

## Effect of Start-Up Culture on Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria (A Study of Selected SMES In South-South Nigeria)

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### Abstract

*The study focused on the effect of start-up culture on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria (A study of selected SMEs in south-south, Nigeria). The specific objectives sought to achieve in this study, included to: examine the effect of individualism culture on Entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria, determine the effect of collectivism culture on Entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria, assess the effect of National culture on Entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The study had a population size of 1632, out of which a sample size of 321 was realized using Taro Yamanes's formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% level of confidence. The instrument used for data collection was primarily questionnaire. Though out of 321 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, 298 copies were returned while 23 were not returned. The questionnaire were analyzed using Likert scale and tabulation. The hypotheses were tested using Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tools. The findings indicate that individualism culture has significant effect on entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria, collectivism culture has significant effect on entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria, national culture has significant effect on entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. The study recommended the need to improve entrepreneurship education, embracement of communalism and entrepreneurial value, regular evaluation of culture in order to promote entrepreneurial survival as well as support SMEs as this has important implications for promoting green development and foster expansion and growth.*

**Keywords:** Culture, individualism, collectivism, national culture, entrepreneurial development.

### INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization initiated in the 1980s by virtue of silent revolution triggered by Masayoshi Ohira, Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Regan and Helmut Kohl have brought about a fierce competition both in the production sector and service industry (Boughton, 2002). The advent of competitive advantage has enabled companies to develop their operations in a sustainable fashion and cultural style. It has been widely recognized that the corporate culture has a profound impact on whether a company is going to gain a competitive advantage or not, since it affects basic ingredients of company performance, such as leadership and innovation (Barbosa, 2015). Although Silicon Valley is often seen

as the emblem of startup culture (Valaskivi, 2012), startup entrepreneurship has been detached from Silicon Valley and become popularized in the last two decades (Hyrkäs, 2016). Startup jargon, semantics, practices and narratives have spread out of the realm of entrepreneurship, and are widely circulated in work life and popular culture. At the same time, the numerous cases of thriving start-up and innovative businesses appear to be disrupting the lucrative business models of well-established brick-and-mortar companies (Radiou & Prabhu, 2015). They do so by applying such an approach to business that is not solely based on innovation, but also on seeking solutions for problems that do not yet exist.

Consequently, large companies find it hard to follow the pace of market transformations quickly and cheaply enough to compete with start-ups, and therefore they look closely at the operations of start-up enterprises so as to get some inspiration. What seems to be an underlying factor contributing to spectacular achievements of start-up companies is the organizational culture of those firms.

Startup culture is the shared values, thoughts and beliefs that shape how people work. It is different from corporate culture because it typically reflects the personalities and passions of the team members (Heinz, 2023). The notion of startup culture, then, seems simultaneously to refer to specific practices and to ambiguous, widely circulated cultural meanings. Therefore, domesticating it involves a local, discursive negotiation. Startup culture is formed in a dialogic process: local actors manage and familiarize the external foreign thereby reinterpreting it from the perspective of local meaning systems. Global phenomena are not simply copied but reworked and reconstructed, creating new meanings and understandings. Simultaneously, the familiar is domesticated, or tamed by the foreign previously unfamiliar phenomena are eventually seen as natural and acceptable in the familiar environment (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014; Collier & Ong, 2005; Nash, 2010; Stenning et al., 2010; Syväterä, 2016). Instead, Fontes one of the key founder of start-up culture defines it as a set of shared values, thoughts and beliefs that shape how people work to reach the company's goal. In her works with start-up leaders on their culture, she instead has them focus on how they want people to feel when they work for them (Heinz, 2023).

However, emigrant entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley also work as disseminators of startup culture. They bring their knowledge, experiences and practices, and utilize them in building local startup settings. Silicon Valley entrepreneurial practices are combined with local resources and customs (Saxenian, 2006). In this process, new startup cultures are created. Startup culture, then, can be conceived of as a global form that migrates to new locations via a complex process of domestication that brings about novel meanings and discourses. In Western economies, startup entrepreneurship has become increasingly important in recent years. In the postindustrial era, entrepreneurship and new ventures are seen essential in the effort to boost global competitiveness and creating jobs (Perren & Jennings, 2005). Also, countries from Europe, Asia, and Africa are in the pursuit of building institutional frameworks suitable for early-stage, high expertise entrepreneurship (Atomico, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2013; 2014). Of note is that startup activities are not understood only in economic terms, but in cultural terms as well (Saxenian, 1996). The rapid success of firms originating in Silicon Valley, California, such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Whatsapp—have led to discussions on a so called startup culture, in which some of the aforementioned firms have a canonical role (Hyrkäs, 2016).

The rise of startup entrepreneurship in Western societies can be linked to the general trend of entrepreneurship spreading from the economic realm to all spheres of life in the postindustrial era, an

idea which has been developed in the literature of political and cultural sociology (Brockling, 2016; Scharff, 2016). However, drawing on Foucauldian ideas on neoliberal governmentality, the ideal post-industrial citizen is constructed as an entrepreneur of the self (Foucault, 2008) proactive, self-reliant, and reflexive with regard to his/her wellbeing and life management. According to Ong (2007), neoliberal logic works towards re-management of populations' by producing educated subjects and fostering self-actualizing and self-enterprising subjects. In a neoliberal, postindustrial context, people are essentially to view themselves as enterprises: they are to constantly work for the betterment of their performance and productivity, thus allowing market logic to penetrate every facets and all relationships (Gershon, 2011).

This study intends to explore the effects of start-up culture confronting tentative entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, specifically the South-South Small and Medium Scales Enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs seeking to enter the business world with new ventures (i.e., start-ups). Though, popular interest in start-ups has increased in recent years, especially among young people who are more alert to the possibilities of modern technological solutions to achieve their aspirations to establish personal ventures. This has been commensurate with local and global economic deterioration and uncertainty, including large-scale unemployment and a lack of job opportunities.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the role of entrepreneurs in the Nigerian economy, the start-up culture constraining their operations are overwhelming and this has had a negative impact on their development and also limited their potential to drive the national economy as expected. This is worrisome for a developing economy without the requisite fund, infrastructure and technology to attract big businesses in large numbers. Firstly, it is pictured that many SMEs anchor their ownership and control individualistic nature, thereby forestalling the growth of the enterprise. Sluggish productivity growth is one of the biggest threats to overall economic growth in developed and developing economies alike, with serious implications for citizens' well-being such as lower income growth, increased inequality, and challenges with loan repayment. Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) contribute to the productivity problem. Within the same sector or within countries of similar size, the productivity gap between large companies and SMEs can vary by a factor of two or more. However, when enabled by a business-friendly environment and open markets, large companies can thrive; meanwhile, SMEs have a broad range of unmet needs. This poor collectivism syndrome affects the growth of SMEs because many a times people or entrepreneur finds it difficult to combine their ideas or ventures together. The limited size of many SMEs means they have difficulty accessing capabilities and resources that would make them more productive, including talented individuals with the latest knowledge of technology, finance, and managerial practices. Furthermore, many SMEs are young enterprises, which, when combined with their small scale, makes them a weaker counterpart for many standard market players, not only in terms of funding access but also for customers who might perceive small suppliers as too risky.

However, the greatest constraint of any enterprises is bad leader as arrow head of their organization. This is seen to be the highest cause of SMEs failure or organization, and this cut across the personality traits of the person. Indeed, those with inner motives need essential personality traits to succeed in business (Sarwoko & Nurfarida, 2021). This is because business operations do not only depend on motivations; they need essential and robust personality traits for entrepreneurial aspiration (Murugesan

& Jayavelu, 2017). Therefore, this work intends to particularly investigate effect of Start-up culture on Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria (A Study of Selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria). Specifically, the study seek to examine the effect of individualism culture on Entrepreneurial growth, determine the effect of collectivism culture on Entrepreneurial survival and effect of National culture on Entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

## **RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Startup Conceptualization**

Startups have become an increasingly popular topic for both scholars and practitioners. These organizations have established a key role in the global economy, being considered the “dynamos of our society”. Startups increase market dynamism and competitiveness given their knowledge and innovation focus; which contribute to fast growth and improvement as well as higher productivity (Decker et al., 2014). Furthermore, due to their size and low levels of hierarchy and bureaucracy, they are more flexible and agile (Kollmann, 2016) being able to respond more rapidly to markets demands (Decker et al., 2014). This gives organizations a competitive advantage over larger ones (Decker et al., 2014). Startups are also widely known for increasingly contributing to forming society’s values (Kauffman, 2018) emphasizing proactivity and a distinct cultural mind set towards work (Burrus, 2017).

#### **Startup Life Cycle**

The Portuguese National Statistics Institute (INE, 2018) likewise considers startups to be newly constituted organization. This perspective concludes that legally a startup and a SME are similar. A startup may be classified/qualified as a SME due to its structure and dimension; however, the opposite is not true. According to theses authors and reports, all enterprise were startups at some point of their life cycle. Although one can agree that a startup is a SME due to its dimension, it is difficult to accept that all SME enterprises are startups. In general, a small business such as grocery and hair dressers is not be classified as a startup. Startups are associated to technologic industries, with a specific working environment. This perspective of startups described as an initial stage of the lifecycle of an SME is a very limited approach to what constitutes and limits a startup. While this perspective attempts to limit a startup by defining parameters such as age, profitability and growth metrics, other approaches have been found within the literature.

#### **Startups as an Organizational Mindset**

Among practitioners, startups have been frequently associated to a mindset and/or a different way of thinking. According to the Robehmed (2013), Adora Cheng, co-founder and CEO of Homejoy, defines the term startups as a “state of mind”. Several articles appeal large companies to adapt the “startup culture mindset/startup mentality” emphasizing the advantage of this mindset (Pawar, 2013). These authors argue that to survive in today’s competitive, volatile economy, business must adapt quickly to both internal and external market pressures. According to these authors, startups cultures promote adaptability and agility to survive in the high risk volatile circumstances giving them a competitive advantage over larger, more rigid organizations.

The startup mindset is defined as thinking “out of the box”, a workplace that aspires and encourages employees to be participative and innovative, mission driven cultures in which employees want to make an impact (Pawar, 2013). It is a workplace which fosters proactivity, ownership and responsibility. Therefore, a startup culture values creativity, problem solving, open communication and collaboration. It is a workplace that “gives” voice to their employees and recognizes the importance of work-life balance. These workplaces are frequently associated with ping pong tables, casual dress codes, and open offices, to name a few to as common benefits associated. These perks create a unique working environment, which are increasingly being implemented by leaders at larger organizations, as they are realizing the benefits from adapting these values.

According to Schneider’s Attribution, Selection and Attrition (ASA) theory, individuals are attracted to organizations with whom they identify with. Leaders and founder’s select the employees they believe share their values and best fit the organization’s culture. The founder’s beliefs, values and assumptions are thus imposed onto the hired people. If the organizations succeed, these values, beliefs and assumptions become the basis for the organizations culture. The founder’s values, beliefs and assumptions become the “glue” that holds the organization together.

### **Startup culture**

The success of a number of small-team entrepreneurial ventures has led to a startup culture rising and a community wide perception of the values that are considered fundamental for an organization of this type (Egan-Wyer, Murh & Rehn, 2018). Hopp and Stephan (2012, cited in Egan-Wyer, Murh & Rehn, 2018) mention that this startup culture emerged from the patterns of successful enterprises such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google and Snapchat. What can be found in these patterns is a shared set of values, language, heroes and mythologies which enables a feeling that the company operates a community. Having shared values as a core concept in the company is what sets startups apart from traditional corporations (Egan-Wyer, Murh & Rehn, 2018).

The term ‘startup’ is usually applied to young or fledgling companies that have discovered, or are developing, a novel innovation. They aim for rapid growth, and their product is usually thought to be scalable, meaning that it can be easily multiplied and tailored to new contexts (Blank, 2006; Blank & Dorf, 2012; Hyrkäs, 2016; Lehdonvirta, 2013; Ries, 2011). Egan-Wyer et al. (2018) note that the term ‘startup’ first gained popularity during the IT bubble at the turn of the millennium, and its usage has continued to expand with the rise of the global internet economy. Startup entrepreneurship is, therefore, somewhat routinely associated with technology and internet-based services. The three (3) conceptualizations of start-up culture include:

- ❖ Startup culture as a form of governance,
- ❖ Startup culture as the cultural circuit of digital capitalism and
- ❖ Startup culture as a distinct form of economic activity

### **Types of Effective Startup Culture**

Some startups are dominated by one type of culture, others embrace different ones that include;

- **Innovation,**
- **Openness,**
- **Inclusiveness and participation,**

- **Supportiveness and people orientation,**
- **Competitiveness/aggressiveness,**
- **Startup founders/leaders,**

### **Startup entrepreneurship**

The term ‘startup’ was intermittently applied to business ventures in the 1970s and 1980s, but during and after the IT bubble at the turn of the millennium, the label increased in popularity. Thereafter, it has formed a loose category of nascent businesses and business cultures involving the utilization and development of technology, software, communications and media (Egan- Wyr, Muhr, & Rehn 2018, Cockayne, 2019). While startups are usually associated with the aforementioned industries in the popular imagination, startups can be and are founded in a variety of sectors and industries (Brown & Mason, 2014), and they are sometimes categorized into companies that produce software (applications, digital services, digital platforms etc.) or hardware (physical objects of varying purpose).

Thus, popular literature on startup entrepreneurship describes four central features of startups: a scalable business model, the attempt to create new products or services, high risk of failure and temporality (Hyrkäs, 2016). The goal of a startup is to grow out of the startup status and become an established company through, for example, acquisition by a larger company or going public, which can often be achieved when the startup’s product is scaled to a large enough size. Instead of relying on entrepreneurs’ or founders’ capital, startups prioritize investor capital that is typically acquired from institutional financiers, risk capital funds and individual investors (Getzoff, 2020; Little & Winch, 2021).

### **Building a successful startup culture**

Apparently, no one-size-for-all approach is yet available, but some insights drawn from previous research and our research data may provide a basic roadmap for entrepreneurs.

- ❖ Identify the distinctiveness,
- ❖ Define culture values,
- ❖ Articulate the culture,
- ❖ Recruit people who fit and align,
- ❖ Training and reward system,
- ❖ Role modeling,
- ❖ Measuring culture success.

### **Components of Start-up Culture**

#### **Individualism and collectivism**

Individualism-collectivism emerges from the literature as a high-level psychological concept that is a concept that explains cross-cultural differences in behavior over a wide range of situations. Individualism is the degree of the looseness of the bond between the members of the society. In individualistic cultures, individuals are expected to take care of themselves or their family alone. Collectivism, on the other hand, refers to a society whose members are part of a united, cohesive group

that protects from birth onwards in exchange for indisputable obedience. Individualism stresses self-sufficiency and self-control.

### **Collectivism culture**

Collectivism culture is characterized by mutual protection among individuals through the formation of close team relationships and individuals' loyalty to the collective interest. According to Hofstede (2001), individual goals in collectivism culture are established in the interest of the team as a whole. When an individual's opinion diverges from that of a larger community, they tend to avoid any conflicts that could arise from the expression of a different opinion. As a result, individuals are less likely to voice their own interests. However, in an individualistic culture, relationships between people are more tenuous and individuals are given the responsibility of looking after themselves and their own families. Individualism, in many types of research examining the impact of culture on entrepreneurship, appears to be strongly facilitating entrepreneurship (Miller & Rose, 2008).

The collective dimension reflects the degree to which individuals are encouraged by social institutions to integrate into groups within organizations and society. In this sense, societies that value entrepreneurship and innovation introduce an efficient institutional system to promote innovative companies. Thus, the institutional environment influences the rate of economic activity, entrepreneurship and strategic actions of organizations in a society (Yamakawa *et al.*, 2008)

This argument explains that individualistic societies create a more favorable environment for entrepreneurship since dominant cultural values are more consistent with entrepreneurial inclinations. Therefore, entrepreneurship is perceived as more proper and appropriate (Pinillos & Reyes, 2011). The positive influence of individualism on entrepreneurship argument is supported by some empirical studies (McGrath *et al.*, 1992), but there are also contradictory results in which collectivism supports entrepreneurship (Wu, 2009).

### **National culture on entrepreneurship**

It is widely accepted that culture is a significant determinant of economic growth. Landes (1998) indicates that the history of economic development proves the impact of culture. Weber (1930) was the first author to write about the relation between culture and economy (Harutyunyan & Özak, 2017). Up to today, a remarkable body of scholarly research has been accumulated whose results suggest that national cultures significantly influence productivity, inventiveness, and innovation of the countries. Also, at the firm level, Hofstede (2001) points out that national culture influences different kinds of economic management behavior. National culture exerts its influence mainly at two levels, one is on the individual, and the other one is on the societal level. National cultures are stated to include comparable ideas, values, and practices appropriate to a certain social structure, whether in business or in society. National culture is often characterized as a society-wide set of norms, beliefs, shared values, and expected behaviors that serve as guiding principles in people's daily lives (House *et al.*, 2002). National culture can be analyzed using Hofstede's cultural characteristics (Hofstede, 2001). The four basic components are individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, masculinity vs. femininity, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001).

### **Development of Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria**

Small scale industry orientation is part and parcel of Nigeria. Evidence abound in our respective communities of what successes our great grandparents made of their respective trading concerns, yam

barns, iron smelting, farming, cottage industries and the likes. Thus, the secret behind their success of a self-reliant strategy does not lie in any particular political philosophy, so much as in the people's attitude to enterprise and if the right incentive is adequate enough to make risk worthy ventures and decisions worth taking.

### **Entrepreneurial Growth**

The term entrepreneurial growth means organization plans to achieve its objective to grow and expand a business by its quality, quantity, and turnover. Entrepreneurial growth can be in terms of innovators, business developers, radicals, expanders, customers etc. Entrepreneurship has served as a key factor in the development and growth of several regions around the world. Entrepreneurship has served as a key factor in the development and growth of several regions around the world. Employment opportunities created by entrepreneurs have helped in dealing with problems related to poverty, regional imbalance, etc. Especially developing countries, which are majorly dependent on agriculture, are trying to provide a boost to entrepreneurial ventures. Harappa (2021) states that there are two classifications of factors influencing entrepreneurship growth, i.e. economic factors affecting entrepreneurial growth and non-economic factors affecting entrepreneurial growth.

### **Entrepreneurial Survival**

The survival of an enterprise is defined in the following way: an enterprise is born or survived. An enterprise is also considered to have survived if the linked legal unit(s) have ceased to be active, but their activity has been taken over by a new legal unit set up specifically to take over the factors of production of that enterprise. Lombela (2020) says that an entrepreneur seeking survival need to:

- a) Start owning their dreams,
- b) Ignore the negative voice within,
- c) Identify their talents,
- d) Be prepared for pain
- e) Luck or Grace? Be prepared when success meets you
- f) Redefine their hustle

### **Entrepreneurial Customer Satisfaction**

The word 'satisfaction' originates from the Latin words *satis*, which means 'enough' and *facere*, which means 'to make' (Oliver, 2010). Kotler and Keller (2016) define satisfaction as "a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointments that results from comparing a product or a service's perceived performance (or outcome) to expectations". The word 'expectation' is considered a crucial part of the satisfaction process, as the customer's expectations have a significant impact on whether the customer will be left satisfied or not (Güngör, 2007). A satisfied customer is a customer whose needs are met or exceeded (Gerson, 1993). Customer satisfaction is a key to keeping and growing consumers, and therefore, many companies strive to not only meet the expectations of the customers, but rather to create a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm among them (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008).

### **Theoretical Framework**



The basic application of this theory to entrepreneurship is seen in terms of planning. In order to describe entrepreneurial planning behaviour, four action processes have been suggested; opportunistic, complete planning and review (Baum, Frese, & Baron, 2014). Based on Frese's theory, early-stage entrepreneurs are likely to observe a new task. Also, this occurs repeatedly and this occurrence of the action is likely to feature in the coming few years. Furthermore, it highlights the fact cognitive ability is much more crucial to entrepreneurs. Compared to the other two theories, this theory is significantly less criticized.

This study anchored on the following key theories among others;

- i.) Innovation theory by Schumpeter, which had a greater thrust with start-up culture. To him the focus of the theory was that entrepreneurs do not operate with conventional technologies and do not believe in making small changes to the existing production method. Rather their main goal is to develop new technologies and products that can bring widespread changes and can help them to shift the paradigm altogether.
- ii.) Drucker's Entrepreneurship theory, the frontier of start-up start-up culture underpinned on Drucker's theory that is based on two important factors which are innovation and resources; innovation depends on resources and resources gain importance only when perceived to possess economic value.
- iii.) Also, Rotter Locus of control theory, the linkage of start-up culture underscored the thought that entrepreneurs with internal locus believe that emergence of success is due to their capabilities and actions. While entrepreneurs with external locus assume chances of success or survival are driven by institutional and external forces.
- iv.) Finally, Action regulation theory strengthens the locus on how individuals control their cognitive behaviour with the help of cognitive processes which consist of selection and development, orientation, monitoring and planning and processing feedback.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted survey research design which utilized primary data from questionnaire, interviews and direct observations to gather data from the respondents. The population of the study was one thousand six hundred and thirty-two (1632) comprising the aggregation of the senior and junior staff and management of the selected SMEs in South-South States of Nigeria. A sample size of 321 was determined using Taro Yamane 1964 formula. The study adopted stratified sampling, whereby each stratum was drawn from a representing unit and to make sure all the entire population are duly represented for an optimal outcome. The questionnaire was structured using 5 points Likert-scale of (Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Undecided, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed). The questionnaire was grouped into two (2) sections. The section A, comprised of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the section B, contained the key items of the research questions. The study adopted pre-test validity and test-re-test reliability method and a reliability of 0.50% which was ascertained using Cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean, percentages and standard deviation. The hypotheses testing was carried out using regression analysis statistical tool for the test. The computer aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) window version 25 was employed to do all the analysis.

## **RESULTS**

### **Questionnaire Distribution**

**Table 1: To what extent does individualism culture affect entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria? (N = 298)**

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	MEAN	REMARK
1	Reinforces focus on abstract thinking that affect result or performance	168	82	17	18	13	1268	4.26	Accepted
2	Imbibe on operation that encourages privacy and self-dependence as well fasten your goal attainment	156	96	13	22	11	1258	4.22	Accepted
3	Embraces self-expression that boost valued uniqueness	161	93	5	30	9	1261	4.23	Rejected
4	Believe that your personal goals can efficiently achieved independently	148	113	2	27	8	1260	4.22	Rejected
5	Often interfere with work-family relationship that affect performance	159	98	8	29	4	1273	4.27	Accepted
<b>Clustered mean for decision rule:-</b>								4.24	<b>Accepted</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2023**

Respondent were asked to indicate their opinions by choosing questions from 1-5, scale is compound scale. The choice reflects the argument or disagreement with the particular concept. In other word, it reveals the participant emotions, attitudes, beliefs, or points of view, because they show positive or negative emotions towards a concept of selecting a choice best representing their feelings (Likert, 2012). From the result, seven questions were designed in the questionnaire to ascertain individualism culture effect on entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. From the result nine (5) of the variables in the table were accepted by the mean range used for decision which is 3.0 and above. This result shows that the mean responses for items 1 to 5 surpassed the criterion mean (4.28, 4.39, 4.45, 4.45 and  $4.37 \geq 3.0$ ). Specifically, “individualism culture has increased the entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs and hence growth of selected SMEs on the average the highest mean ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.24) i.e. the respondents indicated strong agreement to the question statement.

**Table 2: How does collectivism culture affect entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria? (N = 298)**

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	MEAN	REMARK
6	Facilitates how individuals define themselves in relation to “we” mentality	151	99	19	19	10	1256	4.21	Accepted
7	Improves communication often on more indirect style to avoid potential conflict or embarrassment	153	102	18	13	12	1265	4.24	Accepted
8	Inspires group loyalty and group-based decision in firm	157	102	12	20	7	1276	4.28	Accepted
9	Smoothens compromise and favouritism when a decision needs to be made to achieve greater levels of peace	165	87	14	27	5	1274	4.27	Accepted
10	Expedites how firm lay greater emphasis on common goals than on individual pursuit	163	94	13	25	3	1283	4.31	Accepted
<b>Clustered mean for decision rule:-</b>								<b>4.26</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2023**

Table 2 revealed that eighteen questions were designed in the questionnaire to ascertain the effect of collectivism culture on entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs. From the result of all the items in the table were accepted by the mean range used for decision which is 3.0 and above. From the result the mean responses for items 6 to 10, surpassed the criterion mean (3.0). From the result the clustered mean was 4.26 which was accepted. This also agreed that collectivism culture affect entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 3: To what extent does national culture affect entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria? (N = 298)**

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	MEAN	REMARK
11	Power distance boost organization fulfilment	173	72	22	24	7	1274	4.27	Accepted
12	Masculinity vs. femininity (status) ease the accomplishment of firm goals	161	86	18	28	5	1264	4.24	Accepted
13	Hierarchy culture strengthens goal attainment	166	83	10	36	3	1267	4.25	Accepted
14	Religion culture accelerate customer contentment	153	103	7	33	2	1266	4.24	Accepted
15	Clan culture fast-track customer taste	164	88	13	22	11	1266	4.24	Accepted

**Clustered mean for decision rule:-**

**4.25 Accepted**

**Source: Field survey, 2023**

From the result shown in Table 3 above all of the items in the table were accepted by the mean range used for decision which is 3.0 and above has on the average the highest mean ( $\bar{X}= 4.08$ ) and was accepted i.e. the respondents indicated strong agreement to the question statement; Furthermore, the clustered mean was 4.25 which was accepted, the implication is that all the above stated relationship exist between national culture and entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis one**

***H0<sub>1</sub>. Individualism culture has no significant effect on Entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.***

$H_0 = B_1 = 0$ . Test the hypothesis that all slope coefficients are equal to zero.

$H_1 \neq B_1 \neq 0$ . Test the hypothesis that not all slope coefficients are equal to zero.

**Table 4: Regression results examining the effect of individualism culture on Entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	.152	.056		2.717	.007	.042	.262
Individualism culture	.956	.013	.975	75.174	.000	.931	.981

R = 0.975

R-Square = 0.950

Adjusted R-Square = 0.950

Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.23959

Durbin-Watson = 0.451

F-Statistics = 5651.105

T-Statistic ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ) = 75.174

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria

b. Predictors: (Constant), Individualism culture

**Source:** *Researcher's Estimation 2023 SPSS version 25.0 Significance @ 95 confidence level (See SPSS Output –Appendix I)*

As seen in the Table 4, the regression results showed that the estimated coefficient of the regression parameters has positive sign and thus conform to our a priori expectation, the R- square value of 0.950 which is the coefficient of determination covers 95.0% of the sample variation in the dependent variable is explained or caused by the explanatory variable while 5.0% is unexplained. This remaining could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The high value of R-square is an indication

of a good relationship between the dependent and independent variables, meaning that there is a strong positive correlation between individualism culture and entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This means that an increase in the independent variables will bring about credibility in the dependent variable. The regression equation ( $Y = -0.152 + 0.956IC + e$ ) shows that entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria will always depend on a positive constant factor of 0.152 regardless of the existence of other growth determinants. Every unit decrease of individualism culture will increase entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria by a factor of 0.956.

The  $R^2$  value of 0.950 means that 95.0% of the variations in entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria is explained by individualism culture while the 5.0% is explained by other variables indicating that the model is a good predictor. 0.23959 indicates its Standard Error of the Estimate, while Durbin Watson Statistic of 0.451 show the degree of no autocorrelation of variables in the region or partition curve. The F-Statistics of 5651.105 measures the goodness of fit of the model which is greater than 2.5 rule of thumbs. The calculated t-Statistic remains 75.174 at ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ). With reference to table above, the calculated t-statistics of 75.174 at ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ) is greater than the critical value (i.e. 1.984), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. This means that, individualism culture has significant effect on Entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

**Hypothesis two**

***H0<sub>2</sub>: Collectivism culture has no significant effect on Entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.***

$H_0 = B_1 = 0$ . Test the hypothesis that all slope coefficients are equal to zero.

$H_1 \neq B_1 \neq 0$ . Test the hypothesis that not all slope coefficients are equal to zero.

**Table 5: Regression results determining the effect of collectivism culture on Entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	.392	.069		5.675	.000	.256	.527
Collectivism culture	.907	.016	.958	57.384	.000	.876	.938

R = 0.958  
 R-Square = 0.918  
 Adjusted R-Square = 0.917  
 Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.29602  
 Durbin-Watson = 0.281  
 F-Statistics = 3239.874  
 T-Statistic ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ) = 5.675

- a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Collectivism culture

**Source:** *Researcher's Estimation 2023 SPSS version 25.0 Significance @ 95 confidence level (See SPSS Output –Appendix II)*

Also, in the Table 5, the regression results showed that the estimated coefficient of the regression parameters has positive sign and thus conform to our a priori expectation, the R-square value of 0.918 which is the coefficient of determination covers 91.8% of the sample variation in the dependent variable is explained or caused by the explanatory variable while 8.2% is unexplained. This remaining could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The high value of R-square is an indication of a good relationship between the dependent and independent variables, meaning that there is a strong positive relationship between collectivism culture and entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This means that an increase in the independent variables will bring about credibility in the dependent variable. The regression equation ( $Y = 0.392 + 0.907CC + e$ ) shows that the entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria will always depend on a positive constant factor of 0.392 regardless of the existence of other determinants of entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. Every unit increase in collectivism culture will strike an increase towards entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria by a factor of 0.907.

The  $R^2$  value of 0.917 means that 91.7% of the variations in entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria is explained by collectivism culture while the 8.3% is explained by other variables indicating that the model is a good predictor. 0.29602 indicates its Standard Error of the Estimate, while Durbin Watson Statistic of 0.281 show the absence of multicollinearity of variables in the model or partition curve or region. The F-Statistics of 3292.874 measures the goodness of fit of the model which is greater than 2.5 rule of thumbs. The calculated t-Statistic remains 5.675 at ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ).

With reference to table above, the calculated t-statistics of 5.675 at ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ) is greater than the critical value (i.e. 1.984), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. This means that, collectivism culture has significant effect on entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

**Hypothesis three**

***H0<sub>3</sub>: National culture has no significant effect on Entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.***

$H_0 = B_1 = 0$ . Test the hypothesis that all slope coefficients are equal to zero.

$H_1 \neq B_1 \neq 0$ . Test the hypothesis that not all slope coefficients are equal to zero.

**Table 6: Regression results assessing the effect of National culture on Entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B
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	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-.066	.073		-.910	.364	-.209	.077
National culture	1.002	.017	.962	60.611	.000	.970	1.035

R = 0.962  
 R-Square = 0.925  
 Adjusted R-Square = 0.925  
 Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.28492  
 Durbin-Watson = 0.334  
 F-Statistics = 3673.698  
 T-Statistic ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ) = 60.611

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial customers satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria

b. Predictors: (Constant), National culture

**Source:** *Researcher's Estimation 2023 SPSS version 25.0 Significance @ 95 confidence level (See SPSS Output –Appendix III)*

Also, in the Table 6, the regression results showed that the estimated coefficient of the regression parameters has positive sign and thus conform to our a priori expectation, the R- square value of 0.925 which is the coefficient of determination covers 92.5% of the sample variation in the dependent variable is explained or caused by the explanatory variable while 7.5% is unexplained. This remaining could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The high value of R-square is an indication of a good relationship between the dependent and independent variables, meaning that there is a strong positive relationship between national culture and entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This means that an increase in the independent variables will bring about credibility in the dependent variable. The regression equation ( $Y = -0.066 + 1.002NC + e$ ) shows that entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria will always depend on a negative constant factor of 0.066 regardless of the existence of other determinants of entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. Every unit decrease in national culture will lead to proportionate decrease in entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria by a factor of 1.002.

The  $R^2$  value of 0.925 means that 92.5% of the variations in entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria is explained by national culture while the 7.5% is explained by other variables indicating that the model is a good predictor. 0.28492 indicates its Standard Error of the Estimate, while Durbin Watson Statistic of 0.334 show the degree of no autocorrelation of variables in the region or partition curve. The F-Statistics of 3673.698 measures the goodness of fit of the model which is greater than 2.5 rule of thumbs. The calculated t-Statistic remains 60.611 at ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ).

With reference to table above, the calculated t-statistics of 60.611 at ( $df_1 = 1$  &  $df_2 = 296$ ) is greater than the critical value (i.e. 1.984), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. This

means that, national culture has significant effect on Entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria.

## **DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS**

Based on the statistical findings, this study observed that individualism culture has significant effect on entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria in the first hypothesis tested. This conforms to the work of Assmann and Ehrl (2021) who conducted a study on the effect of the cultural trait “individualism” on opportunity entrepreneurship, using cross-country data from the Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI). The study used a combination of the fractional probit regression model and an instrumental variable approach to avoid biased estimates. Individualism emphasizes freedom, personal achievements, and encouragement of change, i.e., values related to the entrepreneurial spirit. Accordingly, the study found that in individualistic countries opportunity entrepreneurship is higher. About half of the magnitude of this effect is transmitted indirectly because people in individualistic countries tend to perceive better opportunities and because those nations are more innovative. The direct effect seems to occur because people derive more utility from their outstanding position in society, and/or due to personal attitudes and social legitimation. These findings are robust to the sample composition and to differences in institutions, religious affiliation, unemployment, education, and wealth.

Also collectivism culture was found to have a significant effect on entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. As this supports the empirical investigations of Qu (2023), who carried out a study on collectivism culture and green transition: An empirical investigation for the rice theory. Using panel data from 2004–2017 on 31 Chinese provinces, this study examines the relationship between the collectivism culture and green transition. My results reveal that places with a stronger collectivism culture tend to make more green investments, and the results remain valid after a battery of robustness tests. In addition, the heterogeneity analysis indicates that the positive effects of collectivism culture on green investments are more pronounced if the province governor is advanced in age, well educated, and holds a long tenure. Additionally, such effects are more conspicuous in those provinces with more serious pollution, greater levels of collectivism, and more developed markets. This study fills a theoretical gap in the field of research on green investments from a cultural perspective. Therefore, this study has important implications for promoting green development and achieve carbon peaking and neutrality.

With regard to national culture and entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs, positive and significant effect was found. This also constitutes a strong bond with the study of Gong and Suzuki (2013) who study investigated the influences of national culture on Guanxi actions between China and Japan. In order to investigate it, two surveys have been conducted to collect the data, one is for culture and the other one is for Guanxi actions. The result of national culture comparison shows both of two Chinese groups have a significant difference from Japanese but do not have significant difference between them. While, the comparison result of Guanxi actions reveals there is significant difference among three groups on Guanxi actions, but Chinese in China and Chinese in Japan do not share more similarities than Japanese. From the results may conclude that compared Guanxi actions, culture is more ingrained and robust, which is difficult to be changed by a different culture and business environment. Finally, the correlation analysis has been conducted between Hofstede cultural



dimensions and Guanxi actions, which indicate that collectivism has significant influence on Guanxi actions.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSION**

Business owners and managers with an express preference for start-up culture that demonstrate individualism, collectivism and national culture are more likely to experience high sales growth. What this implies is that a business owner who wants to grow his/her business in South-South Nigeria will need to adopt one or mixed of those start-up culture or be willing to go into partnership with someone who would complement for their weakness. Furthermore, the study concluded that:

- ❖ Individualism culture has significant effect on Entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This implies that individual culture plays important part in the SMEs entrepreneurial growth, intention and initiation.
- ❖ Collectivism culture has significant effect on Entrepreneurial survival of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This implies that harmony or integration of diverse culture is always added advantage to SMEs entrepreneurial survival.
- ❖ National culture has significant effect on Entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. Also, this implies that amalgamation of different or country culture boost entrepreneurial customer satisfaction among SMEs,

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the statistical findings, the study recommends as follows;

- i.) With regards to individualism culture and entrepreneurial growth of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This study recommended the need to improve entrepreneurship education that will make the entrepreneurs to have “hands on” enterprise experience as well as to practice entrepreneurial directed approach in improving entrepreneurial mindset. This will enable the business owner who wants to grow his/her business in Nigeria the ability to adopt to cultural orientations.
- ii.) This study recommends that SMEs should continuously embracing of communalism the entrepreneurial value in order to promote entrepreneurial survival as this has important implications for promoting green development and foster expansion and growth.
- iii.) With respect to national culture and entrepreneurial customer satisfaction of selected SMEs in South-South Nigeria. This study recommends that SMEs having diverse or different cultures should regularly be evaluated in relation to their ability to support SMEs survival instead of being compared without taking national culture into account. Also, this will improve communication channels or modes with staff, in general and should be undertaken in a more informal manner.

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