

CROSS CULTURAL INVESTIGATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EFFICACY BELIEFS OF RURAL AND URBAN YOUTH IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The study concerned a cross cultural investigation of entrepreneurship efficacy beliefs of rural and urban youth in Mashonaland Central province, Zimbabwe. Sample consisted of 30 youth entrepreneurs between 20 to 27 years of age from rural and urban communities in Mashonaland Central, Zimbabwe. Mean score for the whole sample was 4.16 (SD = 3.12). Participants completed a self-efficacy measure that used a 0 – 5 scale with five descriptors. Rural youths displayed an oriented self, in which hierarchy and status were emphasized and in which one self was compared with other selves. Self-efficacy was a weak predictor of performance for both groups, parental importance was a predictor for the rural group and fear of failure was the predictor for the urban group.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Youth, Self Efficacy, Individualism, Collectivism

INTRODUCTION

Considerable research has converged on the idea that many psychological processes are influenced by various factors (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus & Nisbett, 1998; Klassen, 2004). Extensive research has been devoted to the study of self efficacy beliefs (Pajares & Graham, 1999; Schunk, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000 and Klassen, 2004). To this point, most of the work has involved western and Asian participants. This article examines entrepreneurship efficacy beliefs of youth entrepreneurs with university and with high school backgrounds.

Self Efficacy and its sources

Self efficacy beliefs are context specific evaluations of the capability to successfully complete a task and are formed through mastery experience (past performance), vicarious experience, social/verbal persuasion and interpretations of physiological

and emotional states (Bandura, 1995 and Klassen, 2004). These beliefs contribute to prediction of entrepreneurship outcomes beyond the contributions offered by ability, previous attainments, knowledge and skill alone. According to Bandura (1993) and Klassen (2004), the youth need more than ability and skills to perform successfully; they also need the sense of efficacy to use these skills well and to regulate their business operations.

Compared with related concepts such as competency beliefs and self concept, efficacy beliefs are more tasks specific and are established through criterion reference rather than through comparison with others (Bong and Skaalvick, 2003; Zimmerman, 1995). Self efficacy comprises cognitions and beliefs about capabilities. Efficacy beliefs play a role in managing motivation in expectancy - value theory. Self efficacy beliefs then consist of the degree to which individuals believe they can control their level of performance and their environment (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, 2004).

Although some researchers such as Anderson and Betz (2001), Hampton (1998), Lent, Lopez and Bieschke (1991) have investigated the sources of efficacy beliefs, very few studies have investigated self efficacy sources of the young entrepreneurs. Cultural dimensions such as individualism and collectivism may play a key role in influencing how self efficacy beliefs are formed in diverse settings (Klassen, 2004). Oettingen (1995) proposed that efficacy sources are differently valued according to cultural dimension. Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed that in collectivist cultures some dimensions are assigned much more importance, carry more weight and are relatively focal in one's own behavior. It is possible that the self-oriented sources – past performance and emotional arousal may be highly valued among individualistic cultural groups, whereas the other oriented dimensions of social persuasion and vicarious experience may have stronger influence among persons with collectivist leanings (Klassen, 2004).

The measurement of the four sources of self efficacy poses a challenge for researchers. Previous studies have treated the sources of efficacy beliefs as generalized tendencies that may not inform real time formation of specific self efficacy beliefs (Anderson and Betz, 2001; Klassen 2004). Efficacy beliefs are not formed exclusively at the moment when one faces a task in real time but instead are formed through the selection and reflective interpretation of enactive, vicarious, persuasive and physiological events (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, 2004). The sources of self efficacy beliefs are influenced by both generalized and context specific cognitions and depend on the sorting and interpreting of events when a specific task is approached (Klassen, 2004).

Individualism and collectivism

An individualistic culture is described as one in which goals and needs of the individual take precedence over those of important in-groups such as extended family, community or work organization. Members of collectivist cultures view personal goals and needs as subordinate to the goals and needs of these in groups (Hofstede, 1980, Triandis, McCusker and Hui, 1990). Thomas (2000) writes that in collectivist cultures, a high premium is put on close knit relatedness, interdependence between parents and siblings. He adds that individualism, self sufficiency and self reliance are strong features of parenting practice in western countries. The proponents of collectivist societies place emphasis on material and

emotional interdependence, which results in variance with school philosophy prizing independence, a spirit of competitiveness and the favoring of individuality.

Triandis et al. (1990) describe the features of collectivist societies as communities with a high level of family integrity, behavior regulated by in group norms and an in group that is homogenous and distinctive from the out crop. They added that these collectivist communities price high degree of sacrifice to uphold group norms, setting common goals and a high degree of social support and interdependence. Teachers have to select and develop those collectivist attributes that can be fused into the life and work of the school.

Individualistic cultures tend to emphasize consciousness, independence, individual initiative and right to privacy. In contrast, collectivist cultures have a tendency to stress consciousness, collective identity, group solidarity and duty. The results from recent research have suggested that efficacy beliefs operate differently in different settings (Klassen, 2004).

Asian cultures are typically described as collectivist and western cultures as strongly individualistic (Laungani, 1999; Verma & Triandis, 1999; Mishra, 1994; Sinha 1995). Although no studies have investigated the efficacy beliefs of black Zimbabwean youth entrepreneurs, tendencies are that they retain self-belief characteristics of their culture.

In collectivist societies the individual is not the main focus. The socially effective adult is one who is a good group member, who honors mutual obligations within the family and develops social skills necessary for creating and maintaining harmonious relationship with others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The group adherence begins within the family, and then extends to within the age group, then the school and college and finally the business group. Group loyalties demand participation in all aspects of social life everything together (Keats, 1997). He added that goals, attitudes and values develop in common accord.

However Bandura (1995, 1997) rejected the notion that self efficacy plays a lesser role in collectivist cultures. He pointed out that cultures within the collectivist dimension vary greatly and that individuals, too, adjust their behavior depending on the context. With in-group members, collectivists display a high level of communalism and with out group members, collectivists behave differently. Bandura argued that self efficacy is equally valued by collectivists because without a resilient sense of self, people are easily overwhelmed by adversities in their attempt to improve their group life during collective effort. In highly individualistic cultures, practices may allow for and expect greater individual initiative, whereas in highly collectivist cultures, there may be a greater emphasis on team building (Klassen 2004).

The Zimbabwean Youth

The influence of colonialism remains in the language spoken and also in the political, legal and educational system. Nevertheless traditional lifestyles are still found, persisting most strongly in rural areas. Young people are inducted into their roles from an early age and a common method is that of apprenticeship rather than direct instruction.

Self efficacy and other motivational Variables

In addition to self efficacy, a few other motivational constructs have been examined across different settings. Self concept is one of the most studied motivation constructs (Bong and Skaalvick 2003). Self concept has been shown in numerous studies to act as a significant predictor of entrepreneurship performance (Klassen, 2004). Researchers such as Eaton and Dembo (1997) have suggested that young entrepreneurs are more motivated by a desire to meet their parent's business expectations. Fear of failure and the related construct of parental value of business have been shown to be pertinent motivation construct. Eaton and Dembo (1997) found that not only was fear of failure a better predictor of achievement, it was a better predictor of entrepreneurship performance than was self efficacy. Parents frequently have high business expectations for their children (Gibson and Bhachu, 1991). Entrepreneurship effort and performance of the youth are fuelled by perceived parental value of business.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is designed to put self efficacy to the test in terms of its generalisability to rural and urban Zimbabwean youths. Entrepreneurship as the domain of interest for this study. The primary questions in this study are:

- a) Is self efficacy a valid predictor of entrepreneurship performance for rural and urban Zimbabwean youths or do other motivation variables better explain the performance?
- b) Are efficacy beliefs from the same sources for both groups?
- c) Do the cultural dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism help explain cultural variations in efficacy beliefs?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consisted of 30 (17 male, 13 female) youth entrepreneurs from Bindura rural and urban communities in Mashonaland Central province, Zimbabwe. Research participants were volunteers. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 27 years, with a mean age of 24.43 years. Demographic information collected included language spoken at home, home area, grandfather's and father's home area, level of education and reported previous profitability in entrepreneurship. Participants were categorized according to grandfather or father's home area. Youths whose grandfather and father's home area had been rural area were classified as rural (9 male, 7 female, n = 16). Youths whose grandfather or father's home area had been urban were grouped as urban (8 male, 6 female, n = 14).

Measures

Level of education. A measure of level of education was included as an index of socioeconomic status.

Entrepreneurship measure (performance task): The entrepreneurship measure was created in cooperation with college and universities lectures to reflect some of the content covered in entrepreneurship course. The mean score for the whole sample was 4.16 Standard Deviation (SD) = 3.12.

Self-efficacy for Entrepreneurship: Participants completed a self-efficacy measured that used a 0 – 5 scale with five descriptors; no chance (at 0), very little chance (at 1), little chance (at 2), maybe can do (at 3), can do (at 4) and certain can do (at 5). Self-efficacy for entrepreneurship scores were calculated as the mean efficacy rating for each youth. The mean score for the whole sample was 2.09 (SD =1.58).

Sources of self-efficacy: The sources of self-efficacy scale included vicarious experience, social persuasion and emotional arousal. To increase the construct validity of the sources measure the measure developed by Klassen (2004) was adapted.

Fear of entrepreneurship failure: The scale was adapted from Eaton and Dembo (1997). The whole sample mean was 4.02 (SD = 1.10).

Entrepreneurship self-concept: The mean score for the whole sample was 3.67 (SD = 0.99)

Perceived parental value of entrepreneurship: The scale was completed using the 0 -5 scale used for the other measures in this study. The mean score for the whole sample was 3.90 (SD = 1.05).

Individualism/Collectivism: The Individualism and Collectivism scale included in this study was adapted from Klassen (2004).

Rural group

For this group of 16 youths, the mean age was 26.06 years (SD = 2.11), mean entrepreneurship past profitability was 3.56 (SD = 0.89) and the mean level of education (ranging from 1 = didn't attend school through to 5 = university level) was 3.00 (SD = 1.21).

Urban group

The 14 youths in this sample had a mean age of 22.79 years (SD = 1.89) and an average past profitability performance of 3.57 (SD = 1.02). The average level of education for this group was 5.00 (SD = 0). There were no significant differences between the groups for the demographic variables, with the exception of the level of education.

Procedure

A pilot study was undertaken with six youths in which the procedures and measures were trialed. Some items were dropped from the original entrepreneurship measure because of overly high or low difficult levels. Some of the verbal and written instructions were changed to enhance the clarity. Data from the pilot study have not been included in the analysis for this study. The participatory youths completed the research measures within their own selected environments. Completed questionnaires were collected at the end of the day and the following day.

RESULTS

Rural-Urban Comparison of self-efficacy and other motivational beliefs

To examine the relationship between the independent variable home area (rural/urban) and the dependent variables of entrepreneurship performance, entrepreneurship self-efficacy, self-concept, fear of failure and perceived parental value of business project, univariate comparisons were made.

Table 1: Means and Standard deviations for Entrepreneurship Performance and Motivational Variables

Variables	Rural		Urban	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Entrepreneurship performance	2.81	2.66	5.71	2.95
Entrepreneurship self-efficacy	1.56	1.36	2.96	1.44
Entrepreneurship self-concept	4.06	0.67	3.21	1.12
Perceived parental value	3.72	1.02	4.11	1.08
Fear of failure	4.13	0.94	3.89	1.29

In table 1, mean scores and standard deviations for entrepreneurship performance, self-efficacy, fear of failure, entrepreneurship self-concept and perceived parental view of entrepreneurship for the two groups are presented. The rural group scored significantly lower than the urban group (mean scores 2.81 and 5.71 respectively) on the entrepreneurship performance variable, $t = -2.71$, $df = 28$, $p < 0.01$. The difference between the sample means of rural youths and urban youths is not likely to be due to sampling error. Accordingly, the difference between the samples reflects different entrepreneurship performances. The difference in performance between the two youth groups is statistically significant. There were no significant differences in the other variables; self-efficacy, $t = -2.63$, degree of freedom = 28, $p < 0.01$; fear of failure, $t = 0.56$, $df = 28$, $p < 0.01$ and perceived parental value of business, $t = -0.98$, degree of freedom = 28, $p < 0.01$.

Prediction of Performance

Table 2: Within-Group Correlation Coefficients for Entrepreneurship Performance, Past Profitability and Motivational Variables

Variables	1 Performance	2 Past Profitability	3 Self-efficacy	4 Self- Concept	5 Fear of failure	6 Parental value
1. Performance	1	-0.15	-0.40	-0.21	0.36	0.05
2. Past Profitability	0.22	1	-0.25	0.49	0.29	-0.24
3. Self-efficacy	0.05	0.22	1	-0.27	-0.34	-0.24
4. Self- Concept	0.11	-0.24	-0.46	1	-0.04	0.04
5. Fear of failure	0.10	0.03	-0.07	-0.17	1	0.07
6. Parental value	0.40	0.002	0.13	-0.12	0.27	1

Note: Correlation coefficients for rural group appear below the diagonal while correlations for urban group appear above the diagonal.

Within-group correlations of entrepreneurship performance, past profitability, self-efficacy, self-concept, fear of failure and perceived parental value are presented in table 2. For the rural group, entrepreneurship performance was weakly correlated to entrepreneurship self-efficacy ($r = 0.05$), past entrepreneurship profitability ($r = 0.22$) and entrepreneurship self-concept ($r = 0.11$). In the case of the urban group, entrepreneurship performance was moderately related to self efficacy ($r = 0.40$), weakly related to self-concept ($r = 0.21$) and past performance profitability ($r = 0.15$).

Results from a t-test comparing the four sources of self-efficacy across the two groups are presented in table 3. There was no significant difference between the groups for the emotional arousal variable ($p < 0.01$). The rural group showed higher ratings of social persuasion, but the effect was not significant ($p < 0.01$). There were no significant differences between the two groups for past profitability performance or vicarious experience. Correlation between self-efficacy and the four efficacy sources did not follow the same pattern for each group and all four were not significantly related ($p < 0.01$) with self-efficacy for each group. For the rural group, self-efficacy was weakly correlated with past profitability ($r = 0.22$), followed by vicarious experience ($r = 0.19$), emotional arousal ($r = -0.05$) and social persuasion ($r = -0.13$). For the urban group, self efficacy was moderately correlated with social persuasion ($r = 0.38$), followed by emotional arousal ($r = 0.16$), vicarious experience ($r = -0.12$) and past profitability ($r = 0.25$). The positive correlation between emotional arousal and self efficacy is not reflective of the negative interpretation of emotional arousal used in this study, which is similar to anxiety or fear.

Table 3: Sources of Self-Efficacy: Means and Standard Deviations

Sources of Self-Efficacy	Rural group (n=16)		Urban group (n=14)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Past Profitability	3.56	0.89	3.57	1.02
Vicarious Experience	3.88	1.22	3.86	1.03
Social Persuasion	4.38	0.56	4.14	0.82
Emotional Arousal	1.63	1.24	1.04	0.89

Note: Past profitability was operationalized as reported past entrepreneurship profitability levels

Individualism, Collectivism and Self-efficacy Across Rural-Urban Groups

Table 4: Individualism and Collectivism: Means and Standard Deviations

Dimension	Rural Group (n=16)		Urban Group (n=14)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Collectivism	4.41	0.74	4.29	0.73
Individualism	3.31	1.22	3.54	0.95

Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations for the two groups. Two-sample t-test was used to explore differences in the two dimensions. No statistically significant difference was found for collectivism in both groups. Neither statistical significant difference was found for individualism dimension in both groups. The rural group, however, should a higher mean in collectivism than the urban group, while the latter showed a higher mean in individualism.

DISCUSSION

The rural youths displayed an oriented self, in which hierarchy and status were emphasized and in which one's self was compared with other selves (Triandis, McCusker and Hui 1990). In addition to self-efficacy, the comparison-oriented self-concept (eg. "Compared with others, I am good at entrepreneurship") was a significant predictor of performance for the rural youths but not for the urban youths, for whom fear of failure was more important than self-concept. Self-concept is largely

determined by the results of social comparison and includes affective as well as cognitive facets of functioning. In contrast, self-efficacy reflects appraisal of judgments of one's capabilities, with no direct assessment of affective factors or direct comparison with others (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). For the rural youths, the social comparison aspect of self-concept appeared to be more home area salient than for the urban group. The aspects of I/C influence how students form their self-appraisal and self-beliefs (Oettingen, 1995).

Self-efficacy is influenced by different sources of information that are more or less persuasive depending on a person's cultural values. The self-efficacy of the urban group was predicted by one of the self-oriented (emotional arousal) and the other-oriented (social persuasion) sources, where for the rural group, it was only the self-oriented variables of past profitability that significantly predicted entrepreneurship efficacy. Self-efficacy was a weak predictor of performance for both groups, while parental importance was a predictor for the rural group and fear of failure was the predictor for the urban group. The sources that predict self-efficacy appeared to differ between the groups and associated motivation variables may also have operated differently across the two home-area groups. In general, the rural youths were driven-by parental influences and had more emotional arousal in self-orientation in terms of both predictors of performance and predictors of self-efficacy.

The rural group displayed higher levels of collectivism beliefs than the urban youths. Mishra's (1994) analysis differences in individualism and collectivism revealed the existence of both individualistic and collectivist values among people at the same time, though the former were held somewhat strong than the latter. The findings from the present study contributed to theories that beliefs and practices may influence the types of information people attend to and use as indicators of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The differences and also the similarities between two contrasted rural-urban groups reinforce the claim that such investigations are worth and necessary endeavors. The central question addressed in this study was, does entrepreneurship self-efficacy beliefs operate different in rural youths as compared to urban youth? In this study, rural youths calibrated their efficacy and performance in a way that was different to the urban youths. In the current investigation, there are both similarities and differences between the contrasted groups.

In the present case, past profitability and parental importance have been shown to be relevant factors influencing performance for the rural groups and only fear of failure for the urban group and one's past performance to be a predictor of efficacy beliefs for the rural group and self concept to be a predictor of efficacy beliefs for the urban group. However, it is also apparent that the rural youths viewed the world through a different lens, with a stronger emphasis on social comparison. The rural brand of self- efficacy is shaped much more strongly by others. Furthermore, in a comparison of self- beliefs, the other-oriented or comparative variable of self-concept was needed in addition to parental importance to explain performance for the rural youths, where for the urban youths, fear of failure was sufficient to explain current performance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

This work can play a significant role towards sustainable development efforts in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. Both the Government of Zimbabwe and non governmental organizations are currently involved in efforts to sustainably develop Mashonaland Central Province. These developmental efforts are expected to result in the creation of income generation projects, employment, improved access to health facilities and improved access to education. Using findings from this study can help all players involved in developmental efforts in the province to implement measures in a more effective way.

According to the findings from this research, fear of failure is the predictor of performance for urban youths. For rural youth the predictor of performance is parental importance. For both groups, self efficacy is a weak predictor of performance. Youths in urban set ups therefore engage in entrepreneurial activities because they do not want to be failures while those in rural areas engage in entrepreneurial activities due to parental influence.

In light of these findings, for youth in urban areas to be involved in sustainable development, the fear of failure should be taken into consideration. Efforts to develop urban areas in Mashonaland Central should harness this fear of failure in youth so as to encourage them to engage in sustainable entrepreneurial activities thereby developing the province. This can be done by reinforcing the belief that failure is not an option to these youths, through workshops. As a result they are motivated to put more effort in their entrepreneurial work.

Since self efficacy is a weak predictor of performance, it is therefore not prudent to consider it in developmental efforts that target youth in both rural and urban areas of Mashonaland Central, before carrying out verbal persuasions to change the youth mindset on their capabilities. According to Bong and Clark (1999), self efficacy comprises cognitions and beliefs about capabilities. Since self efficacy is a weak predictor of performance, youths do not believe in their capabilities enough to drive them into developmental activities but only do so to avoid failure and as a result of parental influence.

Self efficacy beliefs can be reinforced in these youths through discussions with them or verbal persuasion, so that they believe in their ability to develop their areas through successful entrepreneurship. As a result, combination of high degree of self efficacy and fear of being a failure can drive youths in urban areas to engage in entrepreneurial activities that can lead to sustainable development of Mashonaland Central.

For rural areas, developmental efforts can target both the youth and their parents, considering the fact that parental influence is a strong predictor of performance. Involving the parents can inspire the youth to engage in sustainable entrepreneurial activities which leads to the development of the province. Parental influence is strong in rural areas since the parents are the role models. Youths in rural Mashonaland Central can be persuaded verbally, just like their urban counterparts, so that their self efficacy beliefs can improve. When this happens, a combination of higher self efficacy belief and parental influence can

be better tools for increased entrepreneurial activities, which can lead to sustainable development of rural Mashonaland Central.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future exploration of efficacy beliefs might profitably examine the processes through which the land redistribution program youths from urban areas acquire the self-understanding and motivational beliefs of the majority rural group. This article has suggested some theoretical links between home-area and entrepreneurship self-efficacy beliefs, future research that establishes stronger empirical links between home-area and efficacy formation will be welcome.

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