

Influence of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance Cultural Configuration on Entrepreneurship Development: The Moderating Effect of Government Entrepreneurial Policies in Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship holds increasing significance for young people in Nigeria as they navigate the dynamic economy. Nigeria is home to a substantial youth population and they are increasingly exploring entrepreneurial opportunities. However, the rate of entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria is not encouraging despite government support programmes and initiatives. The state has so many ethnic groups with different cultural orientations feared to affect entrepreneurship activities. Against this backdrop, this study explored the influence of power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration on entrepreneurship development; the moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies. The study employed a survey research design to generate and collect primary data from operators of SMEs using structured questionnaires. A sample size of 301 respondents were selected for the study and distributed with the questionnaire. However, only 296 distributed questionnaires were validly retrieved representing 98 % of the study's sample size. Statistical and econometrics techniques such as; frequency distribution, simple percentages, tables and hierarchical multiple regression were used for the presentation and analysis of the study. The result of the hierarchical multiple regressions revealed that; power distance and uncertainty avoidance indicated positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship development as 1% increase in power distance and uncertainty avoidance increased entrepreneurship development in Benue state by 74% and 28% respectively. The estimated hierarchical multiple regressions further revealed that, the moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies on the relationship between cultural configuration (power distance and uncertainty avoidance) and entrepreneurship development is negative and insignificant as it decreased the effect of power distance and uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurship development in the study area by 1%. Base on these findings, it is recommended among others that, entrepreneurs in Benue State Nigeria should always adjust their communication pattern and behaviour to align with the expectations of the environment, they should be willing to take risks and embrace uncertainty of the future and *government at all levels should provide policies that support the establishment of business venture in the state.*

Keywords: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Government Entrepreneurial Policies, Entrepreneurship Development & Hierarchical Multiple Regression

INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship is growing among Nigerian youth as they navigate the country's changing economy. There are many young people in Nigeria, and they are becoming more interested in starting their own businesses. The current state of many countries' economies, with all of its hardships, unemployment, and poverty, has increased awareness of entrepreneurship. Many countries, especially emerging ones like Nigeria and others, are very interested in developing their entrepreneurship. Numerous policies have been put in place to support entrepreneurial activities and their growth as a result of the reality of entrepreneurship development and the convergence of economic theories in the globalized world (Asenge, Diaka & Tsetim, 2017).

The body of research shows that entrepreneurship has enhanced nations' capacities to create and seize additional economic possibilities, hence fostering the entrepreneurial economy (Adesola, Outer, & Mueller, 2019). Differential personalities, personal qualities, ethnicities, sociocultural relations, behavioral patterns, life experiences, and educational backgrounds can all be linked to variations in entrepreneurial activities. Predisposing factors include the desire for autonomy or power, the pursuit of success, and social recognition (Abe, Fields, & Atiku 2016). These variables may determine who may or may not engage in entrepreneurial activity, influencing both the sector's survival and entrepreneurial activity. Like in other developing nations, Nigeria's entrepreneurship development is a reflection of social and cultural diversity, which accounts for variations in business success and survival (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016).

Individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance are cultural traits that have historically been associated with entrepreneurship (Munyanyi, Chiromba, Diza, Magweva & Muzvidziwa, 2018). The cultural components were expanded to include indulgence and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 1991). According to Brettel, Chomik, and Flatten (2015), Hofstede's framework of cultural dimensions remains relevant because it offers a collection of universal cultural characteristics that can be applied to any society, facilitating cross-cultural assessments. However, the power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural dimensions are the only ones covered by this study. The degree to which members of nations and organizations with less influence tolerate and expect an unequal allocation of power is known as the "power distance." A psychological notion linked to people's discomfort levels in ambiguous or uncertain situations is avoidance of ambiguity. Responding to ambiguous or unpredictable events might be difficult for people who have a high level of uncertainty avoidance (Kalasin, 2021).

Nigeria is a developing country on the African continent that has abundant natural and human resources that it may exploit to drive economic growth. The federal and state governments have created support programs for entrepreneurs, including tax breaks, loan guarantees, and research credits. But the questions of why some people are more entrepreneurial than others and what drives others to start their own businesses and work for themselves never go away.

More people will undoubtedly be drawn to entrepreneurship in cultures that promote and respect hard work, individual accomplishment, and the establishment of successful businesses than in those that do not (Asenge, Diaka & Tsetim, 2017). For these groups, the growth of an entrepreneurial class is impeded by such negative attitudes. Given that different ethnic groups in Nigeria engage in varying degrees of entrepreneurship, the situation might not be any different there. For instance, the South-East Igbo people have a tradition of using apprenticeships to train the next generation of entrepreneurs, which helps the area lower its poverty rate. The Michika people of Northeast Nigeria have a culture that fosters values and customs of trade and talent sharing amongst them for mutual economic gain and success, which spurs the growth of entrepreneurship.

However, things appear to be different in Benue State Nigeria. Despite government support programs and

activities, a thorough inspection has revealed that the rate of entrepreneurial development in Benue State, Nigeria, is not encouraging. There are numerous ethnic groups in Benue State, each with their own distinct cultural orientations, which may have an impact on entrepreneurship. Asenge, Diaka, and Tsetim (2017) support this claim by stating that celebrations, cultural values and attitudes, and other factors have an impact on the development of business in Benue State. Power distance and uncertainty avoidance may have a concomitant impact on the growth of entrepreneurship. It appears that these issues impede the development of skills, education and training, the formation of new businesses, the creation of jobs, and the underdevelopment of the state's economy.

The journey to becoming an entrepreneur is not solely about financial gains; it hinges on cultivating a specific orientation (Kuratko, Fisher & Audretsch, 2021). This orientation is profoundly influenced by such as the individual values held and their access to Perception of government regulations. Perception of government regulations plays a pivotal role in realizing entrepreneurial orientation (Nakku, Agbola, Miles & Mahmood, 2020). Government regulations and cultural principles of an area have the potential to influence entrepreneurial activities (Atiase, Mahmood, Wang & Botchie, 2018). However, previous research tends to view them as separate factors that only directly impact Entrepreneurial Orientation without considering the potential synergy and interaction between them in a holistic manner (Saka-Helmhout, Chappin & Vermeulen, 2020). This research employs an institutional perspective to address these limitations, recognizing the significant role of culture and regulations in shaping the values and behavior of entities in society. The findings presented make a cutting-edge contribution to increasing the theoretical understanding of the complex interactions between cultural factors, government policy and entrepreneurial development. By examining the influence of cultural factors such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance as well as government policies, this study adds to our knowledge and highlights the nuanced relationships the entrepreneurial environment in Benue state. Hence this study examines the influence of power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration on entrepreneurship development, the moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies. From the research objective, the under listed relevant questions become imperative.

1. What is the effect of power distance cultural configuration on entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria?
2. To what extent uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration affect entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria?
3. What is the moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies on the relationship between the cultural configurations (power distance & uncertainty avoidance) and entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria?

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL REVIEWS

Conceptual Clarification

The literature defines and examines the concepts of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, cultural configuration, and entrepreneurial development from a number of perspectives. Uzun (2020) claims that power distance is a measure of how much a society accepts the unequal distribution of power within its institutions, organizations, and societies. inherent in the caste or monarchy systems. According to Travaglino and Moon (2020), the degree or extent to which members of organizations, institutions, and societies accept or expect an unequal allocation of power is related to the dimension of power gap. A tendency for high power distance manifests itself in behaviors that imply that one's place in the home and at work is defined by a distinct hierarchy of who should lead and who should follow. Social inequality is reduced in a low-power distance society where there is a strong belief in individual equality and the idea that hierarchies are useful but not infallible. Hofstede (2001) defined it as the degree to which a superior in a

social hierarchy may control a subordinate's behavior as opposed to the subordinate controlling the superior's behavior.

Conversely, uncertainty avoidance quantifies the degree to which individuals are prepared or unwilling to accept risks. People with strong uncertainty avoidance preference norms and unchanging truths. People with low uncertainty avoidance tend to be less cautious and rigid when it comes to upholding high standards, relative truths, and the unpredictable world of self-employment. This is a reference to how cultures view the future and the various unknowns that come with it. (Hofstede, 2001). This dimension takes into account the way that unforeseen circumstances, uncertainty, and occurrences are handled. A limited tolerance for risk-taking, ambiguity, and uncertainty is indicated by a high uncertainty avoidance score. The unknown is reduced by stringent laws, policies, and procedures. These cultures use strict laws, rules, and other similar measures as a means of reducing uncertainty for both individuals and organizations. A high level of tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty is indicated by a low uncertainty avoidance score. There are lax norms and regulations and a greater openness to the unfamiliar (Arabiyat, Mdanata, Haffar, Ghoneim & Arabiyat, 2019).

In a similar vein, entrepreneurial development has been defined in a variety of ways, but no clear, widely-accepted definition has evolved. The ability to envision and plot a course for a new business venture by combining information from the functional disciplines and the external environment in the context of the extraordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which faces a new business venture is the essence of entrepreneurship development, according to Celikkol, Kitapci, and Doven (2019). The practice of enhancing entrepreneurial abilities and expertise through organized instruction and institutional development programs targeted at those looking to launch or grow a business is known as "entrepreneurship development." The goal of entrepreneurship development is to increase the number of entrepreneurs within an economy in order to quicken the pace at which new businesses are established, which will quicken the process of creating jobs and advancing the economy. Therefore, it is believed that entrepreneurship is the means of generating income, jobs, and economic expansion (Mwatsika, 2015).

Even so, the notion of "government entrepreneurship policies" is still fluid and subject to change. Government entrepreneurship policies, according to Tende (2014), are merely initiatives and policies launched by the government to encourage entrepreneurship and investment in new businesses. Government initiatives promoting productive entrepreneurship, according to OECD (2018), place a strong emphasis on starting companies that have the capacity to innovate and create jobs. In addition to producing innovations and fostering competition, business development is a key factor in economic growth and employment creation. By fostering local economic growth, assisting with industrial transitions, and providing an alternate route to employment for people who are underprivileged in the labor market or who want more flexibility, it can also have broader social advantages (OECD, 2019).

Theoretical Review

The theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), put forth by Ajzen (1991), provides the study's foundation. It explains how various beliefs, divided into three categories, impact an individual's desire to form a corporation. The first is individual attitudes regarding the behavior of enterprise development, which relates to people's favorable or negative perceptions of this behavior. Subjective norms comprise perceived social pressures including parental support, role modeling, and opinions from others regarding whether or not to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Perceived control, also known as self-efficacy or the capacity to carry out the desired conduct, is the third. This suggests that a strong sense of self-efficacy will suggest a greater likelihood of making the decision to begin an entrepreneurial endeavor..

Generally speaking, the idea emphasizes the importance of purpose, which is thought to encompass the

driving forces behind behavior. According to Ajzen (1991), intentions reveal a person's willingness to try a behavior as well as the amount of work they plan to put into it. Therefore, societal norms or personal attitudes toward the desire for company growth will dictate whether or not Benue State entrepreneurs and business owners intend to aspire for improved performance in their enterprises. The TPB is a useful tool for comprehending how individual entrepreneurs' behavior may be altered. Lewin (1936) adds that an individual's behavior is a product of their surroundings. This concept was introduced as behavior $B = f(P, E)$ in Lewin's equation. He says that in order to elicit behavior (B), an individual's personal traits (P) interact with the environmental conditions (E) and the scenario. Lewin argued that a person's conduct and personality are shaped by a combination of nature and nurture, rather than either one alone (nature being innate tendencies or nurture being the events of life).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) describes how many socio-cultural elements impact the inclination to start a business. The thesis makes a clear distinction between three cultural values—individuals' own attitudes, societal standards, and perceived control—that encourage or inspire people to become entrepreneurs. The idea is also related to the study's conceptual model, which describes how many cultural factors impact the growth of entrepreneurship when an individual or entrepreneur feels it would be desirable to launch a business.

Empirical Review

Numerous researches conducted in Nigeria and other African nations, as well as worldwide, have been documented in the literature examining the impact of power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration on the growth of entrepreneurship. A study on Power Distance Belief and Workplace Communication: The Mediating Role of Fear of Authority was carried out in China by Dai, Hao, Wenting, and Tianyi in 2022. The research design used in the study was survey-based. Of the 1,000 workers in the sample, 465 and 535 fall into the senior and junior categories, respectively. For the hypothesis test, Ordinary Least Square (OLS) was used. The results showed that employees' performance and effective workplace communication are positively correlated with power distance.

Similarly, Shuo and Pasi (2022) examined how power distance affected employees' motivation in a cross-cultural setting using data from Chinese businesses in Europe. Investigating the relationship between power distance and business performance was the goal. The exploratory strategy of the research design involved gathering data from two sources through two different methods: a literature review for the first source and twelve semi-structured interviews for the second. The interview transcripts underwent content analysis. According to the study, power distance and Chinese enterprises' performance in Europe are positively correlated.

Mary and Joseph (2022) used a quantitative, descriptive research design to investigate the relationship between power distance and strategy realization in government-owned businesses. Lower level management, middle level management, and upper echelons of management made up the target population. Primary data was gathered through the use of questionnaires. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables. The association between strategy realization and teamwork orientation was determined using a regression model. The outcomes showed that power distance significantly improves the strategy's likelihood of success. With a mean score of 3.916, it was also determined that management implements strong strategic controls to guarantee strategy realization.

However, using Germany as an example, Kadri, Anneli, and Urmas (2020) make first progress in determining if a person's entrepreneurial behavior is influenced by, among other things, their regional cultural background. A multilevel approach is used, combining current cultural dimensions indicators based on Hofstede's original methodology at the regional (NUTS 1) level with individual-level entrepreneurship

data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. The findings suggest that cultural background at the regional level has a significant role in influencing entrepreneurial behavior. That being said, the effects vary depending on the cultural dimension and also depending on the level of entrepreneurship. Early-stage entrepreneurship may benefit from a lower level of uncertainty avoidance in a given area, whereas established business ownership appears to benefit from a lower level of power distance.

Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Cerne, and Kadic-Magljalic (2019) distinguished between uncertainty avoidance at the unit and national levels using a four-level conceptual model of the function of uncertainty avoidance in the formulation of employees' entrepreneurial ambitions. An advantageous interaction between unit-level uncertainty avoidance and creativity or self-efficacy when there is a supplementary or complementarity fit is demonstrated by the study, which uses data from 787 employees on the first level nested into 73 units on the second level, 19 organizations on the third level, and eight countries on the fourth level. On the other hand, when neither fit type is applicable, the interaction between environmental and behavioral elements is detrimental. Lastly, it appears that entrepreneurial ambitions are unaffected by the avoidance of uncertainty at the national level.

The relationship between a culture of uncertainty avoidance and risk-taking in the decision-making of entrepreneurial enterprises is examined by Bate (2022). Systematic literature review methodology was utilized in the study. Risk-taking, or risk-taking behavior, risk-taking propensity, risk aversion, uncertainty avoidance, uncertainty avoidance national culture, fear of the unknown or the future, and uncertainty avoidance culture and risk-taking are among the keywords that make up a sequence of search searches. Over 35 countries are covered in the review of the studies, which spans the years 1975–2021. The review's findings reinforce the already-found link between risk-taking behavior and a culture that places a high value on uncertainty avoidance. Increased risk-taking has the impact of lessening the culture of uncertainty avoidance, which in turn serves to lessen resistance to change in businesses.

Salami, Ekakitie, and Ebinim (2023) restricted the study to the employees of the small-scale business in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria, in an effort to investigate the effects of government policy on the growth and development of small-scale businesses. A well-structured questionnaire helped in the adoption of the main data approach. Meanwhile, the field data was analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. Just 272 of the 291 surveys that were distributed to health professionals, core medical personnel, and others were returned and utilized for the analysis. The study revealed that entrepreneurship policy intervention and monetary policy are positively related to entrepreneurship growth and development and that such a relationship is strong and statistically significant.

Furthermore, Nwalusiuka (2021) investigated how government policies affect startup challenges and the reliability of this work. This study used a survey that used questionnaires to gather feedback from new firms in Anambra State that had been operating for three (3) years. Using a snowball sampling technique, the study used 400 newly established enterprises in Anambra State. For the study, the main source of data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. The Chi-square test of independence was used to evaluate each of the hypotheses at the 5% significance level. The findings show that government regulations have a big impact on how easily new businesses can obtain financing. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate a strong correlation between government regulations and the longevity of startups in the research region. The outcome also shows that there is a strong correlation between government initiatives for business development and support and the survival of startups in the research domain.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this research. The study considered the population of 1811 of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in Benue state, Nigeria (National Survey of Micro, Small and

Medium Enterprises, 2021). A sample of 301 operators of SMEs were statistically obtained using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling determination procedure for finite population while *a multi-stage random sampling techniques was used to select the respondents from the 23 local government headquarters of Benue state.* According to Nworgu (1991) random sampling gives element of the population equal and independent chance of being in the study. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire tagged “Questionnaire on cultural configuration and entrepreneurship development (CULENT) and it was developed by the researchers. All the constructs were measured using a self-assessment report which was rated by the respondents on a 5 Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The instrument for data collection was validated by experts in the Department of Business Administration from Federal University Wukari and Benue State University Makurdi. To establish the reliability of the instrument as reported by respondents in the study area, the Cronbach Alpha method was adopted. Data for this research was collected using the structured questionnaire which was administered by the researcher and 46 research assistants spread in the 23 local government areas selected for the study. In order to gather data for the study, 301 questionnaires were issued to respondents who make up the study's target audience; 296 of those questionnaires representing 98% were returned valid. The analytical techniques for the study are tables, simple percentage and measure of central tendencies to answer research question. The lower mean limit of 2.50 was used for this study as the decision point of acceptance, therefore the mean value ≥ 2.50 was considered a factor while mean ≤ 2.50 was considered a none factor. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis of the study and to check the moderating effect of government entrepreneurship policies on the relationship between the cultural configurations such as power distance (PWD) and uncertainty avoidance (UCA), and entrepreneurship development (ENTD) in Benue State Nigeria with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. This relationship will be established in functional form as follows:

$$ENTD = f(PWD, UNA) \dots \dots \dots (3.1)$$

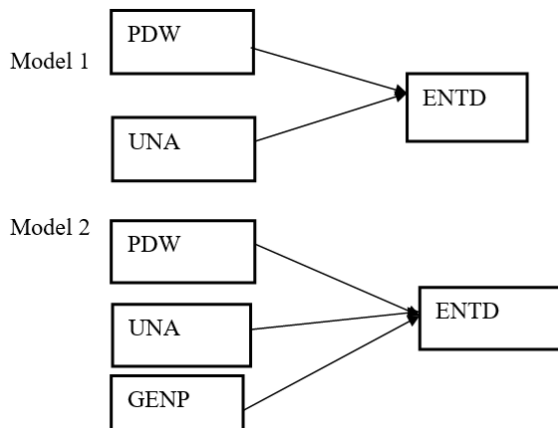
$$ENTD = f\{PWD,UNA,GENP\} \dots \dots \dots (3.2)$$

The models are restated in stochastic form for estimation as thus;

$$ENTD_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^n \beta_1 PWD + \sum_{i=0}^n \beta_2 UNA + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (3.3)$$

$$ENTD_t = \pi_0 + \sum_{i=1}^n \pi_1 PWD + \sum_{i=0}^n \pi_2 UNA + \sum_{i=0}^n \pi_3 GENP + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (3.4)$$

The structural hierarchical multiple regression model is provided as thus;



Where;

ENTD= Entrepreneurship Development

PDW = Power Distance Cultural Configuration

UNA = Uncertainty Avoidance Cultural Configuration

GENP = Government Entrepreneurship Policies

β_0 and π_0 = the intercepts

$\beta_1 - \beta_1$ and $\pi_1 - \pi_3$ are parameters estimated

ϵ = Error terms or Disturbance terms representing other variables not included in the model but may implicitly explain the variation in the behaviour of the dependent variable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Assessment of Entrepreneurial Development in Benue State Nigeria

The perception of the operators of SMEs with regards to entrepreneurial development in Benue State was evaluated and the result presented in Table 1

Table 1: Assessment of Entrepreneurial Development

Items	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
You have enhanced your entrepreneurial skills through structured training programs hence, has no fear for the unknown	296	1216.00	4.1081	.91788
Your entrepreneurial knowledge has made you involves in a continuous search for new profitable ideas	296	1197.00	4.0439	1.04221
Your ability to envision and chart a course for a new business venture is as a result of your masculinity/femininity status	296	1211.00	4.0912	1.00598
Your creation and operation of an enterprise with a view to creating value or wealth is birthed from your individualism belief	296	1225.00	4.1385	.94478
You have the willingness to assume risk' arising out of the creation and implementation of new ideas	296	1245.00	4.2061	.85654
Grand Mean			4.11756	

Source: Field Survey 2024

From the results presented in Table 1, the respondents agreed with all the items in relation with entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria. The mean responses of the operators of SMEs indicated that, the 5th item was rated high base on the decision rule guiding this study. It is an indication that, operators of SMES have the willingness to assume risk' arising out of the creation and implementation of new ideas. The mean responses of the operators of SMEs operators further indicated that, the 2nd item was rated low base on the decision rule guiding this study. This shows that, minority of the sampled respondents

agrees that, entrepreneurial knowledge has made them involves in a continuous search for new profitable ideas. On the whole, the grand mean responses of the operators of SMEs indicated high rating of the items, implying that, *there* is high level entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria.

Assessment of Power Distance Cultural Configuration in Benue State Nigeria

The perception of the operators of SMEs with regards to power distance cultural configuration in Benue State was evaluated and the result presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Assessment of Power Distance Cultural Configuration

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
People who hold power have influence to bring out the best of creative ideas in other people	296	4.0203	.93133
The extent to which a superior in a hierarchy can determine a behavior for you does not affect your business performance	296	4.0642	1.00132
You would prefer and perform much better in a relatively decentralized and less hierarchical environment	296	4.0473	.86620
You do expect to be told and reminded on what to do in order to do it better	296	4.0608	.92591
Your subordinates determines how best you can achieve a task	296	4.0541	.86580
Grand Mean		4.04934	

Source: Field Survey 2024

From the results presented in Table 2, the respondents agreed with all the items in relation with power distance cultural configuration in Benue state Nigeria. The mean responses of the operators of SMEs indicated that, all the items were rated high base on the decision rule guiding this study. It is an indication that, operators of SMES have indicated high rating of the items, implying that, degree of interpersonal influence that those who hold power in a social structure can exert over those who lack power in business ventures is high in Benue state Nigeria.

Assessment of Uncertainty Avoidance Cultural Configuration in Benue State Nigeria

The perception of the operators of SMEs with regards to uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration in Benue State was evaluated and the result presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Assessment of Uncertainty Avoidance Cultural Configuration

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
You tend to perform better in an organization that is conservative, rigid and well structured	296	3.9764	1.00648
Where there is openness for change or innovation and generally inclusive is a better place for you to give better results	296	4.0980	.90227
You prefers to stay in the same job and await better performance even if you disliked	296	4.0777	.86595

the job			
You are comfortable with uncertainty and chaos and delivers the intended outputs in such situations	296	4.0777	.80510
Your performance is not threatened in an environment with lack of no flexible attitude for innovation and change	296	4.0405	1.00425
Grand Mean		4.0546	

Source: Field Survey 2024

From the results presented in Table 3, the respondents agreed with all the items in relation with uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration in Benue state Nigeria. The mean responses of the operators of SMEs indicated that, the 2nd item was rated high base on the decision rule guiding this study. It is an indication that, there is openness for change or innovation and generally inclusive is a better place for you to give better results. The mean responses of the operators of SMEs operators further indicated that, the 1st item was rated low base on the decision rule guiding this study. This shows that, minority of the sampled respondents agrees that, they tend to perform better in an organization that is conservative, rigid and well structured.. The grand mean responses of the operators of SMEs indicated high rating of the items, implying that, *there is high level group's level of anxiety regarding future events in the entrepreneurship. in Benue state Nigeria.*

Assessment of Government Entrepreneurial Policy in Benue State Nigeria

The perception of the operators of SMEs with regards to government entrepreneurial policy in Benue State was evaluated and the result presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Assessment of Government Entrepreneurial Policy

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Government provide policies that support the establishment of venture capital funds	296	1.9966	.91873
, Government Streamline the process of business registration and licensing to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and encourage more individuals to formalize their businesses	296	2.5473	1.23748
Government tax policies such as reduced tax rates or tax holidays are in place to offer incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),	296	2.1926	1.29589
Governments invest in education and vocational training programs that equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the business world.	296	1.9628	1.29453
Government provide adequate investments in infrastructure, such as reliable electricity and transportation networks, are essential for business growth and competitiveness	296	2.027	1.27256
Grand Mean		2.14526	

Source: Field Survey 2024

From the results presented in Table 4, the respondents disagreed with most items *with respect to government entrepreneurial policy in Benue State Nigeria. However, the respondents agreed with the 2nd*

item base on the decision rule guiding this study. This implies that SMEs operators in Benue state indicated some level of agreement that, government streamline the process of business registration and licensing to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and encourage more individuals to formalize their businesses. The mean responses of the SMEs operators further indicated that, the 1st and 4th items were the least rated base on the decision rule guiding this study. This implies that, minority of the sampled respondents agrees that, government provide policies that support the establishment of venture capital funds and governments invest in education as well as vocational training programs that equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the business world. The grand mean responses of the respondent generally indicated low rating of the items, implying that, operators of SMEs are not at home with government entrepreneurial policies in Benue state, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study were tested using hierarchical multiple regressions conducted at 5% significant level and the result is presented at 5.

Table 5: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	Constant	-.071	.271		-.263	.793
	PDW	-.739	.104	-.710	-7.088	.000
	UNA	.281	.105	.268	2.681	.008
2	Constant	-.201	.338		-.594	.553
	PDW	.725	.107	.725	6.776	.000
	UNA	.271	.105	.267	2.581	.008
	GENP	-.013	.020	-.016	-.642	.521

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 5 provides unstandardized and standardized coefficients of the explanatory variables in model 1 and 2 with their correspondents test statistic and significant values. Unlike standardized coefficients, which are normalized unit-less coefficients, an unstandardized coefficient has units and a ‘real life’ scale. **Unstandardized coefficients** are ‘raw’ coefficient produced by regression analysis when the analysis is performed on original, unstandardized variables. The analysis of the hierarchical multiple regressions is based on the unstandardized coefficients for model 1 and 2.

The estimated hierarchical multiple regressions model 1 revealed that, power distance (PDW) cultural configuration has positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria. This further implies that, 1% increase in power distance (PDW) would increase entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria by 74%. The result was found to be statistically significant at 5% confidence level as indicated by the p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Base on this result, H_{01} was rejected in favors of the alternative and concludes that; power distance has a significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria.

Similarly, the estimated hierarchical multiple regressions model 1 revealed that, uncertainty avoidance (UNA) cultural configuration has positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria. This further implies that, 1% increase in uncertainty avoidance (UNA) would increase entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria by 28%. The result was found to be statistically significant at 5% confidence level as indicated by the p-value of $0.008 < 0.05$. Base on this result, H_{02} was rejected in favors of the alternative and concludes that; uncertainty avoidance has a significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria.

The estimated hierarchical multiple regressions model 2 revealed the moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies on the relationship between power distance, uncertainty avoidance cultural configurations and entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria. The result revealed that, when government entrepreneurial policies was introduced to the estimated model, both power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural configurations indicated positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria as 1% increase in power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural configurations would increase entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria by 73% and 27% respectively. However, the positive effects were decreased by 1% due to government entrepreneurial policies in the study area.

The estimated hierarchical multiple regressions model 2 further revealed that, government entrepreneurial policies has negative effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria. This further implies that, 1% increase in government entrepreneurial policies (GENP) would decrease entrepreneurial development in Benue state Nigeria by 1%. The result was found to be statistically insignificant at 5% confidence level as indicated by the p-value of $0.521 > 0.05$. Base on this result, H_{03} was accepted and concludes that; moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies has no significant effect on the relationship between the cultural configurations and entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study sought to examine the effect of power distance on entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria. The result of the hierarchical multiple linear regression revealed that, power distance has positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria as 1% increase in power distance increase entrepreneurial development by 74%. The finding aligned with similar studies by Dai, Hao, Wenting and Tianyi (2022), Shuo and Pasi (2022) as well as Mary and Joseph. (2022) who found that, power distance is a positive predictor of smooth workplace communication and workers performance, entrepreneurial performance and strategy realization. The implication of the findings is that power distance culture values the equal treatment of everyone in the study area. The people studied accepted the unequal distribution of power or wealth and this influences their behaviour.

The second objective of the study examines the effect of uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration on entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria. The result of the hierarchical multiple linear regression revealed that, uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration has positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria as 1% increase in uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration increase entrepreneurial development by 28%. The finding corroborates with similar studies by Kadri, Anneli and Urmas (2020) as well as Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Cerne and Kadic-Maglajlic (2019) who found that, uncertainty avoidance in a region could have a positive impact on early-stage entrepreneurship, business performance and creativity or self-efficacy. The finding is however at variance with similar study by Bate (2022) whose review result re-boots the existing of negative relationship between a high uncertainty avoidance culture and risk-taking behaviour. The implication of this finding is that, *individuals will make the safest decisions possible because they have high uncertainty avoidance. They want to control the outcome of the situation, so they make sure to consider every outcome and make a calculated decision that*

gives them the best chance of getting what they desire hence increasing entrepreneurial development in the study area.

The third objective of the study determine the moderating effect of government entrepreneurial policies on the relationship between the cultural configurations (power distance & uncertainty avoidance) and entrepreneurship development in Benue State Nigeria. The estimated hierarchical multiple regressions revealed that, with the inclusion of government entrepreneurial policies in to the estimated model, power distance and uncertainty avoidance cultural configurations indicated positive effect on entrepreneurial development but decreased the effect of power distance and uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurship development by 1%. The implication of this finding is that, government entrepreneurial policies in the study area had a decreasing moderating effect between cultural configurations (power distance & uncertainty avoidance) and entrepreneurship development and hence derailed entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria. the finding does not support the results obtained in similar study by Salami, Ekakitie and Ebinim (2023) which revealed that entrepreneurship policy intervention and monetary policy are positively related to entrepreneurship growth and development in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria and that such a relationship is strong and statistically significant. it is also at variance with study by Nwalusiuka (2021) whose results found that government policies have significant influence on business start-ups access to finance and show significant association between government policies and survival of Start-ups in the study area.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concludes that, power distance culture values the equal treatment of everyone in the study area. The people studied accepted the unequal distribution of power or wealth and this influences their behaviour hence power distance has positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria. It is also concluded that, uncertainty avoidance cultural configuration has positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria. *Individuals will make the safest decisions possible because they have high uncertainty avoidance. They want to control the outcome of the situation, so they make sure to consider every outcome and make a calculated decision that gives them the best chance of getting what they desire hence increasing entrepreneurial development in the study area. the study concluded that,* government entrepreneurial policies in the study area had a decreasing moderating effect between cultural configurations (power distance & uncertainty avoidance) and entrepreneurship development and hence derailed entrepreneurial development in Benue State Nigeria. Drawn from these conclusions, the study suggested the following recommendations;

1. Entrepreneurs in Benue State Nigeria should always adjust their communication pattern and behaviour to align with the expectations of the environment. When people tend to believe that their superiors are better than themselves, they naturally regard them as authorities it evokes a fear of authority which results in positive entrepreneurial outcomes.
2. Entrepreneurs in Benue State Nigeria should be willing to take risks and embrace uncertainty of the future. They should always think and plan ahead to potentially reduce the chances of making bad decisions.
3. *Government at all levels should* provide policies that support the establishment of venture capital funds, Streamline the process of business registration and licensing, business tax friendly policies, provide adequate investments in infrastructure and invest in education and vocational training programs that equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the business world.

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