

**CULTURAL PROTOTYPES OF THE SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR:
A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF
IRELAND, GUATEMALA, AND CHINA**

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents initial results from the first stage of the international research program “Entrepreneurship Work in Organizations Requiring Leadership Development” (E-WORLD). Qualitative methodologies (literature reviews and focus groups) were used to collect data on perceptions of entrepreneurs in the countries of Ireland, Guatemala, and China. The data were used to identify entrepreneurial prototypes in each country that provide and initial examination into how individuals in each country conceptualize the entrepreneur in that culture. In each of the countries, the entrepreneur is perceived to be visionary, possessing some degree of creativity and innovation and willing to explore new opportunities. They are also perceived to be determined individuals who can persevere in difficult times. However, cultural differences are evident in perceptions of independence and autonomy, entrepreneurial risks and challenges, locus of control, and entrepreneurial motivation. Implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the interest in entrepreneurship. This increased attention is driven by the relationship between small business success and economic and social development, which is echoed by the statement by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2002, p.1) ‘... *it has become increasingly apparent that entrepreneurship does indeed contribute to economic development*’.. Imperative to the success of entrepreneurs are those characteristics and traits linked to entrepreneurial behavior. While such characteristics have been identified (Rauch and Frese, 2007), the question remains as to how these characteristics may differ across cultures due to cultural differences. Several studies have examined how entrepreneurial attributes differ across countries (Mueller and Thomas, 2000; Thomas and Mueller, 2000). However, these studies have been limited in scope, including only a couple of countries. They have also been based on student samples.

This study presents initial results from the initial stages of an international entrepreneurship research project called “Entrepreneurship Work in Organizations Requiring Leadership Development” (E-WORLD). Based upon an attribution or implicit theory of entrepreneurship, EWORLD Project research examines implicit entrepreneurial prototypes across different countries. Presently, there are approximately 35 countries included in the project, which makes this research project one of the largest in scope to examine entrepreneurial characteristics and traits cross-culturally. This paper presents a first attempt to explore entrepreneurial prototypes in three EWORLD countries: Ireland, Guatemala, and China. Initial results are presented that provide a glimpse into the implicit entrepreneurial prototypes that might exist in these three countries.

The first section of the paper reports on the current state of entrepreneurship in the three countries examined. Then, a theoretical framework based in social psychological attribution theory is presented to explain how culture can impact perceptions of entrepreneurial traits and characteristics. Thirdly, the results of the research methodology adopted for the study are presented that include entrepreneurial prototypes for each country. The paper concludes with a discussion of the research findings and the implications of the results for practice and future research, as well as study limitations, are discussed.

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CONTEXT OF IRELAND, GUATEMALA, AND CHINA

Ireland

Ireland is located on the periphery of Europe and is a small open economy, which is dependent on international trade. It has a population of approximately 4 million people and an area of 7,027,308 **hectares**. The Irish government has begun to focus on the development of smaller domestic firms as a source of future growth, which makes sense given the relevance of enterprise to the Irish economy. Statistics indicate that over 97 percent of businesses operating in Ireland today are small (they employ less than 50 people). This equates to a quarter of a million small businesses, employing 777,000 people (Small Business Forum, 2006). More than €5.5 billion in corporation tax is received from these small businesses, which directly contributes to the exchequer annually and thus indirectly to government expenditure on health, education and infrastructure. Encouraging entrepreneurship is high on the agenda of the Irish government as entrepreneurs are catalysts of growth, generating capital, innovation and skills (Birdthistle, 2008).

The 2007 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report for Ireland found that the rate of early stage entrepreneurial activity in Ireland was 8.2% (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman 2008). This equates to 8 in every 100 of those aged from 18 to 64 are early stage entrepreneurs. These individuals are actively taking efforts to start a new business or have started a new business within the previous 42 months. The rate of nascent entrepreneurial activity is 4.2%. Thus some 115,000 individuals in Ireland are actively planning to start a new business. Therefore, as identified in Table 1, the total early stage entrepreneurial activity rate [TEA] for Ireland in 2007 was 8.2%, When you

review the TEA rates for the past 5 years, 2007 shows a increase on 2006 but still hasn't regained the strength it achieved in 2005 (9.8%). The GEM Report for Ireland (2007) also found that there are 214,000 Irish people who own and manage a business they started before 2003. This is nearly 8 in every 100 people in Ireland.

Table 1 Prevalence Rates of Entrepreneurial Activity (2007)

	Nascent entrepreneurial activity	New business owner- managers	Early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA)	Established business owner- managers	Overall entrepreneurial activity
China (n=2,666)	6.9%	10.0%	16.4%	8.4%	24.6%
Ireland (n=1,897)	4.2%	4.2%	8.2%	9.0%	16.8%

According to the Small Business Forum (2006), small businesses in Ireland account for over 70 per cent of gross value added (GVA) in Construction (around €7.2 billion), over 40 per cent of GVA in Services (€15 billion – excluding financial services), and 34 per cent of GVA in indigenous Manufacturing (€2.1 billion). Small businesses form an essential part of the supply chain for larger firms and in particular are part of the support infrastructure needed to attract and retain foreign investment. The performance of the small business sector is thus an important contributor to the overall quality of life and standard of living in the country (Small Business Forum, 2006).

Guatemala

Guatemala is a small country located in the northern part of Central America and has a population of approximately 13.4 million inhabitants. Guatemala's beauty and strength of identity

have not been accompanied by cohesion and prosperity. In 1996 it emerged from a 36-year-long civil war. Enterprises in Guatemala can be found in two types of structures: legally registered corporations and those who are not registered (i.e. belong to the hidden economy). Unfortunately, there are no official statistics about entrepreneurial activity in Guatemala. The most accurate statistics on registered corporations comes from the Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social (IGSS). The IGSS identified that in December 2007, Guatemala had 53,353 active corporations, straddling all industry sectors. In the last micro and small enterprises census made by USAID in 2007, it was reported that there were more than 1 million non-registered enterprises comprised principally of one person. This represents 10% of families in Guatemala, whose income depends heavily on these enterprises.

Many changes have occurred in Guatemala over the past 50 years. Up to the 1940's an entrepreneur was viewed as an individual who exploited workers. In the 1950's the left associations blocked the concept of enterprise, saying that an entrepreneur 'is like a vampire who profits on the blood of others' and who also linked entrepreneurs with oligarchies. A reversal of fortunes for entrepreneurs occurred in the 1960's, which saw large privileges being given to entrepreneurs who invested in manufacturing industries. These privileges took the form of for example access to loans and fiscal advantages,. Since the 1990's a strong effort has been made to enable people to understand the importance of entrepreneurship and this has been achieved in association with Guatemalan universities, institutions and associations. In 2006, a free trade agreement saw the emergence of new rules for commerce and transformation of regional institutions. This has resulted in a new breed of entrepreneurs, who are profiting from the opportunities of globalization. These entrepreneurs are young, very well educated (mostly in American and European universities) and most are from middle or upper class families.

As a nation, Guatemala does not have a modern capitalistic platform and suffers from the lack of venture capitalists; money is not there to support new ideas and leadership. Entrepreneurs in

Guatemala tend to be autocratic leaders, loyal, come from a good family, have established social and economic relations and tend to be male.

China

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for 2007 identifies some interesting findings about the entrepreneurial nature of China. China was one of 42 countries that participated in the 2007 research and was in the category of middle- and low-income country. Table 1 identifies the prevalence rates of entrepreneurial activity defined as the percentage of the age 18-64 population involved in the stated activity. Table 1 includes 2007 prevalence rates for Ireland also. Data for Guatemala is not included, as no such data exists for this country.

The following key findings have been extrapolated from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2007 Executive Report of which China was a participant (Bosma et al., 2007). Most of the businesses identified in GEM show either no or only limited medium-term growth potential, as measured by job creation expectations. High-growth expectation entrepreneurial activity varies between countries, as does the relative prevalence of this activity within early-stage entrepreneurial activity as a whole. For example, the difference is six-fold between the two largest emerging economies in the world, China and India. Among middle- and low-income countries, China exhibits the highest adult-population prevalence rates of high-growth expectation entrepreneurship closely followed by Argentina.

The percentage of a population engaged in setting up or running their own businesses is one means of gauging a country's total entrepreneurial activity (TEA). Of the total participants, Latin American and Caribbean countries, China and Thailand stand out from the rest on this measure. China's TEA rate has increased over time. The rapid expansion of the Chinese economy has resulted in more opportunities for entrepreneurial activity, especially in the big cities. Further exploration of the Chinese GEM data reveals an increase in opportunity-driven TEA, while necessity-driven TEA has remained stable. Additionally, amongst the middle- and low-income countries, entrepreneurship by young adults in China appears to be much higher than among older adults, while this difference is much less marked in India.

Of the middle- and low-income countries, China clearly stands out as a hotbed of high-growth expectation entrepreneurship. The high-growth expectation early-stage entrepreneurship (HEA) rate for China is the highest of any GEM country, even though it is not statistically different from that of the United States, New Zealand, and Iceland. It is

notable that India's HEA rate is only one-fifth of that of China. The GEM report identified that the countries with arguably the 'healthiest' entrepreneurial anatomies, in this sample of nations, are Russia, Singapore, Israel and China (Bosma et al., 2007). The GEM report found that rapid growth in the likes of China and India appear to stem more from foreign investment and policy reforms rather than from foreign aid projects.

Among medium- and low-income countries, China's nascent and new entrepreneurs appear to be the most growth-oriented, with more than 10% of them anticipating high growth. Additionally, China along with India and Thailand demonstrate relatively high degrees of new technology. However, even though China displays high degrees of new technology when one breaks this down one finds that China scores quite low on the proportions of innovative entrepreneurs when compared to other countries. The GEM report also found that entrepreneurs in larger countries, such as the US, Japan, China and Russia, tend to focus, at least initially, more on their larger home markets.

Finally, Table 2 below compares and contrasts Ireland and China in terms of the estimated prevalence of perceptions about entrepreneurship among the non-entrepreneurially active population. The numbers represent the percentage of the age 18-64 population that believes favorable conditions exist regarding the variables in the table. One can see that Ireland scores highest in four of the five categories. China scores higher than Ireland when respondents were questioned about entrepreneurial intentions.

Table 2: Estimated prevalence of perceptions about entrepreneurship

	Potential entrepreneurial activity	Perceived opportunity	Perceived capabilities	Fear of failure	Entrepreneurial intentions
China (n=2,666)	17%	32%	30%	30%	31%
Ireland (n=1,897)	25%	44%	43%	40%	8%

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTION

As far back as Weber (1904), scholars have considered the impact of culture on entrepreneurship. Building on Weber's work, McClelland (1961) theorized about the impact of socialization on certain personality attributes (i.e. need for achievement). Indeed, McClelland predicted that cultures which valued achievement orientations would exhibit higher levels of entrepreneurship. Other studies have followed investigating various personality traits (Shane, 1992; Baum, et al., 1993; Shapero, 1975). In their review of culture and entrepreneurial potential, Mueller and Thomas (2000) note that one would expect that some cultures would be more closely associated with certain entrepreneurial orientations than others. For example, Huisman (1985) found significant variation in entrepreneurial activity across cultures and noted that cultural values greatly influence entrepreneurial behavior. Similarly, McGrath et al. (1992) in their comparison of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs found significant differences in cultural values and beliefs. Examples of personality dimensions believed to be culturally determined include innovativeness, locus of control, risk-taking, and energy level (Thomas and Mueller, 2000). To date, however, the research conducted on cultural dimensions in entrepreneurial characteristics has been somewhat limited in scope (Hayton et al., 2002) involving fewer than nine countries, employing student samples (Mueller and Thomas, 2000; Thomas and Mueller, 2000) and examining few cultural dimensions (Scheinburg and MacMillan, 1988).

This study examines international entrepreneurship from an attributional perspective which has rarely been done in past literature. Although a few previous studies have used an attributional lens to view nascent entrepreneurs (Shaver et al., 2001) and attributional biases of entrepreneurs (Rogoff et al., 2004), there have been no studies to interpret entrepreneurship between different cultures using this perspective. The theory that guides the advancement of the entrepreneurship framework used in the current study is an assimilation of implicit leadership theory (Lord and Maher, 1991) and value-belief theory of culture (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995). Additionally, our

framework relies heavily on the work of House et al. (2004) in the theoretical model used in the GLOBE project.

Implicit leadership theory purports that individuals have implicit beliefs, convictions, and assumptions concerning attributes and behaviors that differentiate leaders from subordinates and effective leaders from non-effective ones. The beliefs and assumptions are called the implicit leadership theory. We take this same concept and apply it to the entrepreneurship area. In essence, we propose that individuals have implicit beliefs about entrepreneurs as well. That is, entrepreneurial qualities are attributed to individuals and, hence, those same individuals are accepted as successful entrepreneurs. These qualities or implicit entrepreneurship theories (IET) influence the actions and effectiveness of entrepreneurs.

The theoretical underpinnings of IET can be found in attribution theory. Beginning with Heider's (1958) writings, attribution theory has focused on people's causal explanations for the behavior and events they encounter. Heider's basic premise was that people act as "naive psychologists" as they strive to explain their own and others' behavior and performance in order to understand and control their environments (Martinko, 1995). These explanations impact expectations for future events, which in turn, shape subsequent behavior. Hence, attribution theory is concerned with the perceived causes of events and the consequences of such perceptions.

Heider (1958) identified four causes to which most people attribute success and failure: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. Building on Heider's ideas, Weiner et al., (1971) identified two underlying attributional dimensions: locus of causality (internal versus external) and stability (stable versus unstable). By examining these dimensions in tandem, they created a 2 x 2 taxonomy for classifying attributions as internal and stable (e.g., ability), internal and unstable (e.g., effort), external and stable (e.g., task difficulty), and external and unstable (e.g., luck/chance). Additional attributional dimensions have since been proposed, including controllability, intentionality, and globality (Abramson et al. 1978; Weiner, 1979, Weiner 1985, Weiner 1986).

The construct of *explanatory style* (Peterson and Seligman, 1984; Seligman, 1990; Sweeney et al., 1986), also known as *attributional style* (Anderson, 1983); can be defined as a predisposition to make certain kinds of attributions for success or failure. Individuals with "pessimistic" explanatory styles tend to attribute failure to personal (internal), permanent (stable), and pervasive (global) causes, and success to impersonal (external), temporary (unstable) and specific causes. Persons with "optimistic" styles favor the exact opposite pattern of attributions.

Culture has been defined as a set of shared values and beliefs as well as expected behaviors (Hofstede, 1980). The value-belief theory postulates that the shared values of a culture impact the behaviors of individuals and organizations and affects perceptions of legitimacy and acceptability (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995). Indeed, Hofstede (1993) notes that the validity of a theory is constrained by its culture. Although many management theories have their roots in European thought, Western influences have significantly dictated theoretical development over the last century (Sidani, 2008). Our work relies heavily on that of House et al. (2004) where the foundation of Hofstede's and Triandis's work was used to establish cultural dimensions.

Hofstede's (1980) work has been used extensively in cross-cultural research and has been effective in explaining behavioral differences in people in organizations. The Hofstede framework includes cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power-distance, and, masculinity-femininity (Hofstede, 1980). As such, researchers have applied this framework in an entrepreneurial context. Hayton et al. (2002) note that most researchers have found that entrepreneurs are associated with cultures that are high in individualism and masculinity, and low in uncertainty avoidance and in power distance. Like Hofstede (1980), House et al. (2004) contend that cultural characteristics exert a significant effect on the characteristics of the organizations in that society. Further, Hayton et al., (2002) posit that cultural values serve as a filter for the degree to which a society considers certain entrepreneurial behaviors as desirable. Hence, several authors

have noted the importance of understanding the impact of cultural norms on entrepreneurship (Hayton et al., 2002).

Therefore, implicit/attribution entrepreneurship theory is used as the basis for examining cross-cultural perceptions of entrepreneurship. It is argued that cultural factors (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004) affect the perceptions and attributions made of entrepreneurs in a specific country. Countries have developed different entrepreneurial prototypes based upon specific cultural factors and dynamics. It is important for entrepreneurs in a given culture to match the prototype of the successful entrepreneur for that culture. The degree to which an individual matches the cultural entrepreneurial prototype may affect the feedback received from others and their motivation to engage in entrepreneurial behavior. It may also affect the willingness of others to follow or fund them in the new business activity. The research question the current study addresses is:

What is the content of the implicit entrepreneurial prototype in each of the three countries: Ireland, Guatemala, and China?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The major methodology used for this study was ethnography. Ethnography is an attempt to describe and understand a culture. More specifically, it is an attempt to understand a culture from the native point of view. Ethnography is useful for identifying culture bound or culture specific theories and the manner in which individuals within a specific culture perceive phenomena, encode information, and assign meaning to those phenomena (Spradley, 1980). Since much cultural knowledge is tacit in nature, ethnography is used to identify that knowledge that may largely lie outside our awareness and that most often is based on personal experience, perceptions, and value systems. Ethnographers use numerous methods to collect such data on a phenomenon of interest. Observation, interviews, focus groups and the examination of cultural artifacts are common

methods used to identify cultural theories and meanings specific to a certain culture (Krueger, 1998; Spradley, 1980).

Because implicit cultural prototypes involve tacit knowledge and are the result of the construction and assignment of culture specific information and meaning, ethnography is an appropriate method for identifying and understanding the structure and meaning given to the concept of entrepreneurship within a specific culture, or the implicit cultural entrepreneurial prototype. In each of the three countries, various ethnographic methods (focus groups, interviews, literature reviews) were employed to collect data from individuals in those countries regarding entrepreneurial perceptions. At this point, it is important to understand that no comparisons across countries are being made. It is not the aim of the present study to conclude that individuals in one country consider a certain entrepreneurial characteristic or behavior to be more important than do individuals from another country. The aim is to simply identify the content of the entrepreneurial prototype in each of the three countries. The ethnographic process, including specific methods employed and sample characteristics, is discussed below for each individual country. In each country, data were gathered by academics at leading universities within their respective country. Data were sent to EWORLD investigators for analysis.

Ireland

A total of 16 participants participated in three different focus groups. Eight participants were male and two were female. Ten of the participants were entrepreneurs, operating in a variety of industries such as the manufacturing industry, business services, construction, and the professional services sector. Six of the participants were graduate level students studying in the area of entrepreneurship. These students were familiar with the extant Irish entrepreneurship literature. Participants ranged in age between 25 and 40 years. Several participants were born into a self-employed family in which their father operated a business or worked within the family business.

Focus groups were used to develop a description of the Irish entrepreneur. Participants were asked to describe the Irish entrepreneur in terms of the characteristics, traits, and behaviors common to the entrepreneur or considered important for the successful entrepreneur to possess in Ireland. A few questions were given to participants on a prompt sheet to help start discussion and get participants to thinking about entrepreneurial characteristics. For example, two questions asked participants to consider the importance of innovation for the entrepreneur and the extent to which entrepreneurs encouraged employees to be creative. Another question focused attention on achievement motivation. Other than this, the Irish collaborators kept the focus groups unstructured so as to facilitate the free flow of ideas and not guide the discussion toward specific traits or behaviors. Focus group data were sent to the EWORLD investigators for analysis.

Guatemala

Due to the lack of entrepreneurial firms and activity in Guatemala, researchers consulted extant literature regarding Guatemalan entrepreneurship to identify traits and behaviors characteristic of individuals featured in that literature or that appeared to be related to entrepreneurial success in Guatemala in general. Many of the articles examined consisted of interviews with Guatemalan entrepreneurs or established businessmen. Other articles resembled academic journal articles that focused on the nature of Central American business leaders and the Guatemalan entrepreneurial climate and culture. Literature such as this is just one example of a cultural artifact commonly used in ethnography to develop a description and understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

The Guatemalan researchers also conducted a couple of interviews with businessmen. Participants operated in the manufacturing and business services industries and were all male. These interviews were used to collect additional data to develop a description of the Guatemalan entrepreneur. Participants were asked to describe the Guatemalan entrepreneur in terms of the characteristics, traits, and behaviors common to the entrepreneur or considered important for the

successful entrepreneur to possess in Guatemala. Literature review and interview data were sent to the EWORLD investigators for analysis.

China

In China, 25 MBA students from a leading Chinese university participated in interviews and completed a questionnaire to assess their perceptions of the Chinese entrepreneur. Participants were asked to describe the Chinese entrepreneur in terms of the characteristics, traits, and behaviors common to the entrepreneur or considered important for the successful entrepreneur to possess in China. Questionnaire items asked participants to describe the successful entrepreneur with a Chinese cultural background and provide a list of characteristics and attributes believed to be important for successful entrepreneurs in China. The sample of 25 students was split fairly evenly on gender, with approximately 50% being male and 50% female.

Data on entrepreneurial perceptions were also collected from existing literature (i.e., see Taormina & Lao, 2007). Previous empirical studies conducted in China that measured perceptions of specific entrepreneurial attributes and behaviours (optimism, achievement motivation, and networking) provided additional insight into the characteristics perceived important for the Chinese entrepreneur. Literature review and interview data were sent to the EWORLD investigators for analysis.

Standardization of Research Methodology

Because the goal of ethnographic research is to describe and understand a topic in a specific setting, standardization of research methodology across countries in this study is not a major issue. The issue is not whether the methods employed represent sound, experimental, scientific designs and procedures. The issue in ethnographic research is whether the methods used are appropriate methods for the specific situation that will help the researcher describe and understand the topic of interest in that situation (Spradley, 1998). The researcher uses whatever means available for

collecting the desired information. Therefore, the methods of data collection and samples employed differ somewhat across the three countries in this study. The methods and samples available to use in each country were used to help gain insight into entrepreneurial perceptions in each context.

Standardization is less of an issue when no comparisons among groups are being made, which is the case here. As previously stated, no comparisons among the implicit entrepreneurial prototypes are being made at this point. The research objective is to simply make a first attempt to identify the content of the implicit entrepreneurial prototype in each country context. Therefore, standardization of methods and procedures across countries becomes less of an issue.

Taxonomic Analysis

Both focus group data and literature review information were subjected to taxonomic analysis (Krueger, 1998) to identify the attributions made of entrepreneurs in each country. Krueger defines taxonomy as a set of categories organized on the basis of relationships. Taxonomy shows the relationships between things that together comprise a cultural domain. See the results of the taxonomic analyses for each country in Tables 3-5. Once a cultural domain of interest has been identified, such as the domain of “perceptions of the entrepreneur” in this study, the task becomes one of searching the data to identify perceived characteristics, traits, and behaviors and grouping them into subsets based on similarity. This method of analysis allows for the organization of the data into groups and categories in order to make sense of it, and to describe and understand the perceptions individuals in that specific culture hold of the entrepreneur. This was the procedure followed here for each of the three countries individually.

Once the focus group, interview data, and literature data had been collected by collaborators in each of the three countries, the data were sent to EWORLD investigators who subjected the material to taxonomic analysis. For each country individually, the data were examined to create a list of perceptions of characteristics, traits, and behaviors that individuals appeared to

have of the entrepreneur. Once that list was developed, characteristics, traits, and behaviors that appeared similar were simply placed into categories or subsets to produce the box diagrams found in Tables 3-5. This procedure helped organize the data and make sense of it.

The issue of the validity of results is an important consideration at this point. Demonstrating validity of results in ethnographical or qualitative research is somewhat different from the demonstration of validity in quantitative research that closely follows more traditional, standard scientific methods. In experimental research employing scientific methodology, the internal and external validity of a study is often evidenced by controlling for confounding or intervening variables and the representativeness of the sample which that makes generalizability of the results more likely. However, in qualitative research such as ethnography, the goal is not to identify and control such confounding variables nor is it to generalize results to the greater population. According to Spradley (1998), qualitative research is not intended to generalize and it is not within the capability of qualitative research to project results onto the greater population.

The goal of qualitative ethnographical research is to more completely describe and understand the topic under investigation. Validity is evidenced by consensus and the extent to which the results reflect the views and ideas of the participants and materials from which the data were collected. In this study, three EWORLD investigators participated in examining the data and developing the taxonomies for each country. Consensus was achieved on the part of the three investigators that the characteristics, traits, and behaviors identified in the data were legitimate in that they were reported by participants in the focus groups and interviews or were found in the literature. Consensus was also achieved regarding the categories or subsets created in the taxonomies. Then, the taxonomies were sent back to researchers in the three countries who collected the data to determine whether they believed the results were accurate in that they were valid reflections of participants' views and also were consistent with what they themselves, as experts, believed to be true regarding perceptions of the entrepreneur in their specific country. In

this manner, consensus among the various sources was sought and evidence of the validity of the taxonomies provided.

RESULTS

The taxonomies provide insight into the content and structure of the implicit entrepreneurial prototypes. Results of the taxonomic analyses for each country are found in Tables 3-5. The findings of the taxonomic analyses for each country are also summarized below.

Attributions of Entrepreneurs in Ireland

The following characteristics of entrepreneurs in Ireland were especially noted in the focus groups:

Internal locus of control. Focus group members reported that Irish entrepreneurs display an internal locus of control in that they believe they are in control of their own destiny. However, some focus group members acknowledged the fact that there are elements in the business environment that they cannot control that still affect their business.

Independent and autonomous. In terms of what motivates Irish entrepreneurs to found a business, the findings indicate a desire for independence and an opportunity to exploit a gap as the primary reasons. Focus group members noted that frustration with one's current situation and desires to make money were two other important factors.

High need to achieve. Focus group members agreed that determination and perseverance were key personality traits for the Irish entrepreneur. These attributes enabled the entrepreneur to survive the turbulent years in the initial start-up phase of a company.

Low risk tolerance. Focus group members reported that Irish entrepreneurs are aware of risk and view risk as an opportunity. However, when taking risks Irish entrepreneurs evaluate that risk to

the fullest and are thoughtful risk takers. It was reported that the Irish entrepreneur prefers security and stability.

Well prepared for the task. In Ireland, rates of entrepreneurship are highest amongst those with graduate education. The majority of Irish entrepreneurs appear to have a tertiary level education in a non-business discipline such as engineering and science. Focus group members reported that many Irish entrepreneurs have prior work experience within the industry they have established themselves in. Thus one can say that one of the sources of business ideas for Irish entrepreneurs might stem from the industry sector in which they were previously employed. In their previous jobs, prior to start-up, Irish entrepreneurs held positions of authority (e.g. managerial positions).

Entrepreneurial Parents. Focus group members reported that having self-employed parents increased the propensity of individuals to engage in new venture creation. It was noted that having entrepreneurial parents opened one's eyes into the entrepreneurial way of life.

Creative and innovative. Focus group members reported that creativity and innovativeness were two important traits of the Irish entrepreneur. Participants indicated that it was vital for entrepreneurs to be creative and innovative in order to be "ahead of everyone else."

Attributions of Entrepreneurs in Guatemala

Participants noted that a large part of Guatemalan society has had a misconception of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has been associated with privilege, oligarchy and impunity. However, since the 1990's a strong effort to make people understand the importance of entrepreneurship has been developed in Guatemala by universities and entrepreneur associations.

The following characteristics of entrepreneurs in Guatemala were noted:

Motivated by money and success. Participants noted that by and large the Guatemalan entrepreneur is motivated by the riches and success of owning a thriving enterprise.

Has good connections and links. Focus group members noted that entrepreneurial success in Guatemala is largely based on political connections and family social status. It was also noted that the successful entrepreneur often has a sponsor or godfather (“Padrino”).

Strong character. The successful Guatemalan entrepreneur was described as primarily male, autocratic, rash, audacious, courageous, and brave.

Visionary. Several focus group members noted that successful Guatemalan entrepreneurs must possess a vision that is effectively communicated to the followers.

Loyal. Loyalty was expressed as an important success factor in terms of family and political relationships.

Workaholic. Focus group members noted that successful entrepreneurs worked numerous hours in order for their organizations to be successful.

Determined and resolute. Focus group members reported that a new breed of entrepreneur in Guatemala is determined and resolute in exploiting the opportunities of globalization. Participants noted that these new Guatemalan entrepreneurs are young, very well educated from mostly American and European universities and come from middle class families. These entrepreneurs desire to develop their own ventures instead of assuming a position within a family business.

Attributions of Entrepreneurs in China

The following characteristics of entrepreneurs in China were noted in the focus groups:

Passionate and hardworking. Several focus group members noted that it was important for the Chinese entrepreneur to be passionate about the business and to be a hardworking individual in order to be successful.

Exploratory and adventurous/visionary. Participants noted that the ability to be creative and visionary were important success traits in the Chinese market.

Willingness to learn. Several focus group members noted that the Chinese entrepreneur must be willing to learn about new ideas and business processes in order to be successful.

Knowledgeable and competent. Participants noted that an individual must be knowledgeable about their business and competent in business matters in order to be a successful entrepreneur in China.

Exercises good judgement. Focus group members noted that a successful Chinese entrepreneur can judge and make decisions from the perspective of a competitor. Further, it was noted that these entrepreneurs are rational and decisive individuals.

Communication and networking. Participants reported that networking based on *guanxi*, reciprocal obligations towards friends that have helped the entrepreneur, and keeping promises were all important entrepreneurial traits.

Determined and resolute. Readiness to fight and not being afraid of hardships are also presented as essential features of successful entrepreneurs in China. It was reported that the successful Chinese entrepreneur had a willingness and ability to start from nothing. Further, these entrepreneurs are strong willed, never defeated, courageous when challenged by difficulties, and do not yield when confronted with failure.

Strong moral character. Focus group participants noted that successful Chinese entrepreneurs are forgiving, grateful, and possess high moral character. They are upright and honest in their dealings with others.

Focus is on the collective/others. In China, the successful entrepreneur has a collectivistic perspective and often seeks a positive change for the country. There is a strong sense of social obligation and entrepreneurs do not generally focus on personal successes or gains.

Identifies with country culture. Many of the respondents noted that they valued their culture deeply and experienced a strong sense of nationalism.

The taxonomic analysis demonstrates the image of a passionate, hardworking, exploratory, and visionary entrepreneur that has high willingness to learn. There is link between communication skills and networking. Determination involves willingness, the ability to start from nothing, and persistence to overcome difficulties and failure.

The Chinese entrepreneurial prototype clearly represents a focus on collectivistic values where entrepreneurs work for the benefit of the country and customers instead of seeking personal gains. Chinese respondents in general stress strong moral character of entrepreneurs although some respondents noted that there are different types of entrepreneurs: those that have started from scratch, entrepreneurs that combine business and politics and co-operate with government-owned businesses but also entrepreneurs that have become rich overnight and tend to lack awareness of risk. Respondents also stressed the importance of an entrepreneur in China to identify with the history and culture of the country, have ambitions to develop an international outlook, and be able to merge Chinese culture and foreign cultures in business initiatives. Linking Chinese traditions with Western and regional cultures and social obligations are perceived as important challenges for entrepreneurs. Some respondents also expressed the need for sustainable business success. Among behavioral patterns, networking and acquiring capital, selecting the right team, and following agreements were described as ways to success.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Qualitative ethnographic methods have been used to identify implicit entrepreneurial prototypes in three countries: Ireland, Guatemala, and China. While very initial and exploratory in nature, results appear promising that such implicit prototypes exist in specific cultures and that the content and structure of the prototypes are impacted by cultural factors. It is likely that specific cultures do have distinct prototypes that to some degree are culture specific. This study is a first step and attempts to identify these prototypes, and as such, we believe is a contribution to the existing international entrepreneurship literature.

Although the methods employed in the present study do not allow for a more than or less than comparison of characteristics, traits, and behaviors across the countries, the qualitative methods used do allow for a very general comparison of the content of the prototypes across the countries. A brief summary comparing content is given below.

The analyses reveal some similarity in the implicit entrepreneurship prototypes across the countries. In each of the countries, the entrepreneur is perceived to be visionary, possessing some degree of creativity and innovation and willing to explore new opportunities. They are also perceived to be determined individuals who can persevere in difficult times. These characteristics were found in the data from each country, indicating that these characteristics may be more universal in nature, and not culture specific. It may be that it is important for the entrepreneur to possess these characteristics to some degree regardless of the country in which they may be operating.

There are also a few notable differences that appear in the content of the implicit prototypes. These are characteristics or attributes that emerged in the data for one country but that did not emerge in the others. These characteristics and attributes may be less universal and more specific to certain cultures given certain cultural factors and dynamics. One such example is found in the Irish prototype. The Irish entrepreneur is perceived to have a low tolerance for risk. This low risk

tolerance did not manifest in the Guatemalan and Chinese data. This risk aversion may be due to the fact that many Irish entrepreneurs have high achievement needs which make the risks of failure more aversive. They also tend to have previous business and management experience and are well educated. These factors can operate to make business failure an embarrassment and detrimental to the self-esteem, since the expectation would be that the entrepreneur possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to be successful.

A few such interesting differences are also found in the Guatemalan prototype. The Guatemalan entrepreneur is perceived to be loyal to family and political connections and one who is to some degree under the supervision of the “padrino,” a sponsor and mentor. The Guatemalan entrepreneur is perceived to have opportunity as a result of family of birth and the privileges of family and political connections. Therefore, they are perceived to operate within the boundaries of family relationships and political connections. Furthermore, Guatemalan entrepreneurs are perceived to be opportunity-seekers. They are perceived to be privileged individuals that come from prominent families with connections that benefit them. They are not as likely to be motivated by need as much as by loyalty to family and the existence of opportunities that can be exploited to maintain power and position within the country. These same themes or perceptions were not found in the Irish or Chinese data as being characteristic of entrepreneurs in those countries.

This has implications for the individual or organization wishing to start a new venture business in Guatemala. They may wish to have the “padrino,” seek the right social and political connections, and project an image of privilege. By doing so and more closely fitting the implicit entrepreneurial prototype, they may be regarded as a more legitimate entrepreneur in that culture. Our results indicate that these same characteristics may not be important in Ireland and China, and possibly could have a negative effect if characteristic of the entrepreneur in these cultures.

Another notable difference is found in the Chinese prototype. In China, entrepreneurs are perceived to be loyal to the culture. They are perceived to represent cultural values and portray a

strong sense of nationalism and value for cultural history and norms. The perception is that they work to benefit the community. This focus on adherence to norms and nationalism did not emerge in the Irish and Guatemalan data, but appears to be unique to China in this study. However, this finding is not surprising and easy to explain given the highly collectivistic nature of the Chinese culture.

It is also notable that while both the Guatemalan and Chinese entrepreneurs tend to be perceived as hardworking and industrious, the perception is that they are motivated by different reasons. The perception of the Chinese entrepreneur is that they are motivated to benefit the collective. They do not focus on personal gain or benefit, but have a strong sense of social obligation and desire to positively benefit the country. This country focus is consistent with the collectivistic Chinese culture and the nationalistic spirit of the entrepreneur. The motivation of the Guatemalan entrepreneur, on the other hand, is to benefit self or family, not the greater collective such as the country. While Guatemala is a highly collectivistic nation, it is also a high power distance nation, suggesting some degree of interaction here between the collectivistic and power distance cultural orientations.

Implications for Practice

Given that the results indicate differences in the implicit entrepreneurial prototypes across the cultures, an important issue of consideration is the extent to which individuals can be trained to more closely match the prototype. The degree to which an entrepreneur fits the cultural prototype may have consequences for the success of the entrepreneurial venture. It is not being argued that prototype fit is the only, or even the most important factor, necessary for entrepreneurial success. It is certainly true that a multitude of factors exist that affect entrepreneurial success. Environmental factors, individual dispositional factors, and KSAs of the entrepreneur all affect success, to name just a few. However, we argue that prototype fit is one additional factor that likely impacts entrepreneurial success and that has been overlooked in current international entrepreneurship

models and theories. Current models might have greater predictive validity if they recognized and accounted for the effects of the psychology of entrepreneurship, or more specifically, implicit entrepreneurial prototypes. For example, it is possible that an individual in Guatemala might have a reasonable business idea and plan, but not get support for funding a new business because they do not have a “padrino,” or because it is perceived that they do not have the correct social and political connections to be successful. It is also possible that the Chinese entrepreneur may not be supported because it is perceived that they do not possess the proper degree of nationalistic spirit or because perceived self-interest is greater than their motivation to benefit the collective. These lacks of fit perceptions could definitely make it less likely that individuals would not want to support such entrepreneurs either in the form of funding or by purchasing their products and services. Therefore, fitting the implicit entrepreneurial prototype may be one additional piece of the entrepreneurial success puzzle.

Research exists to suggest that individuals can be trained to exhibit entrepreneurial traits (Krueger and Brazeal, 1994). Given the initial findings of the present study, the important implication is that entrepreneurship training focus to some degree on the development of characteristics and attributes in the implicit prototype of the country in which the entrepreneur will operate. Matching or fitting the prototype becomes the skill being trained. Learning would need to focus on the acquisition of knowledge, behaviors, and characteristics important for matching the entrepreneurial prototype of that specific culture. From a human resource management perspective, matching the individual with the cultural prototype of a specific country could be considered a job task and the training of prototype specific knowledge, skills and abilities would equip the individual to successfully perform the prototype matching job task. Training methods to best train the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities would also need to be identified. Methods will be determined by the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities being trained, desired training outcomes (i.e., ability to match the entrepreneurial prototype being taught), and organizational resources. Traditional training

evaluation methods can be used to identify which methods are most effective for learning to match the entrepreneurial prototype.

The main target audience of such training would be individual entrepreneurs or managers and employees in established organizations selected to head up new entrepreneurial ventures in another culture. It is these individuals that would appear to benefit most from knowledge of a specific country prototype and skill at matching the prototype in terms of both traits and behaviors. Training programs could be established in universities or by international entrepreneurial organizations to train individuals interested in international entrepreneurship ventures about specific prototypes.

Many potential and nascent entrepreneurs seek entrepreneurial education in formal university programs. For this reason, we believe that this study also has implications for entrepreneurship degree programs in colleges and universities, especially those that have an international business and entrepreneurship component. Implications of the current research offer several benefits to entrepreneurship education and training in terms of curriculum development. Empirical findings with regard to international entrepreneurship would enable institutions of higher education to develop specific entrepreneurial skills in students desiring to operate business ventures in various countries around the world.

While knowledge and skills can often be trained, we acknowledge that certain entrepreneurial traits or abilities may not be subject to development through training. Such traits or abilities may include those reported to be important in all three countries included in this study, such as visionary qualities. In such cases where the entrepreneur may lack these attributes important to the cultural prototype, it may be necessary for the entrepreneur to surround themself with employees or business colleagues that do possess the needed attributes. This may function to create the perception that the organization as a whole possesses the right characteristics to be entrepreneurial, which may be beneficial. In an established international entrepreneurial

organization, management may have the luxury of selecting for these traits and abilities in the selection recruitment process, instead of attempting to develop them in training. Such endeavors could promote and aid entrepreneurial ventures in being more internationally competitive.

Implications for Future Research

There are several future research implications. First, the qualitative data collected in this study can serve as input for more sophisticated, complex measures and analyses. Qualitative methods in the form of focus groups are often used to gain initial insight into a construct of interest. This is a standard step and procedure in a Classical Test Theory approach to questionnaire and scale development (Churchill, 1979; Paul 1981). The entrepreneurial characteristics, attributes, and behaviors collected using the current qualitative methods will become the content of a questionnaire to be used to collect future quantitative data. The quantitative questionnaire can be used across multiple countries and collected data will allow for more direct comparisons of entrepreneurial prototypes across countries using statistical analyses. Factor analysis can be used to statistically analyze individual country data to model the structure and content of the implicit entrepreneurial prototype in that culture. At that point, the factor analytic results can also be compared to the taxonomic analysis for each country and can serve to validate the taxonomies if similarity exists between the taxonomy and factor structure. The present study was simply the first step in this process to gain insight into the content of the country prototypes.

Secondly, the processes by which cultural characteristics affect perceptions of the successful entrepreneur and lead to the development of an entrepreneur prototype will need to be investigated. Third, future research will need to investigate how the various entrepreneurial characteristics and traits affect the success of the entrepreneur as measured by defined results criteria. These are all potential research avenues that need to be investigated in future research.

Study Limitations

This study is an initial exploratory investigation into the implicit cultural entrepreneurship prototypes of these three countries. Several limitations exist that need to be addressed. First, it must be noted that the sample sizes in each of the three countries is small. This is a concern and it would have been preferable to have much more data based on more focus group samples. However, it is important to note that sample sizes are typically small in ethnographical research (Krueger, 1998; Spradley, 1980). This is due to the nature of the research as well as the goal of the research. As stated above, the goal of such research is to investigate a topic in such a way as to be able to describe and understand it. The goal is not to generalize or to project results onto a population. Therefore, although it is preferable to have more data, small sample sizes are typically considered acceptable at this point in this type of research. The goal of the present study was simply to gain insight into the implicit entrepreneurial prototypes that might exist in the countries of interest and collect data for future quantitative research. We believe that our study accomplished this, even with the small sample sizes.

Second, the process of data collection across the three countries was not standardized. Although it is usually preferable to have a standardized methodology, it is important to note that such research as this typically does not employ a standardized methodology as found in experimental or quasi-experimental research (Krueger, 1998; Spradley, 1980). Given the absence of a standardized data collection process and the small sample size employed, we understand that caution must be exercised in interpreting the results and that future research is needed that utilizes a more standardized research methodology and greater samples sizes.

We hope that the present study is a first step in that direction.

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APPENDIX

Table 3 Irish Entrepreneurial Prototype		
Irish Prototype	Internal locus of control	
	Independent and autonomous	
	High need to achieve	determined and persevering
		highly motivated
		oriented to detail
		results driven nature
	Low risk tolerance	like security and stability
		thoughtful risk takers
	Well prepared for the task	well educated
		previous business/management experience
	Entrepreneurial parents	
Creative and Innovative		

Table 4 Guatemalan Entrepreneurial Prototype

Guatemalan Prototype	Motivated by money and success		
	Has good connections and links	has a sponsor or Godfather, Padrino	
		economic links	
		entrepreneurial links	
		Political	governme
			governme
			political lin
	Family	born into a	
good socia			
family link			
Strong character	Leadership	male domi	
		autocratic	

		sagacity
		rash
		audacious
		courageous
		brave
	Visionary	
	Loyal	
	Workaholic	
	Determined and resolute	

Table 5 Chinese Entrepreneurial Prototype

Chinese Prototype	Passionate and hardworking Page 37			
	Exploratory and adventurous/visionary			
	Willingness to learn			
	Knowledgeable and competent			
	Exercises good judgment	Can judge and make decisions from the perspective of a competitor		
		Rational		
		Decisive		
	Communication and networking	Networked	Well-connected/ Guanxi	
			Well-informed	
		Good communication skills		
	Determined and resolute	Willingness and ability to start from nothing		
		Persistent	Strong willed	
			Never defeated	
			Courageous when challenged by difficulties	
Do not yield when confronted with failure				
	Strong moral character	Forgiving		
		Grateful		
		High morals	Integrity	Respectable personality
				Keeps promises
		Upright		
Honest				
	Focus is on the collective/others	Collectivistic	Nation	
			Seeks a positive change for and benefit of the nation	
		Strong sense of social obligation		
		Customers	Seeks maximum benefit of the customer	
Creates value for the customer				
Personal gain	Do not focus on personal success			

			Do not seek personal gain
	Identifies with country culture	Values culture	Fits well into the national culture
			Values country history and culture
			Embodies and represents the national culture
		Nationalism	Strong national conscience and spirit
			Patriotic