

Original Article

Perceptions of the Impact of Culture on Universities' Success: A Dissertation Quantitative Partial Findings

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Globalization and innovation are two important concepts through-out various organizations and institutions that serve as driving forces producing great changes in the society. In order to surpass these external environmental challenges and demands, such as, political, economic, social and technological factors, the organizations' goals and strategies should consistently align with each other. Successful organizations use several components, such as, employee partnership, self-empowered work teams and participation to dynamically adapt to their environment. As such, educational institutions should not be exempted. In addition, the researcher has observed the successes and failures of many institutions partly due to the impact of culture on the business management style of the institution. Universities being run as business organizations have the potential to be innovative and successful based on its cultural environment. However, despite the positivity of the impact of culture on universities, culture also has the great risks of causing failure of universities. As such, "Perceptions of the Impact of Culture on Universities' Success as Business Entities" is derived as the Dissertation topic. The research seeks to investigate the correlation between culture and the success of universities. One recommendation of the study includes the necessity to carry out the research with a much larger group of participants of national cultures. This would help the results of the study to be of more significant value and hence present universities leaders with a better understanding on the impact of culture on their institutions.

Keywords: Globalization, Culture, University success

Introduction

Globalization and innovation are two important concepts through-out various organizations and institutions that serve as driving forces producing great changes in the society. In order to surpass these external environmental challenges and

demands, such as, political, economic, social and technological factors, the organizations' goals and strategies should consistently align with each other. According to Kirkman, Lowe, & Young (1999), successful organizations use several components, such as, employee partnership, self-empowered work teams and participation to dynamically adapt to their environment. As such, educational institutions should not be exempted.

Due to globalization and increase in technology the world of higher education has been going through institutional changes. Some of the

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changes they have to deal with include online studies, competency-based degrees and adaptive learning. As a result, the real costs of higher education have become ever more onerous. The central idea to be investigated is to understand why universities are not using different national cultures to impact their business models in their administrative and performance management systems.

Relevant Literature

According to the anthropologist Taylor (1871, p.1), culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. As humans, we utilize our cognitive schemes by sorting our past and present knowledge for our future source. For example, these include stereotypes, gender roles and our global viewpoints. That is, in other words, cognitive scheme can be seen as a mental framework of our common experiences, shared by several specific cultural groups rather than individuals (Garro, 2000).

While the world is increasingly becoming integrated, it is of essence if institutions, such as, the universities in this case, consider matching the needs of globalization so that they remain sustainable and at the same time become successful (Wu, 2016). As argued by Hofstede (2001) concerning culture, institutions should indulge in research to come up with approaches and opportunities which will build stronger cumulative theories and traditions to boost their success and at the same time sustainability within the education sector, and ultimately in higher education institutions.

Hofstede (1991, 2001, 2011) research was used as the foundation for the cultural elements, along with the Value Survey Model (Hofstede, 2013), provided the framework for the quantitative aspect of this research. The quantitative design utilizes the co-relational studies of the six cultural dimensions outlined by Hofstede and Minkoy (2011). The six cultural dimensions are:

- Power distance – this dimension describes the degree in which the less powerful members of a company or social group accepts and

expects power to be shared unequally.

- Uncertainty avoidance – this dimension has to do with a society’s level of tolerance concerning insecurities and ambiguity.
- Individualism versus collectivism – this dimension has to deal with the extent to which individuals in a society feel independent or interdependent when working in groups.
- Masculinity versus femininity – this dimension has to do with the role of gender in the society by the use of force versus affection.
- Long-term versus short-term orientation – this dimension has to do with members of the society accepting the world as it is presently, but also preparing for future changes.
- Indulgence versus restraint – this dimension is about enjoying life, friends and freedom versus living under a controlled regime.

Individualism and Collectivism is the dimension of culture most relevant to this study. Individualism and Collectivism is the dimension of culture which focuses on the level of connection between individuals and the societies in which they live, (Hofstede, 2001). Individualism can be explained as the thought that each person has his or her own rights to determine how he or she may choose to live (Hofstede, 2000). Collectivism, on the other hand, builds on the thought that the life of the person is owned by the group or community in which the particular person operates (Hofstede, 2001). This is relevant to this study as from a management perspective, it is important to know that the performance management level of the participants is affected by their Cultural Individualism or Cultural Collectivism level. For example, culturally, the Americans would be on a high position in the Individualistic category. This is because this kind of thinking was instilled in the American culture through its constitution and as a result, the American people live their lives generally by thinking of and promoting themselves. Another nationality, like Jamaicans, because of their history and close proximity to America have the same individualistic cultural thinking.

Collectivism, on the other hand, builds on the thought that the life of the person is owned by the group or community in which the person operates.

Such a person is considered not to have any rights and so must give up his or her personal desires for the betterment of the society in which the person belongs. From a management perspective, it is important to know that people who reside in individualistic cultures, for example, people in America are considered to be very proud, and are viewed generally to be selfish and egocentric. They focus on the "I" and not on the "We" as opposed to many Asian societies, like Japan. Universities' management can learn and use this knowledge by realizing that constant praising these individualistic people would provide tremendous extrinsic motivation for them to do well in the institution. University management must realize that these "self-centred" humans must be involved in clear, precise conversation for effective communication in the work place. As in America, for example, individualistic persons focus on their self-value, self-worth and achievements, so hierarchy is considered to be very important in their culture. University managers and senior faculties then can use evaluation methods as a form of strategy to motivate performance level in the universities.

In Asia though, as in Japan, where collectivism is more common because the Japanese focus a lot more on groups and community togetherness, the university management can guide the workforce through lots of team and group work. Unity and loyalty are values that are shared and considered most important in these societies. They carry this over in the work place where confrontation is avoided and the greater good of the company comes before individual needs.

Research Questions and Design

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Since the purpose of the proposed study is to gain insight into perceptions of the lack of viable business models for universities to take from a cultural perspective in order to survive, my primary research question is as follows: How significant is the perception of the impact of culture on the success of universities as business entities?

The phenomena of the purpose of this study is

the failure of educational institutions to sustain education. The research question is formulated by the phenomenon and the supporting hypotheses, based on the Value Survey Model 2013 Edition (The Hofstede Centre, n.d.), which were created in order to test for the perceptions of the impact of individualistic and collective cultures.

H0: The perception of the impact of collective and individualistic national cultures on the success of universities as business entities is not significant.

H1: Collectivistic national cultures is perceived to be more significant on the success of universities as business entities.

H2: Individualistic national cultures is perceived to be more significant on the success of universities as business entities.

H3: There is significant difference on the perception of national culture on the success of universities as business entities.

Research Design

Phase 1

This research study involved the use of a mixed methods design and a sequential approach of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative design utilizes the co-relational studies of the six cultural dimensions defined by Hofstede (1991, 2001, 2011), along with an additional six questions, intended to gain further insight into the participants' perceptions of universities' cultural operations. The quantitative survey was a combination of the validated Hofstede's 30 questions Value Survey Model (VSM) 2013 and the researcher's 6 questions, in order to determine the cultural dimensions effectiveness on universities' success. As a result, Phase 1 of the Survey is made up of a total of 36 questions. The quantitative survey was available through SurveyMonkey which had an inserted e-mail link. Participants had been targeted by email referrals and the general population from SurveyMonkey. A total of 75-100 participants were targeted with an expected 30 qualified respondents.

Phase 2

After the quantitative survey, the participants were asked to self-select voluntarily for a short

interview by phone, Skype or Zoom. This phase has a total of six semi-structured qualitative questions. The purpose of this phase was to incorporate a phenomenological dimension to the results. However, for the purpose of this research article, the paper will focus on the quantitative part of the research.

Research Methodology

This mixed methods study is comprised of two surveys of participants working in universities with leadership roles. The cultural aspect of the study is based on the theoretical framework from Hofstede's research, while the Value Survey Model 2013 was utilized as the underlying tool for the quantitative component. The sample population was a self-selected group of employees in leadership positions at a university from SurveyMonkey website. In the first part of the survey, the respondents filled out an online survey voluntarily and may choose to self-select to participate in the qualitative phone or internet interview stage. Similarly, based on the intended purpose of focusing on the quantitative aspect of this research, the qualitative methodology will not be included in this section.

Participants and Data Collection

The respondents were purposefully selected from those who are in leadership positions in a university. The targeted participants came from different countries and regions, for example, in Jamaica where I did my BA, from my present part-time university work here in Japan, and from many other referrals. In addition, as it were not enough, the researcher published the quantitative survey online through SurveyMonkey research website, which has a larger possibility of getting respondents who qualify for this research. The quantitative data was collected by SurveyMonkey via the electronic survey, afterwards, the participants were asked to self-select if they opt to be interviewed on Skype/Zoom or telephone in the qualitative aspect of the research. I, then chose ten of these participants.

Research procedures

The participants were presented with the survey and asked the primary qualifying question, if they work in a leadership position in a university. This question served to eliminate any respondents who did not meet this criterion, which is relevant to the research topic. The research was done and the data collected over a period of 2 weeks. For those qualified for the electronic survey, they were required to answer about 40 multiple choice, short answer and ranking questions. The estimated time of completion was 10-15 minutes. The participants were also given the option to withdraw at any time during the process, or up to four weeks of data collection. For those self-selected 10 persons for the interview, they were contacted within 3 days after the initial electronic survey to set up an agreed date for the interview portion of the study. The interview portion was scheduled for 10-15 minutes of 5 open ended questions related to culture and the participants' universities' working environment. However, this qualitative interview data will not be included in this paper.

A total of 32 qualified participants, could complete the survey in Part 1 of the research. There were more males than females who did the survey, about 69% men to 31% females. It was almost a ratio 3:7 of women to men, who completed the survey.

Results and Discussion

This mixed methods study was designed to investigate the perception of the impact of national cultures on universities' success. This research was formulated considering the universities' cultural operations and the overall effectiveness of national cultures in making universities more successful, through the observations and perceptions of the participants. The age group for both genders which participated the most was in the range of 25-29.

Based on Geert Hofstede (1991, 2001, 2011) cultural dimensions model that categorized national cultures into six dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity

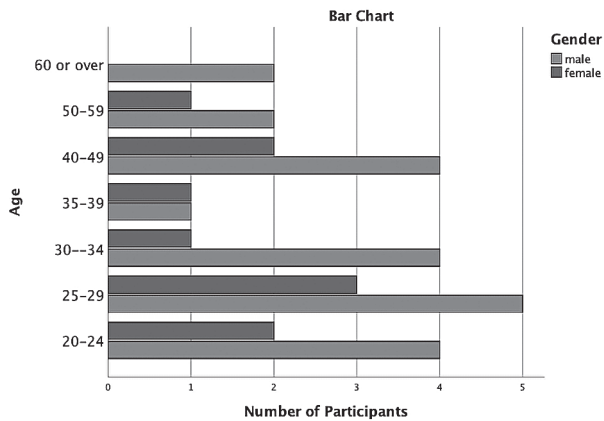


Figure 1 Cross-tabulation of gender and age

versus femininity, long-term versus short-term orientation, indulgence versus restraint, and individualism versus collectivism, it is the individualism versus collectivism dimension that mostly pertains to the cultural attitudes toward societal norms and behavior.

In the table below, of the Pearson correlation results, there are three significant data reading that is relevant to the topic of “Perceptions of the impact of culture on the success of universities”. The first is the coefficient readings, the second, the strength of the relationship and lastly, the degree of any significant relationship between

Table 1 University Cultural Operations Pearson Correlation Matrix & Coefficients of Determination

University Cultural Operations	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
V1 Overall	1	0.14	-.44*	.30	0.07	0.33
V2 Different	0.14	1	-.30	.50**	-.14	0.20
V3 Conflict	-.43*	-0.30	1	-.49**	.47**	-.41*
V4 Beneficial	0.30	.51**	-.49**	1	-.38*	0.20
V5 Barriers	0.07	-.14	.47**	-.375*	1	-.42*
V6 Collective	0.33	.20	-.41*	0.2	-.42*	1

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

the variables as indicated by the asterisks. V1-V6 variables represent the overall effectiveness, people with different cultural backgrounds, conflict, beneficial, creating barriers and a cooperative and collective culture respectively. If the Pearson correlation coefficient is positive, then there is a positive relationship between the variables. For example, there is a positive relationship between the overall effectiveness of the university and (i) having people with different cultural backgrounds (Different), (ii) it being beneficial (Beneficial) to have different cultures, (iii) that different cultures may create barriers (Barriers) and (iv) overall, the university has a cooperative and collective culture. However, there is not a positive relationship between the university’s overall effectiveness and that different cultures may create problems and conflict. Any coefficients that show a negative number in essence demonstrates that there is a negative relationship between the two variables.

The strength of the relationship is predicated on the numbers in the table. For example, the coefficients that have values $.1 < |r| < .3$ are considered as having a small correlation. As such, $.3 < |r| < .5$ are considered as having a moderate association. Any coefficients greater than $> .5$ are considered as having a strong correlation (Cohen, 1988). For example, although there is a relationship between the overall effectiveness of the university and having a diverse culture may create barriers, the coefficient of 0.07 shows that there is only a small correlation.

Lastly, the coefficients may show a significant correlation as noted by a single asterisk or double asterisk. This means the correlation is significant at either the .05 (single asterisk) or .01 level (two asterisks). For example, the overall effectiveness of the university is significantly correlated with cultural differences may cause conflict; however, the coefficient is negative. This means that

there is an inverse relationship between the two variables. As university effectiveness increases, the potential for conflict as a result of cultural differences decreases.

VSM data collection was augmented by five additional questions that were specific to the participants' experiences with virtual multicultural teams. These questions measured virtual team effectiveness with a ratio scale spanning 11 points (0 to 10, with 0 representing none of the time, 5 representing half of the time, and 10 representing all of the time). All data were initially screened for entry errors and missing data points. The data were collected with an online survey so there were not any entry errors. There was only one missing data point (case 38 for a cultural dimension). The final number was 62 participants for all descriptive statistics and inferential tests. Likert-scaled responses were screened for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity to determine whether they could be treated as continuous data (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The data did not show any substantial or systematic departures from statistical normality, which indicated Likert-scaled data could be treated as continuous data and justified the use of parametric inferential statistical tests to examine group differences.

Conclusion

This quantitative part of the Dissertation study highlighted the direct relationship between specific cultural elements and universities' success. Hofstede's 2013 VSM survey based on his six dimensional cultural model, deconstructed the concept of cultural norms and notions to dissimilate what aspects of culture are more impactful on universities' success. The quantitative results support the importance of cultural diversity for the success of universities. This quantitative partial study presented data as to what aspects of culture are more effective on universities' success. There is an overall positive effectiveness of universities having different cultural backgrounds. In summary, it is generally considered beneficial for universities

to host diverse cultures in their institutions. This research paper's implications are for all persons in leadership positions to be more aware of the significance of the impact of culture on universities' success. However, a deeper research is recommended so as to comprehend the full aspect of national cultures' diversities and their potential of having a significantly positive or negative effect on the success or failure of universities.

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