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The nexus between cultural values and entrepreneurial innovativeness: a Nigerian study

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ABSTRACT

Innovation is the process through which the entrepreneur converts market opportunities into workable, profitable and marketable ideas. It is the application of something creative that has a significant impact on an organization, an industry or the society at large. Innovation is critical not only to facilitate differentiation, but also to bring about sustainable competitive advantage. The study employed survey research using questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Two hundred subjects responded to the questionnaire. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested using multiple regression, t-test, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Analysis of Variance. The study suggested, among other findings, that there is an association or relationship between cultural values and entrepreneurial innovativeness in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that entrepreneurs should consider their cultural values and ethnic dispositions in their business pursuits since they can go a long way in determining entrepreneurial innovativeness.

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Introduction

Firms regard the innovativeness of their workforce and workplace culture as an important source of competitive advantage and a driver of economic growth. Innovativeness of an individual employee is a trait which organizations covet and often conduct trainings to inculcate innovativeness. To that end, several researchers have studied the assessment, as well as the improvement of an individual's innovativeness in specific contexts such as inventions, process and product innovations, consumer new product purchase, and technology innovation adoption (Goldsmith and Foxall, 2003; Hyvonen and Tuominen, 2006). Previous studies have indicated that an individual's cultural background impacts on the ways personality traits are exercised, practised and manifested (Kumar and Kelly, 2006; Steenkamp, Hofstede, and Wedel, 1999). Cultural dimensions have gained importance as researchers and organizations have become sensitive to the impacts that cultural background can play in positively or negatively impacting the realization of desired behaviors and outcomes. Cultures that are highly individualistic tend to prepare individuals for independent thinking and foster behaviors which promote questioning the normal ways things are being done.

In this study, we explore how the dimensions of national culture impact an individual's innovativeness. The characteristics of national culture can be understood according to the five dimensions used by Hofstede (1991) in his analysis of national culture. Hofstede identified four dimensions with which to characterize national culture: 1) individualism-collectivism 2) masculinity-femininity 3) power distance, and 4) uncertainty avoidance. Later research added a fifth dimension, long term orientation or time orientation. Hofstede's findings were based on a large sample of professionals employed within IBM in over fifty countries.

Individuistic versus Collectivist culture: This dimension refers to the degree to which individuals are intrinsically

integrated into groups. Individualistic cultures have ties between individuals as loose bonds and individuals are expected to look after themselves and their immediate responsibilities. Such cultures find that individuals tend to act, think and perform individually as opposed to collectively as part of a group. Collectivist cultures tend to find individuals naturally cohesive and part of groups and individuals tend to act and perform in collective manners and for the good of collective referent groups.

Masculinity versus Femininity: This dimension refers to the degree to which a culture values such behaviors as assertiveness, achievement, social support for nurture, quality of life. Individuals in high masculinity score cultures tend to push harder for achievement and ambition.

Power distance: Power distance is a scale of dependence on relationships in a cultural context (Hofstede, 1991). In small power distance countries, there is a limited dependence of subordinates on bosses; instead interdependence is preferred in that the subordinate consults with the boss. In contrast, in countries with high power distance, there is considerable dependence of subordinates on bosses, and the subordinates respond by either preferring dependence (paternalism) or rejecting it entirely (counter-dependence).

Avoidance of uncertainty: This characteristic refers to the rejection of ambiguity or uncertainty in order to avoid anxiety. It refers to the extent to which individuals in a culture tend to feel comfortable in unstructured, novel or surprising situations versus structured, stable or known situations. This uncertainty avoidance shows up as a fear of ambiguous situations, a suppression of deviant ideas and behaviors and resistance to innovation (Steenkamp, Hofstede and Wedel, 1999).

Problem Investigated

Nigeria is a multi ethnic and multi-cultural country accounting for the divergence in views and orientations. This divergence in cultural values can also have a serious impact and

influence on entrepreneurship practice in general and entrepreneurship innovativeness in particular. The establishment of new small and medium businesses is associated with job creation, innovation and enhanced productivity in the economy (Inegbenebor, 2005). This study investigated the association between cultural values and entrepreneurial innovativeness among entrepreneurs in Lagos Metropolis of Lagos State, Nigeria. Dimensions of cultural values such as masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, power distance and time orientation were employed.

Research Objectives And Hypotheses

The objectives for this research are inculcated in the four hypotheses formulated for this study.

- Masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and individualism, power distance and time orientation will jointly and independently predict Entrepreneurial Innovativeness.
- There will be main and interaction effect of Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance on Entrepreneurial Innovativeness.
- There will be a significant relationship between individualism and Entrepreneurial Innovativeness.
- There will be a significant difference between uncertainty avoidance and Entrepreneurial Innovativeness.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Literature Review

Cultural Values

Groups, societies, or cultures have values that are largely shared by their members. The values identify those objects, conditions or characteristics that members of the society consider important (Khairul, 2009). The multifaceted character of national culture and the debate about the impact of cultural similarities and dissimilarities has already received attention in the literature (Adler, 1991; Adler and Jelinek, 1986). Hofstede's large scale study of the influence on cultural dimensions on management has frequently been used in other studies. He identified four cultural dimensions (later broadened to five dimensions) of culture: power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance, and later long-term orientation or Confucian values (Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005).

Some theoretical and empirical studies have applied and evaluated Hofstede's dimensions according to their influence on innovative activities (Jones and Davis, 2000). Most of the studies identified that there was only a low impact of power distance as well as uncertainty avoidance on innovations. Contrastingly, masculinity seems to positively influence innovation activities. The results about individualism are mixed. Very few studies have used cross-cultural dimensions in the area of entrepreneurship with a few exceptions such as Ardichvili and Gasparishvili (2003). These studies are important from the perspective of nations competing for new ventures as a study of dissimilar cultural dimensions can give insights into which aspects describe why individuals tend or do not tend to be entrepreneurs. Such studies can explain what cultural dimensions influence and impact on entrepreneurial intentions and actions.

Entrepreneurial Innovativeness

Innovation is the generation of ideas, its acceptance and the implementation of such ideas, which are either novel, or modification of existing processes, products or services (Babalola, 2006; 2009). Innovation is the "... process that turns an invention ... into a marketable product" (Gabor, 1970). Innovation is therefore more than invention; it also involves the

commercialization of ideas, implementation, and the modification of existing products, systems and resources (Bird 1989). Innovative activity is explicit in Schumpeter's description of the entrepreneur. Schumpeter (1934) defined the role of the entrepreneur as a catalyst of change, seeing the entrepreneur as "... an idea man and a man of action ... instrumental in discovering new opportunities". Drucker further elaborated the innovator role of the entrepreneur and described innovation as "the specific tool of entrepreneurs ... [and] ... the means by which they exploit change" (Drucker 1985). In differentiating the entrepreneur from the small business owner, Carland, et al (1984) argue that innovative strategic practices are necessary for new ventures to be profitable and grow. In making this distinction, they define 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).

Assigning the role of innovator to the entrepreneur implies that successful entrepreneurs adopt and implement competitive strategies such as introducing new products and services, new methods of production, opening new markets or sources of supply, or even reorganizing an entire industry (Bird 1988; Carland et. al. 1984). However, prior to implementation, the potential entrepreneur must be able to effectively formulate such strategies suggesting the possession of personal characteristics which reflect creativity and innovativeness (Muellers and Thomas, 2000).

There seems to be strong empirical evidence to support the claim that entrepreneurs, particularly those successful at growing an enterprise, are more innovative than non-entrepreneurs. For example, research by Sexton and Bowman-Upton (1986) shows that entrepreneurship students tend to be more innovative than other business administration students. Carland et al (1988) found that entrepreneurs who establish and manage a business for the principal purposes of profit and growth have a higher preference for innovation than other small business owners. Carland and Carland (1991) found that both male and female entrepreneurs have significantly higher levels of innovative preference than their managerial counterparts. Buttner and Gyskiewicz (1993) found entrepreneurs scored higher on Kirton's adaption-innovation scale (Kirton 1976) than general managers of large organizations. Also using Kirton's adaption-innovation scale, Goldsmith and Kerr (1991) found that entrepreneurship students were more innovative than other business students. Smith and Miner (1985) found that founders of fast-growing firms scored significantly higher in personal innovation than individuals holding managerial positions. Other studies have shown that innovation is a primary motive to start a business. For example, Shane, Kolvereid, and Westhead (1991) report that the opportunity to innovative and be in the forefront of new technology was frequently given as a reason for starting a business. The opportunity to innovate is also frequently cited in international studies as a motive for starting an enterprise (Scheinberg and MacMillan 1988; Blaise, Toulouse, and Clement 1990).

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on two major schools of thoughts in entrepreneurship serving as the theoretical foundations for this study. The two schools are examined below.

THE Psychological Characteristics School of Thought on Entrepreneurship

The behavior of an individual is determined by his/her attitudes, beliefs, drives, needs and values. Human behaviors originate from the desire to satisfy one's needs. This school's focal point is on personality factors; they believed that entrepreneurs have distinctive values and attitudes towards work in particular and life in general.

People who have similar characteristics as entrepreneurs do have a superior predisposition to perform entrepreneurial activities than people who do not possess such characteristics (Lachman, 1980). Cunningham and Lischeron (2002) identified three basic personality traits namely: personal value, such as honesty, duty, responsibility and ethical behaviour; risk-taking tendency; and the need for achievement. Scholars have shown that many entrepreneurs exhibit higher levels of honesty, ethical behaviour, socially responsible, and hardworking than the general population. Values are learned and internalized, thus it replicating the practice of socialization into a culture. Personal values are fundamental to the way an individual believes; they will be expressed irrespective of the situation (Mainoma and Aruwa, 2008).

This school submits that certain individual values and needs are the necessary preconditions for entrepreneurship. Since these values are learned early in life and are well entrenched prior to adulthood, entrepreneurial characteristics are hard to imbibe in schools. Characteristics which have received a great deal of attention include; need for achievement, locus of control, risk-taking, tolerance of uncertainty and behaviour type (Begley and Boyd, 1987).

Personality perspective on Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial behaviour can be viewed from either internal or external perspectives of an individual. Internal viewpoint looks at the personality traits of an individual such as locus of control, risk taking, need for achievement, extraversion, problem solving, innovation, creativity perception, openness and work values. The external viewpoint examines culture, role models, work experiences, education and environment. McClelland (1961) submits that entrepreneurs are persons who have a high need for achievement. He goes on to explain that individuals with a high need to achieve will exhibit entrepreneurial behaviour. (Casson, 1982) quotes Kets De Vries (1985) as saying that family background and work experiences were significant in forming an entrepreneurial personality. He contends that individuals who have gone through hardship in childhood need to escape from their harsh background. Their aggressive behaviour forces them to start their own enterprises, instead of being employed by others. Rotter (1989) developed the concept of locus of control whereby the forces responsible for an individual's destiny are either internal or external. Individuals with a high internal locus of control are more likely to become entrepreneurs, than those of high external locus of control. Timmons (1994) refers to entrepreneurial behaviour as a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity directed, and leadership balanced. He acknowledged that entrepreneurship personality can be acquired or in born.

Seven factors are responsible for entrepreneurial behaviour (Hisrich et. al, 2006). The first is education. The authors state that there is a general feeling that entrepreneurs are less educated than the general population. They further assert that education is essential in the upbringing of an entrepreneur because it facilitates the integration and accumulation of new knowledge; provides individuals with opportunities; and assists

entrepreneurs in adapting to new situations. The second factor is personal values, which refers to a set of attitudes about the nature of the management process and business in general, for example opportunism, individualism and competitiveness. Third is age, which is the chronological age of an entrepreneur, and the entrepreneur's previous business experience. Fourth is work experience that includes previous technical and industry experience. The fifth factor is role models. These are individuals influencing entrepreneurial career choice and style. Moral-Support network is stated as the sixth factor, individuals who give psychological support to an entrepreneur. The final factor is Professional-Support network, which stands for individuals who help entrepreneurs in business activities.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study was carried out using the survey design. The independent variables are the cultural values dimensions (masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, power distance and time orientation), and the dependent variable is entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Sample

The sample of this study comprises entrepreneurs in Lagos Metropolis. These entrepreneurs were selected from different lines of occupation: farmers, traders, artisan, civil servant, police/soldier and students/house wife. The subjects were purposively selected for this study. A total number of two hundred and twenty five questionnaires were distributed, with a number of two hundred found usable and were analysed. The subjects consist of one hundred and twelve males and eighty eight females with age ranging from nineteen to above sixty years.

Instruments

The questionnaire was designed in three parts: Section A (Demographics) while Section B measures cultural values. The measure of cultural values was adapted from prior work by Hofstede (1980), Shane (1993) and Khairul (2009). The scale consists of 30 items concerning each of the cultural values using a 5-point likert format ranging from Strongly Agree=5 to Strongly Disagree=1. The Cronbach's α values of the cultural values dimensions were 0.61 for masculinity, 0.74 for individualism, 0.59 for uncertainty avoidance, 0.65 for power distance and 0.66 for time orientation. Section C measures entrepreneurial innovativeness. The measure of entrepreneurial innovativeness was adapted based on prior work by Schumpeter (1934) which is a 15 item questionnaire, using a 5-point likert format ranging from Continuously Implemented=5 to Not at all Implemented=1. The Cronbach's α value is 0.92. The scales were revalidated and the reliability coefficients were Cultural values 0.75 and entrepreneurial innovativeness 0.79.

Data analyses

The demographics were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage.

Hypothesis 1 was tested using multiple regression while hypotheses 2 was tested using analysis of variance. Hypothesis 3 was tested using Pearson Correlation and hypothesis 4 was tested using t-test.

Data presentation and analyses

Descriptive statistics of demographics

The table above showed that there were 112(56.0%) males and 88(44.0%) females, 17(8.5%) of the respondents were under 20 years, 56(28.0%) were age ranged 20-29, 49(24.5%) were of age range 30-39, 28(14.0%) were of age range 40-49, 34

(17.0%) were of age range 50-59 while 16(8.0%) were of age 60 and above years respectively. The Yorubas were 52(42.5%), the Hausas were 25(12.5%), the Igbos were 60(30.0%), Non-Nigerians were 13(6.5%) while 17(8.0%) of the respondents did not specify their ethnic group. The table also showed that 69(34.5%) of the respondents were single, the married were 92(46.0%), the divorced accounted for 32(16.0%) while the widow were 7(3.5%).

The academic qualification of the respondents showed that 9(4.5%) attained primary school education, 25(12.5%) attained secondary school education, 46(23.0%) had NCE,OND certificates, 73(36.5%) had 1st Degree or HND certificates, 44(22.0%) had the Postgraduate certificates while 3(1.5%) had other certificates respectively. Also, the occupation of the respondents indicated that 102(51.0%) of the respondents were farmers, 9(4.5%) were in business, 3(1.5%) were Civil Servants, 6(3.0%) were Artisans, 45(22.5%) were either Doctors or Nurses, 6(3.0%) were either Police Officers or Soldiers while 29(14.5%) were Students or Housewives respectively. The religion of the respondents showed that the Christians were 137(68.5%), the Muslims were 48(24.0%), the Indigenous Religious believers were 8(4.0%) while 7(3.5%) belonged to other religious organizations.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: Masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, power distance and time orientation will jointly and independently predict entrepreneurial innovativeness

The table above showed that the *linear combination* effect of Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, Power Distance and Time Orientation will jointly and independently predict Entrepreneurial Innovativeness was significant ($F(5,194) = 15.938$; $R = .540$, $R^2 = .291$, $Adj. R^2 = .273$; $P < .05$). The independent/predictor variables jointly accounted for a variation of about 29 percent. The following showed the various *relative contributions* and levels of significance of the independent variables:

Masculinity ($\beta = -.088$, $P < .05$), Uncertainty Avoidance ($\beta = .340$, $P < .05$), Individualism ($\beta = .215$, $P < .05$), Power Distance ($\beta = .091$, $P < .05$) and Time Orientation ($\beta = .206$, $P < .05$) respectively. The above shows that masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, time orientation and power distance predicted entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Hypothesis 2: There will be main and interaction effect of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurial innovativeness.

The above table showed that there was no significant main and interaction effect of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurial innovativeness ($F(3,196) = .900$, $P > .05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

In the table, the mean scores Low masculinity is 52.04, the mean score for high masculinity is 51.98, the mean score for low Uncertainty Avoidance is 49.01 while that of high Uncertainty Avoidance is 53.79 respectively.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant relationship between individualism and entrepreneurial innovativeness.

The table above showed that there was significant relationship between individualism and entrepreneurial innovativeness ($r = .334^{**}$, $N = 200$, $P < .01$). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant difference between uncertainty avoidance and entrepreneurial innovativeness.

The above table showed that there was a significant difference between uncertainty avoidance and entrepreneurial innovativeness. (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 52.309, $df = 199$, $P < .05$ level of significance). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Conclusion

This study is concluded based on the results obtained from the tested hypotheses. The study showed that masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, time orientation and power distance predicted entrepreneurial innovativeness. We can conclude that these cultural values are predictors of entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Also, there was no main and interaction effect of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Furthermore, there was significant relationship between individualism and entrepreneurial innovativeness. The study indicated that the more individuals are left to cater for themselves, the greater their degree of entrepreneurial innovativeness. Finally, there was a significant difference between uncertainty avoidance and entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that:

- entrepreneurs should consider their cultural values and ethnic dispositions in their business pursuits since they can go a long way in determining entrepreneurial innovativeness.
- attempt should be made by entrepreneurs and would be entrepreneurs to discover and develop specific cultural values that can promote their entrepreneurial innovativeness.
- governments at all levels should train and educate entrepreneurs on the need to embrace entrepreneurial innovativeness with a view to foster economic development.

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Table 4.1: Showing the Descriptive Statistics of demographics

SEX	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	112	56.0
Female	88	44.0
Total	200	100.0
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 20	17	8.5
20-29	56	28.0
30-39	49	24.5
40-49	28	14.0
50-59	34	17.0
60+	16	8.0
Total	200	100.0
Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yoruba	52	42.5
Hausa	25	12.5
Igbo	60	30.0
Non Nigerian	13	6.5
Unspecify	17	8.0
Total	200	100.0
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	69	34.5
Married	92	46.0
Divorced	32	16.0
Widowed	7	3.5
Total	200	100.0
Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary school	9	4.5
Secondary school	25	12.5
NCE,OND,	46	23.0
Ist Degree/HND	73	36.5
Postgraduate	44	22.0
Others	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farming	102	51.0
Business	9	4.5
Civil Servant	3	1.5
Artisan	6	3.0
Doctor,Nurse	45	22.5
Police,Soldier	6	3.0
Students,Housewife	29	14.5
Total	200	100.0
Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	137	68.5
Islam	48	24.0
Indigenous Religion	8	4.0
Others	7	3.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: field survey (2010)

Table 4.2.1: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the results of hypothesis 1

Variables	F-Ratio	Sig. of P	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	β	T	P
Masculinity	15.938	.000	.540	.291	.273	-.088	-1.215	.226
Uncertainty Avoidance						.340	4.817	.000
Individualism						.215	3.290	.001
Power Distance						.091	1.285	.200
Time Orientation						.206	3.047	.003

Source: field survey (2010)

Table 4.2.2a: Summary of Analysis of Variance showing the results of hypothesis 2

.Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Main Effects	1126.656	2	563.328	5.552	.005	
Masculinity	.188	1	.188	.002	.966	n.s.
Uncertainty Avoidance	1126.468	1	1126.468	11.102	.001	sig.
2-way Interactions	1.595	1	1.595	.016	.900	
Masculinity x Uncert Avoidance	1.595	1	1.595	.016	.900	n.s.
Explained/Main Effect	1128.251	3	376.084	3.706	.013	
Residual	19887.749	196	101.468			
Total	210.16.00	199	105.608			

Source: field survey (2010)

Table 4.2.2b: Multiple Classification Analysis(MCA) showing the effect of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Variable + Category Grand Mean = 52.00	N	Unadjusted variation	Eta	Adjusted for independent + covariates deviation	Beta
Masculinity					
1. Low	80	.04		.66	
2. High	120	-.02	.00	-.44	.05
Uncertainty Avoidance					
1. Low	75	-2.99		-3.13	
2. High	125	1.99	.23	1.88	.24
Multiple R-squared					.054
Multiple R					.232

Source: field survey (2010)

Table 4.2.3: Summary of Correlation Analysis showing the results of hypothesis 3

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Entrepreneurial Innovation	52.0000	10.2766				
Individualism	18.2450	3.2770	200	.334**	.000	Sig.

Source: field survey (2010)

Sig. at .01 level

Table 4.2.4: Summary of T-test showing the results of hypothesis 4

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Entrepreneurial Innovation	200	52.000	10.2766				
Uncertainty Avoidance	200	17.6900	3.5108	1.96	52.309	199	.000