entrepreneurs, this research aims to provide a basis for governments and other organisations to develop policy and initiatives to enhance entrepreneurship.

2. This study therefore aims to fill the gap in knowledge which currently exists on the effects of culture on the entrepreneurial process. To date, most of the studies or cross-cultural surveys that have explored this phenomenon have been conducted in Western or in Far Eastern countries (e.g. Kreiser, et al., 2012, Eroglu & Picak, 2011). Therefore, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the differences between how the cultural factors affect the entrepreneurial personality in either European or Gulf countries.
3. Gulf countries are known as collectivist and high-power distance societies whereas European culture is characterised by individualism, low-power distance. Comparisons about entrepreneurial abilities and tendencies between these two regions will be of great value for entrepreneurs as well as for governments of particular countries. In addition, since Arab countries are rich in natural resources (Shahabuddin, 2002), individuals are able to obtain property, money, and businesses from their families and are therefore more likely to establish their own businesses. However, due to a lack of evidence on this issue, they may not be well informed about how best to start a business in their country considering their national cultural characteristics.

Method

Participants

An opportunistic sample of participants was recruited by targeting entrepreneur-focused websites and other social media sites (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) as well as e-mail communications. Recruitment messages posted to these sites addressed founders of single or multiple businesses of any size in either European or Gulf countries, regardless of their gender or age. After initial contact, all respondents were invited to circulate the recruitment message to other entrepreneurs in their network – in this way extending the participant group through snowball sampling (Woodward, 2014). A total of 224 individuals responded to the recruitment message and received the access to the online survey questionnaire. Of these 224 potential participants, 84 completed and returned their questionnaire data, including 40 from the Gulf region and 44 from Europe. This represents an overall return rate of 37.5%.

Measures

Cultural Orientation **(CVSCALE):** The measure of cultural characteristics used in this study was selected from Yoo et al. (2011) in order to include scales for Hofstede's (1980, 2001) individualism-collectivism, power-distance, uncertainty-avoidance, masculinity and long-term orientation. This CVSCALE (Yoo et al., 2011) has been developed as a comprehensive 34-item, five-dimensional measure of an individual respondent's cultural orientation. A number of assessments have shown this method to have acceptable levels of reliability and validity in various international settings (Yoo et al., 2011) therefore confirming the applicability of this scale in different countries and among different kinds of

populations (Yoo et al., 2011). The items on this scale were adapted from Hofstede's (2001) 'Values Survey Module' in order to apply them to a wider range of contexts. The statements for this scale are written (e.g. 'I prefer a superior who consults me before reaching a decision' or 'I prefer to work in a team or a pair rather than alone') to allow respondents to rate their level of agreement on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 – 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The survey is structured so as to alternate the order of presentation of items pertaining to the different cultural dimensions, and the final validated version contains 5 items for power-distance, 5 for uncertainty-avoidance, 6 for individualism-collectivism, 6 for long-term orientation and 4 for masculinity/femininity (Appendix A, Part II).

Entrepreneurial tendencies and abilities (META): This instrument consists of a 64-item self-report scale which assesses four facets of entrepreneurial talent on a 5-point Likert rating scale. These facets include proactivity (P) (e.g. 'I am quick to spot profitable opportunities'); Opportunism (O) (e.g. 'I try to take advantage of every profitable opportunity I see'); Entrepreneurial Creativity (EC) (e.g. 'In groups I usually have the most innovative ideas') and Vision (V) (e.g. 'I want to make a difference in the world') (Ahmetoglu & Chamarro-Premuzic, 2013). In addition, the scale allows a total entrepreneurial talent score (the sum of their counts for each of the four aspects of entrepreneurialism) to be calculated for each respondent. One of the founding assumptions is that ventures can be considered entrepreneurial if they involve a level of innovation, added-value and the effective seizing of an opportunity (Ahmetoglu & Chamarro-Premuzic, 2013). Another basic assumption is that there exist quantifiable individual differences in entrepreneurial talent that mean certain individuals are primed for entrepreneurial success (Ahmetoglu & Chamarro-Premuzic, 2013) (Appendix A, Part II).

Background and Outcome measures: In addition to the META and CVSCALE items, questions were integrated in the present survey to ascertain details of personal background (region and country of residence, gender, age and marital status) and outcome factors (number of businesses and employees, annual revenue, profit, growth rate and longevity of the business) (Appendix A, Part I).

Procedure

The social media recruitment message (Appendix B) was prepared for circulation to selected entrepreneurial forums, groups, blogs and other sites that attract European and Gulf-State business interest. The self-report questionnaire was prepared for online circulation and return using the Qualtrics Online Survey Platform (2015). An information and consent form (Appendix C) was supplied to all respondents who replied to the recruitment message expressing their interest in participating in the survey (n=224) (Whitley & Kite, 2012). The information sheet stated that I am a researcher, conducting this survey as part of my postgraduate studies at a British University, and their participation is entirely voluntary. It was explained that should the entrepreneur be willing to take part, they will receive a link to an online questionnaire which should take approximately 10 minutes of their time to complete. It was

explained that data will be held confidentially and all results will be reported anonymously and used for the purposes of this assignment only (Mertons, 2014).

Moreover, even after signing the consent form and returning the completed questionnaire it was made clear to each participant that they will be able to ask for their data to be removed from the survey if they so wish. An online mechanism was established for this to be implemented if necessary, although none of the participants took up this facility. All prospective participants were thanked for reading the information sheet, and researcher' s contact details (name and email address) were supplied for any follow-up questions, comments, requests or other issues to be returned as necessary (Crano et al., 2014).

On receipt of the completed questionnaires (n=84), all responses were entered into SPSS for statistical analysis.

Literature Review

Culture and entrepreneurship

Taking a macro-social perspective, theorists such as Max Weber (1905, cited in Frick et al., 1998) have made the connection between broader social ethics and values, and work-related/entrepreneurial behavior. In particular, Weber argued that prevailing religious motivations made a substantial contribution to the emergence of modern industrial capitalism in the context of 19th Century Europe. In contemporary settings, Frick et al. (1998) argued that while cultural attitudes may no longer be dominated by religion, they remain highly relevant in debates concerning broader sets of influences on the entrepreneurial process and the beliefs and behaviors it involves.

Defining culture, Hofstede (1994) underlines the connections with group affiliations, stating that culture is a 'collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another' (p.5). On this basis it would be expected that individuals belonging to different social groups would display different kinds of 'programming', with variations occurring over time and across regional, ethnic, religious and gender divides (Shapero, 1984). The fact that culture is acquired in these different contexts suggests that it exerts an influence of people which is separate from their innate drives and their individual personalities (Bergman, 2007). At the same time, the impact of culture on personal attitudes has been highlighted as a key environmental determinant of entrepreneurial activity and success (Bergman, 2007). At a basic level, for instance, cultural norms will influence individuals' decisions as to whether to start a business and become self-employed, or whether to opt for paid employment (Shapero, 1984).

At a broader level, culture is understood to affect economic activity in a number of ways, e.g. by shaping attitudes to work and consumption while simultaneously affecting the nature and organization of economic activity (Fukuyama, 2001). Concerning start-up activity, Davidsson et al. (1997) found that

attitudes towards business foundation have regional and group dimensions as well as occurring at the personal level. The argument is that positive attitudes towards business foundation and other forms of innovation will be fostered in cultures which favour individual initiative, just as cultures that are antagonistic towards entrepreneurship will have a restrictive effect on start-ups and other creative enterprise (Davidsson et al., 1997).

Despite these and other theoretical perspectives on the connection between culture and entrepreneurship, some commentators argue that the precise relationship between cultural values and entrepreneurial activity remains uncertain (Thurik, 2009). Challenges arise from the fact that cultural transformations take place very slowly, which makes time-based comparisons problematic (Acs & Szerb, 2010). Additionally, there are difficulties in specifying the relevant cultural variables needed to allow valid comparisons between organizational, regional, occupational, religious, gender or other groups (Bowen & De Clercq, 2008). One approach has been developed by the Dutch management researcher Geert Hofstede, whose model of cultural dimensions provides a validated and comprehensive way to conceptualize and compare behavioural differences across cultures (Hofstede, 1994).

Cross-cultural dimensions in entrepreneurial potential:

Hofstede's (2001) widely-used measure of culture provides a five-dimensional model for mapping and comparing individual orientations to national cultures (Yoo et al., 2011). Formed initially from a study of IBM staff in 39 countries, Hofstede (1984) utilized factor analysis to specify four distinct indicators of cultural difference. These were described as the power-distance index (PDI), individuality, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance (otherwise referred to as 'risk-taking'). Subsequent refining of the model led to the addition of a temporal frame in terms of long- or short-term orientation to the future (Yoo et al., 2011). By way of explanation, the PDI taps into the degree to which the authority of more powerful members of organizations or other groups is expected and accepted by those who are less powerful in the prevailing social hierarchy. Large-power distance societies are more unequal yet embody attitudes throughout the power-hierarchy that are highly accepting of the high level of inequality. As applied across 76 countries, Hofstede's PDI suggests that Eastern European, Latin, Asian and African countries have higher power-distance scores than German and English-speaking societies. Individualism concerns the extent of social bonding – so that individualistic societies (e.g. developed Western countries) are those in which people are viewed as autonomous and responsible for looking after themselves and their immediate family. In contrast, collectivist societies (Eastern countries) are characterized by close social cohesion which is formed on the basis of extended family and community networks (Hofstede, 2010).

The dimension of 'masculinity-femininity' encapsulates societal differences in terms of assertiveness, caring and other values which conventionally are associated with the genders (Hofstede et al., 1998). As a measure of the distribution of values, this dimension distinguishes between countries

which favour ambition, work and competitiveness ('masculine' qualities) over modesty, family and sympathy for others ('feminine' qualities). Hofstede (2010) describes how the dominant mode in any one society can impose a taboo on the expression of the less-dominant set of values and in this way act to sanction individuals in their choice of beliefs and behaviours. In high-masculine societies (Japan, German-speaking regions, certain Latin countries such as Italy and Mexico) this would work against the likelihood of 'feminine' values. Alternatively, high-feminine countries (e.g. Nordic countries, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal, Chile, Korea and Thailand) would not be expected to encourage the expression of drive, ambition and competitiveness (Hofstede, 2010).

The fourth dimension in Hofstede's model is uncertainty avoidance, which is defined as the degree to which the prevailing social culture prepares members to deal with situations that are ambiguous, risky and/or novel (Hofstede et al., 1998). Societies that are geared towards avoiding these kinds of uncertainties (e.g. East and Central European countries, Latin countries, Japan and German-speaking regions) tend to embody rigid behavioral rules, laws and customs combined with disapproval of diversity and difference. This contrasts with more open, flexible and tolerant attitudes in uncertainty accepting cultures (e.g. English-speaking, Nordic and Chinese countries) (Hofstede, 2010).

Finally, the long-term versus short-term category captures systematic differences in cultures in terms of their orientation to time (past, present, future) and ideas about the extent of stability and/or change which is either possible or desirable (Hofstede, 2010). Short-term societies (e.g. US, Australia, Latin American, African and Muslim countries) tend to be traditionalist and collectively oriented, while long-term oriented cultures (e.g. East Asia and Eastern/Central Europe) focus more on the future as brought about by personal adaptations, change and qualities such as thrift and perseverance. Notably, economic growth is associated positively with long-term orientation, whereas the pace of growth is significantly lower in short-term oriented economies (Hofstede, 2010).

Person-Culture interactions in entrepreneurship

As McGrath et al. (1992) demonstrate, there are wide variations in the total level of entrepreneurial activity across societies that are largely similar in their economic development and institutional organisation. This evidence is interpreted as supporting arguments on the crucial role of national culture and prevailing social norms in either facilitating or restricting the likelihood and effectiveness of entrepreneurial initiatives (Reynolds et al., 2001). From a cognitive perspective, this is explained as being due to the influence of cultural values on personal perceptions, schemas, interpretations and general sense-making (Chrisman et al., 2002). From this viewpoint, cultural dimensions function as the 'lens' through which individuals perceive the information on which they base their choices and the behavioral and experiential outcomes that follow from acting in a particular way (e.g. being innovative/entrepreneurial).

In this way, culture is argued to impose on information processing in ways that involve both values (what is important) and beliefs (what is true) (Davidsson & Wiklund 1997). In so far as they interact with personal characteristics, these cultural variables have a vital place in accounts of entrepreneurial motivation – which from this perspective is understood to be a function of combinations of individual differences, universal needs and culturally-defined needs and objectives (Triandis & Su, 2002). Specifically, it is argued that shared values govern people's selection of information in their work and general environment, which in turn provides the criteria for their evaluations and interpretations of the available options. Taking individualism as a case in point, the suggestion is that people will be more attuned to the value of uniqueness and autonomy in an individualist as opposed to collectivist societies. It is found, for instance, that individualism-oriented groups tend to increase in motivation after experiencing success, whereas collectivist-members are more likely to increase in motivation following failure (where the person is more likely to focus on self-change and improvement in order to bring themselves into line with the demands of the environment) (Triandis & Su, 2002).Overall, this illustrates the involvement of a fundamentally cognitive process (e.g. perception and information processing) in selecting the culturally-determined information on which the individual will base their decisions and behavioural choices.

Ajzen (1991) has integrated these social, cognitive and behavioural variables in his theory of planned behavior (TBP) (Ajzen, 1991). This model provides a social cognitive account of behavioural choice and change, based on the assumption that combinations of information, beliefs, attitudes and other socio-cultural and personality factors are the precursors to the person's current and future actions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In particular, the individual's intentions are emphasized as underlying their behavioral choices (e.g. whether or not to engage in entrepreneurial activity) and these intentions are understood to emerge from his/her evaluations of what is involved in performing the behavior together with the subjective norm (defined as the perceived expectations and value attributed by other people to the individual acting this way). The proposition is that a positive personal evaluation of the course of action in conjunction with the belief that others consider that they should behave in this way culminates in a strong motivation to respond accordingly.

This model was further refined by Ajzen (1991) who later acknowledged the issue of personal control (that is, that people are not always in a position to carry out their desired course of action). As an outcome Ajzen (1991) added the perceived behavioral control (PBC) element to take account of the individual's perceptions of the extent to which they see themselves as being able to carry out the behavior in question. These perceptions will reflect past experiences as well as the actual environmental restrictions the person is likely to experience in bringing about their intended behavioral outcome (e.g. starting a new business venture). From this perspective, the likelihood of entrepreneurial intentions and activities will be mediated by the information inputs received from the cultural environment – as well as

the perceived responses of others together with the sense of efficacy or control that the person believes they can bring to bear on implementing their decision (Shrum, 2012).

International Comparisons: Entrepreneurialism in Gulf and European countries

Given that societal and national cultures are acquired early in life, these influences are hypothesized to be deeply rooted in the human mind and to give rise to systematic differences in the values, motivations and behaviors across different kinds of societies (Hofstede, 2001). On this basis it would be anticipated that diverse cultures would vary in the quantity and quality of entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes. The suggestion is that societies which vary in terms of national or regional identity as well as ethnicity, religion and language affiliations will show divergent patterns of entrepreneurial activity. Studies of venture creation, for example, often examine a single-country market in order to establish the pattern of connections between personal, cultural and contextual factors – and entrepreneurial potential (Urban, 2007). On the other hand, some commentators suggest that cultural differences in entrepreneurial motivation and activity are overrated, and while culture may shape general values it does not necessarily saturate all aspects of the person's belief system (Markoczy, 2000). In a study of three countries, Shane et al. (1991) identified only one out of thirteen possible factors that applied universally within and between nations and genders.

Nevertheless, existing evidence suggests that certain regions or countries are more conducive to the initiation and success of entrepreneurial enterprise (Thurik, 2009). Along with structural regulations governing business entry and stimulation (Cappellaras et al., 2008) the existence of an entrepreneurial culture is recognized as vital to success (Wennekers et al., 2007). The pertinent cultural dimensions appear to include the propensity for risk-taking in combination with stigmatizing failure – particularly in respect to business start-ups (as compared to the less risky option of taking over an existing enterprise) (Thurik, 2009). Comparative studies of transition economies and more developed market economies (in Europe and Asia) have found significant differences in terms of infrastructure development as well as other support structures and barriers to new ventures (Estrin & Mickiewicz, 2010).

Global inequalities in levels of entrepreneurial activity have recently been underlined and addressed by The World Economic Forum (Rosler, 2014). Concerning Europe, for instance, Rosler (2014) argues that despite the fact that five of the top-ten most innovative world economies are in Europe (Finland, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands), there are potentially huge advantages to the region in stimulating the growth of innovative companies to the level of that in the US, China or Israel (Rosler, 2014, p.3). Apart from contributing to overall output and productivity it is argued that Europe would benefit from attracting international talent, top-level skills development and job-creation – particularly in future-oriented sectors of the economy (Rosler, 2014).

Similarly, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GFC) has researched and reported on the potential of the Gulf region to grow in importance as a global economic and trading center (GFC, 2009). As with Europe, the centrality of innovation is recognized as pivotal to the emergence of new firms, products, modes of production and models of business and organizational relations (Al Dairi et al., 2012). This may be especially pertinent to the Gulf region in the context of oscillating oil prices and finite oil reserves (Al Dairi et al., 2012). As a consequence, the economic focus is now on knowledge-based services and competitiveness at the level of MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) as a means to compete in the global market through the provision of world-class products and employment prospects (Al Obaidy, 2012).

Previous studies

Study No.1

The study by Leutner et al. (2014) described the relationship between the entrepreneurial personality and the "Big Five" personality traits. As has previously been shown, the Big Give personality traits are known to predict several outcomes associated with business success. However, this study showed that a set of entrepreneurial measures, were able to provide incremental validity over the Big Five. This set of measures, META (measure of entrepreneurial tendencies and Abilities) was able to predict various forms of entrepreneurial success more consistently than those assessed by the Big Five. This shows the utility of using such a test to identify key personality traits which are important in entrepreneurship and will therefore be a useful tool in assessing entrepreneurial tendencies in this study.

Study No.2

The aim of this study by Dahlin et al. (2013) was to explore the reasons why gender gaps may differ across nations. The authors first demonstrated that gender gaps in subjective health vary markedly across different European countries. They then showed using logistic regression that individual-level socio-economic and demographic variables account for a majority of these gaps although the remaining gaps could not be explained by societal-level gender inequality in multi-level analyses. This paper was able to demonstrate that even within a single continent, Europe, societal differences do exist.

Study No.3

This study carried out by Ahmetoglu et al. (2011) sought to examine a potential link between emotional intelligence (EI) and entrepreneurial success. It had previously been shown that trait EI is important in predicting career success but the authors speculated that EI might also be associated with other forms of career success. Using a combination of measures including META and other self-reported scales, the authors showed that EI only predicted some entrepreneurial outcomes and of these, the effect sizes were small.

Study No.4

Kuatonen (2013) applied the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to predict entrepreneurial behaviour. The results of this study showed that attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms were all significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention.

Study No.5

The study published in 2014 by Hui-Chen et al. developed a model for examining the process of how a person becomes an entrepreneur. They used planned behavior theory (PBT) with motivation-opportunity-ability (MOA) theory to extract key themes related to entrepreneurship. Using this model, the authors were able to conclude that motivation, subjective norms and ability all affect entrepreneurial intentions through personal attuite, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

Results

1- Descriptive statistics

The total response rate from respondents in the Gul and Europe (excluding incomplete questionnaires) was 37.5%. The key demographic data and entrepreneurial success for the Gulf and European samples are presented in Table 1 (below).

Table 1: Background statistics by region (The Gulf and Europe)

Background variable	Gulf (n=40)	Europe (n=44)	Total (n=84)
Gender			
Male	60%	68%	64%
Female	40%	32%	36%
Marital Status			
Married	60%	64%	62%
Single	40%	36%	38%
Mean age (in years (standard deviation))	37(11.51)	47(12.0)	42(12.71)
Age of Company (in years (standard deviation))	13(11.43)	15(12.75)	14(12.15)
Mean number of businesses	7(13.6)	1(1.1)	3.8(9.46)
Mean number of years in business	10(9.2)	15(13.6)	13(12.11)
% of sample with <501 employees	97.4%	100%	98.2%
Mean annual growth	62%	53%	58%

The background data presented in Table 1 suggests the two test groups (entrepreneurs from the Gulf and European regions) are closely matched for gender, marital status and age of their main company. It is noteworthy that the ratio of men to women is lower in the Gulf sample (6:4) than in the European respondent group (7:3). Respondents from the Gulf were on average 10 years' younger than European respondents, and the number of businesses owned by Gulf entrepreneurs was 7-times higher than European respondents. Growth estimates were also higher among respondents from Gulf countries, who report a 62% growth rate as compared to a 53% average annual growth rate among Europeans.

2- The differences in cultural orientation and entrepreneurial talent

To determine if there were any significant differences in cultural orientation and entrepreneurial talent between respondents from the Gulf and Europe, the average scores for each element were calculated (Table 2) and a one-way ANOVA used to determine if these were statistically significant.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviations for cultural and personal dimensions in entrepreneurial success, by region

Cultural/Individual dimension	The Gulf (n=40)	Europe (n=44)	Total (n=84)
Power Distance	14.63(6.808)	12.55(4.511)	13.54(5.780)
Uncertainty-Avoidance	27.68(6.031)	28.64(4.210)	28.18(9.268)
Collectivism	30.55(7.218)	16.80(5.133)	23.35(9.268)
Masculinity	15.65(5.357)	9.91(3.262)	12.64(5.227)
Long-term orientation	35.00(6.441)	34.27(5.978)	34.62(6.176)
Opportunism	33.375(5.299)	29.386(3.013)	31.285(4.681)
Proactivity	55.425(6.830)	50.727(5.792)	52.963(6.699)
Creativity	57.800(7.300)	50.750(6.015)	54.107(7.505)
Vision	132.850(11.023)	130.136(8.697)	131.428(8.697)
Total META	279.45(26.632)	261.11(13.083)	269.786(22.536

These results showed that significant regional variation for the cultural dimensions of 'Collectivism' ($F(1.82)=102.70$, $p=0.001$) and 'Masculinity' ($F(1.82)=35.91$, $p=0.001$). A comparison of mean scores (Table 2) showed that both 'Collectivism' and 'Masculinity' were significantly higher in the Gulf as compared to European countries. ANOVA testing of the four entrepreneurial tendencies also revealed significant differences between 'Opportunism' ($F(1.82)=18.37$, $p=0.001$), 'Proactivity' ($F(1.82)=11.62$, $p=0.001$) and 'Creativity' ($F(1.82)=23.49$, $p=0.001$). No statistically significant difference was observed in the 'Vision' aspect of entrepreneurial potential.

To assess any correlation between cultural and entrepreneurial elements from the CVSCALE and META scales respectively, regression analysis was used. R scores and the corresponding statistical significance was calculated for each region and for both regions combined (Table 3).

Table 3: Bivariate correlations for cultural-orientation and entrepreneurial tendencies (aggregate and by region)

Variable	1 PO	2 CO	3 UN	4 MA	5 LT	6 META	7 REV	8 GROWTH
Europe (n=44)								
1- Power-Distance		.466**	-.306*	.489**	-.055	-.088	-.113	.132
2- Collectivism			-.295	.440**	-.334*	.069	-.013	.121
3- Uncertainty-avoidance				-.209	.499**	-.351*	.211	.063
4- Masculinity					-.173	-.044	-.108	.086
5- Long-Term orientation						-.008	.106`	.127
6- Total META							.263	.219
7- Revenue & Profit								.321*
8- History & Growth								
The Gulf (n=40)								
1- Power-Distance		0.84	.159	.298	.116	.120	.019	.113
2- Collectivism			.450**	.154	.467**	.664**	.090	.214
3- Uncertainty-avoidance				.182	312*	.155	.172	-.92
4- Masculinity					.218	.157	-.194	-.097
5- Long-Term orientation						.576**	.059	-.105
6- Total META							.037	-.064
7- Revenue&Profit								-.224
8- History&Growth								
Total (n=84)								
1- Power-Distance	-.015	.275*	.392**	.056	.184	.033	.017	
2- Collectivism			.054	.548**	.129	.614**	.176	.074
3- Uncertainty-avoidance			-.004	.378**	.078	.063	.038	

4-	Masculinity	.008	.333**	-.040	-.087
5-	Long-Term orientation	.395**	.047	.014	
6-	Total META			.122	.026
7-	Revenue&Profit			-.083	
8-	History&Growth				

** Correlation is significant at p<.01 (two-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at p<.05 (two-tailed)

Regarding the aggregate results, significant positive associations were found between entrepreneurial talent (META) and the culture dimensions of collectivism (r=0.614, p<0.01), masculinity (r=0.333, p<0.01) and long-term orientation (r=0.395, p<0.01). There were no significant correlations between cultural orientation and the two component entrepreneurial outcomes (revenue/profit and size/history/growth of the company). The dimension of masculinity showed a negative relationship with both of these outcomes, although this was not statistically significant. The comparative analysis of the associations confirms significant positive correlations between each of the cultural dimensions of collectivism, masculinity and long-term orientation and Total-META scores among the participant group as a whole (n=84). This is partly replicated in the Gulf-based sample (n=40) where collectivism and long-term dimensions again emerged as positively and significantly associated with Total-META. In the European sample only uncertainty-avoidance was found to correlate inversely and significantly with Total-META. No statistically significant relationships were found between cultural orientation and entrepreneurial outcomes, or between Total-META and entrepreneurial outcomes. Among the European sample only, a significant positive association was shown between the two component outcome measures (revenue/profit and company history, size and growth).

3- Regression of META and cultural variables

To determine the respective contributions of META and cultural variables in accounting for variance among the measures of entrepreneurial activity and success in this study, a regression analysis was carried out (Table 4).

Table 4: Regression coefficients for Total-META

Measure	Beta	t-value	Significance
Dependent variable: Annual revenue/profit			
Europe			
PO	-.325	1.88	.07
UN	**-.325**	**3.42**	**.002**
CO	.118	.694	.492
MA	-.038	.231	.818
LT	.253	1.51	.140
META-total	**.299**	**2.138**	**.04**
Opportunism	.161	.917	.365

Proactivity	.291	1.53	.134
Creativity	-.159	.885	.382
Vision	.125	.754	.455
Gulf			
PO	.050	.273	.787
UN	.178	.826	.415
CO	**.**028	.103	.919
MA	-.253	1.36	.185
LT	.041	.179	.859
META-total	.002	.009	.993
Opportunism	.120	.422	.676
Proactivity	.028	1.00	.921
Creativity	.115	.435	.667
Vision	-.149	.490	.627
Dependent variable: business history, size and growth			
Europe			
PO	-.087	.439	.664
UN	.180	.947	.350
CO	.093	.476	.637
MA	-.087	.469	.641
LT	-.001	.003	.997
META-total	.015	.216	.186
Opportunism	-.45	.249	.805
Proactivity	**.**295	1.506	.140
Creativity	-.110	.593	.557
Vision	.205	1,203	.236
Gulf			
PO	.157	.881	.386
UN	-.320	1.328	.196
CO	**.712**	**2.665**	**.013**
MA	-.125	.641	.527
LT	-.079	.226	.823
META-total	-.413	1.303	.123
Opportunism	130	.421	.677
Proactivity	-.037	.121	.904
Creativity	**-.**389	1.343	.190
Vision	.204	.638	.529

Among the European data Total-META was positively associated with revenue and profit at the 90% confidence ($p<0.01$). Among the Gulf-based respondents, the association is positive, but was not significant. The direction of these findings suggests that the higher the Total-META in a population is, the higher the expected revenue and profits of the enterprise. These findings confirm that an uncertainty-avoidant cultural orientation is a significant moderator of the relationship between META and business revenue and profit among European respondents ($p=0.002$). The direction of this result shows that low uncertainty-avoidance improves the significance of the Total-META effect on these beneficial business outcomes. Conversely, none of the cultural-dimensions were found to have a significant moderating effect on this relationship among respondents from the Gulf. Accordingly, in the European sample, the Total-META score was positively and significantly associated with business size, history and growth. However, in the case of Gulf-countries, META was shown to be negatively, but again not significantly, correlated with this particular entrepreneurial outcome. Culture appears to have no significant moderating or mediating effect in Europe. Nevertheless, the collectivism-orientation was found to be a significant moderator of this relationship in the Gulf-based sample ($p=0.01$).

4- Moderation analysis for region

To examine whether region moderates the influence of total META on entrepreneurial outcomes. Regression analyses were again carried out to analyses these trends with the results displayed in Table 5

Table 5: Moderation analysis for region

Model		Beta	t-value	Significance
Dependent variable: Annual revenue/profit				
1	(Constant)		-.354	.725
	Total META	.030	.193	.847
	Region	.187	1.041	.302
	POtotal	.044	.356	.723
	NUtotal	.061	.481	.632
	COtotal	.150	.719	.474
	MAtotal	-.258	-1.739	.086
	LTtotal	.008	.056	.956
Dependent variable: business history, size and growth				
1	(Constant)		.108	.914
	Total META	-.045	-.268	.790
	Region	-.072	-.385	.701
	POtotal	.031	.240	.811
	NUtotal	.006	.040	.968
	COtotal	.246	1.141	.258
	MAtotal	-.188	-1.206	.232
	LTtotal	.022	.144	.886

Both moderated regressions provide evidence that region does partially moderate the impact of the total META score. Specifically, it appears that when region was included in the model, none of the independent variables including region are significant, since their p-values are much greater than the significance level when set at 10%. However, the findings of the previous regressions (Table 4) highlight that when each region is analysed separately, some of the independent variables become significant. Hence, it can be considered that region does indeed play a moderating role in the regression outcomes.

Cultural-orientation, entrepreneurial tendencies and entrepreneurial success

To quantify the effect of cultural-orientation on the relationship between Total-META and a two-dimensional measure of entrepreneurial outcome, stepwise regression and mediational analysis were carried out. Cultural orientation alone was found to account for less than 1% of the variance on each of the outcome components (*adjusted* R^2) and entrepreneurial abilities and tendencies (META) predicted just 2% of this variance. Standardised regression coefficients indicated that the tendency for 'opportunism' accounted for 68% of overall variance in entrepreneurial outcomes. In conjunction with 'proactivity' (18%) the total explained variance increased to 85%. In respect of cultural-orientation, 'Power distance' is the strongest overall predictor of entrepreneurial outcomes, accounting for 51% of variance in the Gulf and 27% of variance in Europe. Together with the uncertainty-avoidance cultural orientation, the regression model shows these combined dimensions to explain 68% of overall variance although these relationships did exceed the 5% level of significance.

Discussion

The purpose of this exploratory investigation was to measure and compare the relative impact of cultural differences and individual entrepreneurial tendencies on the entrepreneurial outcomes in two contrasting regions (The Gulf and Europe). These findings confirm significant regional differences along Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions of collectivism and masculinity, and for the entrepreneurial tendencies of opportunism, proactivity and creativity (Ahmetoglu and Charmarro-Premuzic, 2010). Each of these factors is significantly higher in Gulf countries as compared to the European entrepreneurs included in this survey.

Taking the sample as a whole, neither overall cultural-orientation nor META-Total was found to have a significant effect on entrepreneurial outcomes. Rather, a weak positive association is evident between total-META and revenue and profit in Europe only. The moderated regression, with region playing the moderating role, has also provided evidence of the non-significant impact of total META and culture on these two outcomes. Mediation analysis suggests that in this case, the uncertainty-avoidance cultural dimension is a significant moderator of this relationship – in the direction that the propensity for risk-taking increases the beneficial effect of entrepreneurial talents/tendencies on financial outcomes (revenue and profit) in Europe. This is supported by the fact that the European data also reveal a strong negative association between the uncertainty-avoidance cultural orientation, and Total-META. Conversely, the 'collectivism' dimension is shown to be significantly higher in the Gulf (as compared to Europe) and to be a significant moderator of the relationship between META and entrepreneurial outcomes in this context. In this case, a strong and positive association exists between Total-META and cultural-orientation – though this is not replicated in the European data or among the sample as a whole.

A broad conclusion can be drawn that while the present findings indicate correlations between selected cultural dimensions and individual capacities on entrepreneurial success there is no 'one size fits all' combination that can be shown to be universally effective. Rather, the different measures of entrepreneurial success are found to be affected by distinct cultural dimensions and/or aspects of entrepreneurial talent. Furthermore, particular talents (e.g. sense of opportunism, proactivity and creativity) are shown here to associate positively with entrepreneurial success in one context (e.g. high-masculinity and high-collectivist Gulf countries) but not the other (e.g. high-individualist, low-masculinity and low-power distance Europe). The suggestion is that the prevailing culture exerts a moderating effect on the business outcomes of specific entrepreneurial abilities and tendencies.

Methodological limitations

The present design and methods impose limits on the extent to which these results can be assumed to generalize across entrepreneurial contexts and respondents. One positive aspect is that these study utilises two existing and validated measures (CVSCALE and META). Nevertheless, the return rate at 37.5% (i.e. 84 out of a possible 224) was relatively low and as such reduced the power of the PCA and stepwise regression analysis used to test these data. A Kolmogorov-test statistic suggests that of the four outcome measures utilized in this study, only the reported annual business growth-rate displays a near-normal distribution ($p=0.07$). Follow-up research replicating this study with a larger sample of entrepreneurs from a greater range of European and Gulf countries is recommended in order to further test the relationships between variables in this study.

The opportunistic nature of the sampling method means that representativeness is also an issue. In this case, participants self-selected on the basis of their use of targeted websites and other electronic media. To address this problem it is recommended that future research aims to be more inclusive of a greater range of entrepreneurs and countries. The cross-sectional nature of the present design limits the outcomes of the survey to a 'snapshot' picture of the cultural and personal dimensions of interest (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2012). Additionally, self-reported measures can be affected by self-presentation and social desirability influences (Moorman and Podsakoff, 1992). Reliance on this single method means that there can be no objective check on the reliability of responses (e.g. reports of business size, longevity, growth and revenue).

Moreover and despite the fact that the evidence from this study suggests that the propensity for 'opportunism' and 'proactivity' are relevant to predicting entrepreneurial success (together accounting for 68% of variance) it should be noted that META is only one of a number of scales that exist to measure other traits or characteristics that have been shown to predict entrepreneurial potential. In their 'Competence theory', for instance, Stoof et al. (2000) conclude that performance is ultimately shaped by combinations of knowledge, capacities, characteristics and attitudes that are relevant for the task at hand.

This gives rise to a model of entrepreneurial behavior founded on concepts of motivation, characteristics, knowledge/experience and capabilities (Stoof et al., 2000).

Finally, many studies have investigated the characteristics of individual entrepreneurs using a range of personality dimensions and traits. While the selection of entrepreneurial qualities in the present study has strong research foundations (Ahmetoglu and Chomoroo-Premuzic, 2013) it should be noted that this measure excludes a wide-range of characteristics that have been found in previous studies to comprise the 'entrepreneurial personality', such as need for achievement, internal locus of control (LOC), tendency for risk-taking, drive for power and affiliation together with the tolerance of ambiguity and capacity for endurance (McCelland, 1961; Nandram and Samson, 2000).

Cultural and Individual Factors in Entrepreneurship

In line with existing evidence, the findings from this study illustrate that a range of cultural and individual differences are instrumental in shaping entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes. At the same time as supporting Hofstede's (1980) proposition that regions will differ in their cultural orientation, this study extends this thesis by demonstrating the moderating effect of culture on the relationship between individual entrepreneurial talent and the success of the enterprise.

Previous studies in this realm have yielded mixed findings on the extent to which the pertinent cultural dimensions (e.g. collectivism/individualism) help or hinder entrepreneurial effectiveness in the given context. Hayton et al. (2002) suggest that entrepreneurship is an essentially individual state which involves personal risks and rewards. Simultaneously, the innovative aspects of entrepreneurial activity necessarily rest on individual characteristics of creativity and vision (Urban, 2007). The implication is that entrepreneurial innovation and success would be more likely in individualistic rather than collectivist cultural contexts. Even so, Shane et al. (1995) report findings that run counter to these expectations. In some circumstances, high individualism is dysfunctional for innovation (Morris et al., 1993) while collectivism supports entrepreneurship through the provision of social support, networks and resources (Shane et al., 1995). What is evident from the present study is that Gulf and European regions differ significantly along this dimension, and that collectivism is a significant modifier of the relationship between individual ability and entrepreneurial outcomes in Gulf countries.

As based on Hofstede's (1980) empirical evidence, individuals in high uncertainty-avoidant cultures tend to be less open to change and risk. For this reason, these people respond well to the rules and structures that reduce unpredictability in present and future events (Sully De Luque and Javidan, 2004). Resulting practices include formalized processes of interaction and planning, which have been suggested to provide poor support for innovative practice and entrepreneurship in high-uncertainty countries (Hayton et al., 2002). As with collectivism, the evidence so far presents a mixed picture on these relationships, with one study finding a negative connection between uncertainty avoidance and quantity

of entrepreneurial activity (Meuller and Thomas, 2000). In other cross-cultural research, however, uncertainty avoidance is shown to associate positively to the prevalence of business ownership (Wennekers et al., 2007). In the present analysis uncertainty-avoidance is shown to significantly and inversely moderate the relationship between META-scores and financial outcomes in the European sample. This means that the cultural-propensity for high-risk taking increases the beneficial effect of META on revenue and profit.

Nevertheless, the role of individual talent (META-total) is here shown to be in positive and direct association with business revenue and profit in both the Gulf and European samples – even though this achieves significance (at the 10% level) in the European data only. The suggestion is that high-entrepreneurial ability has a beneficial effect on the financial success of the enterprise. These findings underline Kuratko's (2007) argument that entrepreneurial activity at the individual level is a fundamental driving-force of value-creation, with the two personality variables of vision and creativity highlighted in the present sample as a significant factor in determining growth and size of the business. As defined by Ahmatoglou and Chamarro-Premuzic, 2013, entrepreneurial creativity at the primary level concerns the capacity to produce novel business ideas, which itself involves secondary tendencies towards non-conformity, originality and a preference for unique experiences. The 'vision' element captures qualities relating to global thinking (being able to see the 'bigger picture') in combination with the motivation to effect change and progress, which can also involve a set of values and commitment to a sense of purpose in life (Ahmetoglu and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2013). The entrepreneurial behaviours that follow from these tendencies have been shown in this study to relate positively to business financial outcomes in the European setting. Further research is recommended to establish the significance of these effects among a larger sample in a broader range of cultural settings.

As it stands, however, the evidence from this study underlines significant regional differences in the inter-relationships between entrepreneurial talent, cultural-orientation and business success. The association of META-Total and the history, size and growth of the enterprise is positive in Europe and negative in the Gulf (though neither achieves an accepted level of statistical significance). Whereas an uncertainty-avoidant cultural orientation exerts a moderating effect on the relationship between META and entrepreneurial outcomes in Europe, the collectivism-orientation emerges as a significant moderator of this relationship in the Gulf data.

These regional variations are interpreted as supporting Shane et al.'s (1995) suggestion that entrepreneurialism in a given context depends on the match between cultural orientation and individual tendencies. Present findings, for instance, indicate that the propensity for risk-taking is facilitated in the predominantly individualist, low-masculinity and low-power distance European cultural-orientation – which in turn exerts a positive effect on the relationship between the individual talent of the entrepreneur and the likelihood of business success. Conversely, the evidence suggests that collectivist cultural

orientation is a crucial modifier of the relationship between entrepreneurial talent and business outcomes in the Gulf.

The scope of the present findings: A critique

Objective measurement of the various factors involved in successful entrepreneurship has value for those charged with decisions concerning the financing of new ventures (Brinkman, 2000) as well as the self-knowledge of the entrepreneur him/herself (Nandram and Samson, 2000).

The importance of motivation has been demonstrated in research on the 'push' and 'pull' factors underlying an individual's drive for entrepreneurial activity (Nandram and Samson, 2000) – including the experience of unemployment, inability to find a job and dissatisfaction with current circumstances. The attraction to entrepreneurship can also be fostered by personally-experienced needs for autonomy, achievement or power (Nandram and Samson, 2000). It would be useful in future research to investigate cross-cultural variations in the kinds of motivations and 'needs' expressed by entrepreneurs in different kinds of cultural orientation (e.g. individualist/collectivist).

Many studies have investigated the characteristics of individual entrepreneurs using a range of personality dimensions and traits. While the selection of entrepreneurial qualities in the present study has strong research support (Ahmetoglu and Chomoroo-Premuzic, 2013) it should be noted that this measure excludes a wide-range of characteristics that have been found in previous studies to comprise the 'entrepreneurial personality' (McCelland, 1961). The common traits found among entrepreneurs are need for achievement, internal locus of control (LOC) and the tendency for risk-taking (McCelland, 1961). Secondary needs have also been identified as the drive for power and affiliation together with the tolerance of ambiguity and capacity for endurance (Nandram and Samson, 2000).

Furthermore, it is not known from the present analysis whether the regional samples (Europe and Gulf-based entrepreneurs) differed systematically in the level of knowledge (e.g. qualifications) and skill (e.g. capabilities). As an identified component of entrepreneurial competence, the knowledge element refers to levels of awareness concerning business administration and market familiarity (Stoof et al., 2000). Associated with this are specific capabilities, such as leadership, creativity, flexibility, organizing and planning, interpersonal skills and financial control (Brinkman, 2000). More recently, the 'Emotional Intelligence' (EI) concept has been used by some researchers to describe and measure the fundamental ability to effectively appraise, express and regulate self-emotion while recognizing and managing emotions in others (Wong and Law, 2002).

In this wider theoretical framework it is clear that the present investigation offers a selective and partial account of the characteristics and talents displayed by individual entrepreneurs. What these findings contribute, however, is evidence on the moderating effect of culture on the relationships between entrepreneurial abilities and business success.

Explaining the cultural impact on individual entrepreneurship

Given the importance of entrepreneurial activity to key business outcomes, understanding the dynamics through which a person becomes a successful entrepreneur is a matter of national importance. While the evidence gained in this study confirms the effect of cultural orientation on the quantity (e.g. company size, revenue and profit) and quality (e.g. longevity and growth) of entrepreneurial activity, there is no single theory to account for the mechanisms through which individual behaviours are shaped by the cultural context.

Within the framework of Ajzen's (2002) planned behavior theory (PBT) entrepreneurial action/inaction follows three kinds of beliefs – including beliefs about the probable consequences of behaving on one way or another (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about what others' expect and accept, and the level of desire to conform to those expectations (normative beliefs) and finally, beliefs about the likely occurrence of factors that will help or hinder the achievement of desired behavioural goals (control beliefs) (Ajzen, 2002). As the basic guides to personal evaluations of the available courses of action, these beliefs are seen to directly influence specific attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control aspects of the person's entrepreneurial intentions. Within this model cultural norms and values are seen as a source of information for the beliefs underlying the potential entrepreneur's behavioural intentions. In this way, cultural orientation is seen to play a direct role in shaping the personal attitudes that give rise to specific motivations to engage (or not engage) in entrepreneurial behavior (Hui-Chen et al., 2014). Individuals will in this way be either encouraged or restrained in recognizing and exploiting innovative opportunities in their given cultural context (Hayton et al., 2002).

Beyond the level of information, PBT also provides a route for explaining the role of actual and perceived facilitators of, and barriers to, the person's likelihood of attaining their desired behavioural outcomes. Perceived behavioural control can be understood in the context of social cognition as resulting from an integration of social perceptions, cultural values and personal characteristics or traits (Busenitz and Lau, 1996). The idea is that entrepreneurial decision-making is both embedded in cultural contexts and informed by cultural values and discourses (Mitchell et al., 2000). For Triandis and Su (2002) the way information is selected from the environment is itself shaped by cultural convention. Just as cultural values and personal attitudes are highly integrated, the suggestion is that cognition and social context are profoundly interrelated.

Nevertheless, this element of PBT also takes account of the structural factors that may be perceived as pivotal to the success or otherwise of the enterprise. Within this framework the perceived existence of barriers such as exclusive practices, discrimination, inadequate access to markets or legal or other bureaucratic restrictions on entrepreneurial practice will have a negative impact on the person's entrepreneurial intentions in so far as he/she regards these barriers as outside their control (Baycan-Levent et al., 2012). For example, the 'Masculinity' dimension reflects differences in gender egalitarianism

across societies, so that cultures which are low in masculine-orientation are more likely to have higher rates of women participating in the workforce and receiving equal levels of education to men (Emrich et al., 2004). Consequently, it would be expected that women in 'low-masculinity' contexts would be more likely in to participate in entrepreneurship as a result of the direct cultural influence on their subjective and normative beliefs – as well as the indirect effect of the prevailing structures on their perceptions of what is possible and what is not (Emrich et al., 2004). At the same time, these possibilities are in themselves connected to the actual stage of economic development and wealth of the potential entrepreneur's society. Baycon-Levent et al. (2012), for instance, report the mediating effect of GDP in the relationship between culture dimension and entrepreneurial activities. Whereas traditional culture is shown to foster entrepreneurship in low-medium GDP countries it has the opposite effect in high-GDP regions (Baycon-Levent et al., 2012).

The overall suggestion is that cultural, personal and structural variables will all be active in shaping the level and type of entrepreneurialism at any one time in any given context.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The level of entrepreneurial activity in any society at any given time seems to emerge from combinations of cultural factors, individual entrepreneurial talent and the inter-relationships between the two. Findings from this study suggest that culture exerts its effect as a modifier of the relationship between individual tendencies and entrepreneurial outcomes – though the significant cultural dimensions through which that effect operates depends on the context. As a result, there is no single 'recipe' for effective entrepreneurial activity, and successful outcomes depend on the match between cultural values and individual tendencies. Of the variables included in this study power-distance, collectivism and uncertainty-avoidance dimensions associate most strongly with entrepreneurial outcomes. At the individual level, qualities of opportunism and proactivity are shown to make the largest positive contribution to the success of the enterprise. Nevertheless, the pattern of results across the regions indicates that different combinations of culture and ability are associated with different business outcomes in each region. Consequently, present evidence is interpreted as supporting Strum et al.'s (1995) argument that it is the congruence of culture and entrepreneurial style that determines the success of the venture. In critiquing these findings it is noted that broader economic and social structures will work to either facilitate or hinder the entrepreneurial process, which means that national economies still need to work to equalize opportunity and reduce the perceived and actual barriers to entrepreneurial success. While Ajzen's planned behavior theory offers an explanatory account of the effect of culture on individual intention it is recognized that present findings offer a necessarily selective and partial account of the interactions between cultural factors and individual talent in the production of entrepreneurial

activity. Further research is recommended to establish the significance of culture as a modifier of entrepreneurial effectiveness among a larger, more representative sample of cross-cultural entrepreneurs.

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