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**A Culture Comparison Based on
Entrepreneurial Attitudes**
A Comparison Between Finland and France

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International Business

ABSTRACT

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The objective of this thesis was to identify the main cultural differences between Finland and France based on the attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial attitudes of individuals are partly shaped by the culture of a society. Thus, by examining the attitudes of the members of a society, some cultural features can be learned about that society.

The research method used in this thesis was a qualitative research method by separate interviews with respondents from both countries. The interviews were conducted in a conversational manner with open-ended questions, giving the respondent an opportunity to give answers without any guidance. Afterwards, cultural analyses of both countries were done by using Geert Hofstede's and Fons Trompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner's theories about national cultures.

Even though Finland and France have very similar cultures, this thesis managed to find some substantial differences. Finland has a low power distance, indulgent, specific-orientated and neutral culture, as opposed to France which has a high power distance, restraint, diffuse-orientated and emotional culture.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Attitudes, Culture

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1. AIM OF THE THESIS

The objective of this thesis is to find the main differences in the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and France, and furthermore, the aim to indicate the main cultural differences based on those attitudes. The attitudes towards entrepreneurship are affected by various factors, not just by those directly related to the business world. Kendra Cherry, an educational consultant, stated (2018), that “attitudes are often the result of experience or upbringing, and they can have a powerful influence over behavior. While attitudes are enduring, they can also change”. This leads us to believe that the cultural differences in society do have an impact on how the people in that society perceive entrepreneurship.

The attitudes towards entrepreneurship describe a society’s perception of entrepreneurial activity, innovation, and growth. They give answers to questions like how society perceives entrepreneurs in general, and what are the difficulties of becoming/being an entrepreneur. In addition, entrepreneurial attitudes include the personal characteristics that a society believes an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed. Also, what other personal factors affect an individual’s will to become an entrepreneur is a question asked.

As mentioned above, attitudes are partly shaped by the upbringing and experiences of an individual, which can be interpreted that the values and beliefs of a society (culture) shape the way its members look at things. Morrison (2000) suggests that the degree of entrepreneurial behavior in a country is greatly influenced by the culture of a society and the characteristics of people living in these societies. Therefore, this thesis aims to identify the main cultural differences between Finland and France based on the entrepreneurial attitudes of Finnish and French people.

Following is the research questions this thesis attempts to find answers to:

1. What are the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and France?
2. What do the entrepreneurial attitudes tell about the cultures of Finland and France?
3. What are the main differences between the cultures of Finland and France?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Essential Concepts

Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has received many different definitions in the academic world. The word "entrepreneur" stems from the French word "entreprendre", which translation is "to undertake". According to the Oxford Dictionary, an entrepreneur is an individual who undertakes to supply a good or service and takes on risks associated with the investment (Oxford Dictionary 2009, 203). Howard Stevenson (1983), a former Harvard Business School professor defined it as follows: "Entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control."

Zimmerer and Scarborough (2005, 3) defined an entrepreneur as "one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying significant opportunities and assembling necessary resources to capitalize on them".

In addition, according to Bolton and Thompson (2000), an entrepreneur is a "person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognized value around perceived opportunities".

In summary, all these definitions suggest that entrepreneurship is about acting on an opportunity, trying to create something of value, and facing risks and uncertainty. Robert Hisrich (1990) emphasized the risk taking factor of an entrepreneur, which shows in his definition: "Entrepreneur is someone who demonstrates initiative and creative thinking, is able to organize social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account, and accepts risk and failure".

Culture

According to Richard Mead in 1994, there is no single definition for culture among scholars. However, there are many different definitions, which might indicate just

how broad and complex the concept of culture is. The term "culture" can be used in various contexts in different fields of studies. For example, "culture" may refer to societies, organizations, or ethnic groups, as well as, societal, national or gender groups.

Geert Hofstede (2011, 3) defined culture as follows: "Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". He also added that "culture in this sense, includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture" (Hofstede 1984, 21)

Fronz Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (2012, 8) tried to define culture in terms of layers: "Culture comes in layers, like an onion. To understand it, you have to unpeel it layer by layer". They divided culture into three layers: The outer layer, the middle layer, and the core. The outer layer includes explicit products such as language, foods and fashion. The middle layer includes norms and values. The core includes the people's assumptions about the core of human existence: survival is the most basic value.

In addition, the Oxford Dictionary defines culture as "the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society".

2.2 The Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

As was mentioned earlier, entrepreneurship is, according to many scholars, about acting on an opportunity, trying to create something of value, and facing risks and uncertainty. However, it is likely that some people are better at recognizing different entrepreneurial opportunities, and creating something from it that turns out to be of value. Furthermore, the ability to face risks and uncertainty is greatly impacted by the personality of the individual – some people are better at handling uncertainty than others.

The following section of the thesis illustrates what characteristics might be important for an entrepreneur in order to perform well. There are several studies conducted that have tried to identify the personal characteristics that increase an individual's probability of becoming and succeeding as an entrepreneur (Koh 1996;

Lumpkin and Dess 1996; Mueller & Thomas 2000; Utsch & Rauch 2000). However, the studies show somewhat different results, and no unanimous decision has been found among scholars about what characteristics do have an effect on entrepreneurial behavior.

This thesis attempts to find the most important characteristics that have the strongest influence on entrepreneurial behavior by trying to find the characteristics that are mentioned in most research studies in the field. Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 135-172) researched the link between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance. They identified five personality characteristics that entrepreneurs have in common: autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness. Lumpkin and Dess referred to these characteristics as "personal traits of an entrepreneur".

Mueller and Thomas (2000, 51-75) also identified risk-taking, and innovativeness as entrepreneurial traits, but contrary to Lumpkin and Dess, added high need for achievement, tolerance to ambiguity, and internal locus of control to the characteristics. They also suggested that individuals are motivated by their personality traits and socio-cultural history to engage in entrepreneurial behavior. Furthermore, Utsch and Rauch (2000) also identified the same characteristics as Mueller and Thomas to be influential in entrepreneurial behavior.

Koh (1996, 12-25), on the other hand, suggested the characteristics that entrepreneurs have in common are internal locus of control, need for achievement, the ability to take risks, innovativeness, self-confidence, and tolerance for ambiguity. Beugelsdijk and Noorderhaven (2005, 159-167) also identified locus of control, innovation and need for achievement as key characteristics of entrepreneurs.

As mentioned above, previous research on personal traits of entrepreneurs identify several characteristics that entrepreneurs could have in common. Therefore, this thesis uses the traits that most studies mention as key characteristics and which are likely to have the strongest effect on entrepreneurial behavior. These personal traits are innovativeness, the ability to face risks, locus of control, and need for achievement. This thesis uses these four personal characteristics as a framework for the

comparison of the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and France.

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is likely to be the most specific entrepreneurial characteristic of all the other traits. There are many definitions of innovativeness among scholars. Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 135-172) defined it as entrepreneur's willingness to depart from the existing technologies or practices. It is the level of creativity and originality of an entrepreneur. Furthermore, innovativeness is an individual's reaction to something new and different (Goldsmith & Foxall, 2003, 324). Even though there are many other definitions of innovativeness, it is agreed upon scholars that it represents something new (Gronhaug & Kaufmann 1988, 1).

Some studies emphasize the importance of innovation to successful entrepreneurship. They suggest that innovation is a significant factor in entrepreneurship, and without it, it is not likely to succeed (Reimers-Hild et al. 2005; Mueller, 2004). Even though the importance of innovation is clear in entrepreneurial behavior, it is extremely hard to measure. There are many suggestions on how to measure innovativeness in studies, but no uniform measurement system exists (Pekkala-Kerr et al. 2017, p.14).

A research done by Jones and Davis (2000) points out that innovation is affected by the national culture of a society. The study reveals the linkage between Geert Hofstede's power distance, individualism and uncertainty avoidance dimensions, and the level of innovativeness in a society. Innovation tends to be better in societies with low power distance index, high individualism, and low uncertainty avoidance societies (Strychalska-Rudzewicz 2016, 126-129).

Risk-taking ability

It is no wonder that many of the studies recognized that the risk-taking characteristic has a strong effect on entrepreneurial behavior because risk is constantly present in the business world. The discussion between entrepreneurs and their ability to face risks dates all the way back to 1921, when Knight proposed that entrepreneurs are different from other people by their ability to act on an opportunity despite risks

and uncertainty (Knight 1921).

Risk-taking ability refers to the entrepreneur's ability to engage in risky projects and preference to take part in uncertain acts, rather than relying on a more cautious approach. (Lumpkin & Dess 1996, 135-172). Hisrich also emphasized the risk-taking characteristic of entrepreneurs. He stated that entrepreneurs and nonentrepreneurs differ not in the way they accept risks, but rather in the way they perceive them. Entrepreneurs tend to have lower risk perception, which gives the illusion of high risk tolerance (Hisrich et al, 2007, 583).

Of course, having good risk-taking ability does not necessary mean that entrepreneurs jump into any business without caring about the risk or the outcome. Rather, they prefer to take moderate risks in situations where they have some level of control over the outcome and in realizing profit (Koh 1996, 14-16).

Locus of control

Locus of control, or to be more specific internal locus of control, was introduced by Rotter in 1954 in his theory of social learnings. It refers to an entrepreneur's belief that he has significant influence over an outcome through personal skills, ability and hard work (Rotter 1966). Some studies suggest that it is one of the key characteristics in entrepreneurial behavior (Brockhaus 1982; Perry, 1990), yet the concept lacks some uniform results in the empirical studies that were trying to analyze its effects on entrepreneurial behavior.

Locus of control can be internal or external in nature. Internal locus of control refers to individuals who believe that by their own decisions and actions they control the events or happenings that occur in their lives, while external locus of control refers to individuals who believe that life's events are the result of external factors, such as luck, fate or chance (Koh 1996, 14-16). An entrepreneur with internal locus of control can be defined as an individual who takes initiative to start and build a company by relying primary on himself rather than others in order to reach his goals (Mueller & Thomas 2000, 55-58).

Locus of control associates with the uncertain nature of entrepreneurship. Individuals with external locus of control tend to dislike self-employment, because of the high level of ambiguity it involves. This is contrary to individuals with internal locus of control, who tend to withstand uncertainty, because they feel like they have control over it (Hancıoğlu, Doğan & Yıldırım 2014, 910).

Need for achievement

The need for achievement refers to individuals' will to achieve significant accomplishments, master different skills, and reach for challenging goals. The concept of need for achievement was first introduced by Murray in 1938, and then later developed into a theory, called "acquired-needs theory", by McClelland in 1985 (Kerr et al. 2017, 17). McClelland's work has influenced many other researchers who have studied the achievement motive in entrepreneurs. He also reported many studies where he suggested a link between high need for achievement and entrepreneurial success (Johnson 1990, 39-40). The need for achievement is what makes an individual to push harder, which is why it is also related to good business performance.

Koh also used McClelland's theory in defining the concept of need for achievement. He stated that need for achievement is a strong psychological driving force behind human action, and it is a key characteristic in entrepreneurial behavior. He also, points out that studies and literature include a great deal of evidence indicating a significant association between need for achievement and entrepreneurship (Koh 1996, 14-16). Furthermore, Mueller and Thomas suggested that the trait of need for achievement varies across different cultures and countries (Mueller & Thomas 2000).

2.3 Other entrepreneurial factors

2.3.1 Age

According to Parker in 2009, age may have different effects on the opportunity and willingness on becoming a entrepreneur. He argues that age does have its upsides and downsides when a person is thinking about becoming an entrepreneur. Many studies have argued that the probability of becoming an entrepreneur increases

while a person gets older (Carr 1996; Blanchflower 2004). On the contrary, some studies argue that becoming older also decreases an individual's desire and probability of becoming self-employed (Johansson 2000).

One might expect older people to be likelier to become entrepreneurs than younger people due to the fact that they usually they have an opportunity to do so: older people have more of the human and physical capital requirements of entrepreneurship. They are more likely to have gained the physical capital (money) by working for a longer time or from receiving inheritance, which can be used as a starting capital for a company. The longer working experience also works in favor for the older people when measuring the human capital (experience) of an entrepreneur (Parker 2009, 113). Blanchflower (2004) also argued that as an individual becomes older it is easier to break into entrepreneurship. He stated that young people might be more willing to enter the field of entrepreneurship, but older people are more likely to flow into self-employment (Blanchflower 2004, 44).

Older people might choose to become self-employed also due to reasons like avoiding mandatory retirement provisions often found in paid employment, or by having created better social and business networks through working for a longer time they have recognized valuable opportunities in entrepreneurship. In addition, entrepreneurship gives the opportunity for a person to be his/her own master, which gives him/her a better control over the pace and amount of work, making it better suited for older people (Parker 2009, 113).

On the other hand, due to certain reasons becoming an entrepreneur might become less attractive once an individual reaches a certain age. Being an entrepreneur often entails longer working hours (Blanchflower 2004, 19), which the older individuals are often less capable of covering. Furthermore, older people are usually more risk-averse than the young, making them less willing to enter a risky occupation like entrepreneurship (Boden 1999). Conversely, younger individuals are more willing to try something riskier, like entrepreneurship, since these occupations provide the richest information about their personal job-matching opportunities. Also, younger people have more time to enjoy and benefit from the returns of the business, which

is why the risk taken might seem smaller than from older people's perspective (Lévesque and Minniti 2006; Parker 2009)

According to Praag and Ophem (1995) it is important to separate the desire of becoming an entrepreneur from the possibility of becoming one. While younger people might be more willing to become self-employed, they often do not have the possibility of doing so. On the contrary, while the desire of becoming self-employed among older individuals might decrease over time, the possibilities will increase with age. Furthermore, it is unlikely for an individual to become an entrepreneur if both or either one of these factors (desire and possibility) are missing (Praag & Ophem 1995).

In summary, these arguments suggest that individuals are increasingly likely to become entrepreneurs as they age, up to a certain point, after which the probability of becoming self-employed declines over time (Lévesque & Minniti 2006). Moreover, descriptive studies suggest that entrepreneurship is concentrated among individuals in mid-career, between the ages of 35 and 44 (Parker 2009, 114).

2.3.2 Experience

Experience captures the impact of training and skill acquisition more informatively than age does. Age and experience, even though they usually walk hand in hand, are not the same thing when talking about entrepreneurship. Greater experience might promote self-employment more or less for the same reasons as the age-related arguments, but experience also includes the learning of an individual. Greater experience increases an individual's knowledge about recognizing business opportunities, or how companies work in practice. It also includes training for skills needed in entrepreneurship, or in business life in general. These arguments suggest that greater experience has a positive effect on entrepreneurship (Parker 2009, 116).

Of course, greater experience does not necessary contribute towards entrepreneurship: it depends on what kind of experience it is. Experience can be general business experience, functional experience (marketing, product development or management), industry experience, start-up experience, or vicarious experience (obtained

through observing relatives, parents, friends or associates) (Shane 2003). It is important to recognize the differences between the types of experience. For example, previously obtained experience in entrepreneurship promotes self-employment more than experience in paid employment, or managing. Also, general business experience can promote entrepreneurship if a person starts a business related to his/her former occupation (Parker, 2009 116).

2.3.3 Education

Similarly, to the age factor on becoming an entrepreneur, the research concerning the impact of education on the self-employment has gotten mixed results. Some studies suggest that education increases an individual's probability of becoming an entrepreneur (Ristilä & Tervo 2002; Blanchflower, 2004), and some studies have found that education has a decreasing effect on an individual's probability of becoming self-employed (Blanchflower 2004; Parker 2009). Some studies even suggest that education does not have an impact on a person's probability of self-employment (Praag & Ophem 1995).

Higher level of education may indicate that an individual is better at recognizing different entrepreneurial opportunities, understanding the markets, as well as different entrepreneurial processes. Also, higher education indicates that a person is more capable of performing in entrepreneurial activity in general, which therefore increases the probability of an individual on becoming an entrepreneur (Parker 2009). Moreover, if one accepts that higher level of education increases a person's management skills, which consequently influences his/her choice of becoming self-employed, the impact of the education is apparent (Le 1999).

On the other hand, it is also possible that higher level of education increases an individual's probability of becoming employed in the paid employment sector, thus decreasing the individual's likelihood on ending up as an entrepreneur. In addition, high level of education increases the earning potential of a person in the paid employment sector, making it less likely for a person to become an entrepreneur (Parker 2009).

Nevertheless, according to the study conducted by the European Commission in 2010, a good education promotes the desire for self-employment (European Commission June 4, 2010, Memo/10/232).

2.4 Cultural Differences

This thesis uses two different frameworks to compare the differences in the cultures of Finland and France. The first is the Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, which is followed by the theory of the seven dimensions of national cultures by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hamden-Turner. Both of the theories are explained below, and later on used when analyzing the research results of the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and France.

2.4.1 Geert Hofstede's 6D-model

Geert Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist, who studied cross-cultural groups and organizations. He developed, with the help of other scientists, a well-known and pioneering theory about national cultures and dimensions. The theory is called the cultural dimension theory (6D-model) and it examines national cultures along six dimensions: Individualism, Power Distance, Masculinity, Uncertainty avoidance, Long-term orientation and Indulgence. The latter was added to the theory in 2010. (Web page of Geert Hofstede 2013)

Hofstede based his theory on the research done at IBM. As a former IBM employee, he was able to use the company's extensive database from which 116.000 questionnaires filled by IBM employees were used in 72 countries and in 20 languages between the years of 1967 and 1972. Geert Hofstede tried to find reasons why some concepts of motivation did not work the same way in different countries and how the people perceived and interpret their surrounding world (Hollensen 2011, 245).

The six dimensions of national cultures by Geert Hofstede are briefly explained below. They describe the six basic issues that a society needs to come to terms with in order to organize itself. (Web page of Geert Hofstede 2013). The six dimensions are:

- Individualism (versus collectivism)
 - "I" versus "We"
 - Individualism describes the extent to which people feel independent in a society, as opposed to collectivism where individuals feel like being a part of a larger whole.
 - In individualistic culture everyone is expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate family. In collective cultures people are born into larger social groups which protect them in exchange for loyalty. (Geert Hofstede 2011, 11)
- Power distance
 - The power distance index describes the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
 - All societies are unequal but some are more than others.
- Masculinity (versus femininity)
 - Masculinity dimension refers to the distribution of values between the genders.
 - Masculine cultures are referred as assertive and competitive while feminine cultures values modesty and caring.
 - Men's values among societies differ more than women's. Men can be very assertive and competitive in some societies, while on the other side, modest and caring in some. Women tend to be usually modest and caring, but in masculine cultures they can be somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men.
- Uncertainty avoidance
 - Low uncertainty avoidance versus high uncertainty avoidance.
 - Measures the degree which the members of a society feel either

comfortable or uncomfortable when facing uncertainty.

- The members of weak uncertainty avoidance cultures accept the uncertainty in their lives and take each day as it comes. Also, they dislike rules and are comfortable with different kind of persons and ideas.
- The members of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures look at uncertainty as a threat, that must be removed. In addition, they have a need for rules, clarity and structure in a society. (Geert Hofstede 2011, 10)
- Long-term orientation (versus short-term orientation)
 - This dimension illustrates a societies attitudes towards the past, the present and the future.
 - Long-term orientated societies adapt to changing circumstances and prepare for the future. They focus on saving and investing, and believe that a solution depends on the time and situation. Long-term orientation is associated with economical growth.
 - Short-term orientated societies believe in traditions, steadiness and stability. They put high importance on events that have happened in the past and concerned about the present. Short-term orientation is associated with slow or no economic growth. (Geert Hofstede 2011, 14-15)
- Indulgence (versus restraint)
 - Measures how happy people feel in a society.
 - In indulgent societies people feel like they can give in to their natural human desires which make them enjoy life and have fun.
 - In restraint societies the gratification of needs is controlled and regulated, which results in fewer happy people.

2.4.2 Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner theory

Frans Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner are business management consultants who have researched the differences between cultures for over two decades. In 2012, they published the third edition of their book, "Riding the Waves of Culture", where they identify the seven dimensions of culture. (Web page of Trompenaars Hampden-Turner Consulting). They argue that cultures are different from each other in very specific and predictable ways, due to the fact that they are shaped by the beliefs, values and preferences of the people. In addition, the way of doing business is greatly affected by the cultural differences. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 6)

The seven dimensions of culture, defined by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, describe the way humans solve problems they face in day-to-day life and in business. They divided the problems into three categories: "Those which arise from our relationships with other people, those which come from the passage of time, and those which relate to the environment." (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, 8). Five of the dimensions deal with the relationships with other people, one deals with the passage of time, and one with the environment.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's seven dimensions are briefly explained below, and later used when analyzing the cultural differences in attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and France. The dimensions are as follows:

- Universalism versus Particularism
 - How we define other people's behavior?
 - Universalist, or rule-based, behavior tends to be abstract. It also tends to imply equality among people, meaning that all persons should be treated the same. In addition, rule-based conduct has a tendency to avoid exceptions that might weaken the rules. Once you start making exceptions for illegal behavior the system will collapse.
 - Particularist behaviour leans on the exceptional nature of present

circumstances. It sees people not as "citizens" of the society, but as friends, family members, or persons of unique importance, which is why the people feel the urgency to sustain, protect and discount others, no matter what the rules say. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 42).

- Individualism versus communitarism
 - Individualist society encourages individual freedom and responsibility. They believe that representatives make decisions on the spot.
 - Communitarist society encourages individuals to work for the benefit of the group. Decisions are delegated forward in a organization. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 72).
- Specific versus diffuse
 - In specific-orientated cultures the manager separates the work relationship he has with his subordinate. This relationship is also insulated from other relationships and interactions.
 - In diffuse-orientated culture every relationship and level of personality is connected to each other. There is no real distinction between work and private life (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 101).
- Emotional versus neutral
 - In emotional cultures people express their feelings freely by laughing, smiling or gesturing.
 - In neutral cultures people are neutral and do not express their emotions. Instead, they remain controlled and moderated (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 87).
- Achievements versus ascription
 - In achievement-orientated cultures people are judged by what they have

done and achieved.

- In ascription-orientated cultures people are not judged by their achievements but their ascribed status: gender, age, education, family status etc. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 125).
- Past versus future (time-orientated dimension)
 - Past-orientated cultures see the future as the repetition of the past experiences, which is why they feel it is important to learn from the past.
 - Future-orientated cultures do not see the past as significant for the future (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 147-169).
- Internal versus external (environmental-orientated dimension)
 - Internal, or push-orientated persons view nature in a way that they feel like it is controllable. They also have a focus on themselves.
 - External, or pull-orientated persons think that humanity is controlled by nature. They have a focus on the environment (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012, 173-189).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this thesis the research data was collected by using a qualitative research method by semi-structured interviews. A qualitative research method means any kind of research that presents findings arrived at without using any means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 17). Furthermore, a qualitative research uses a "real world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest", as well as presents the findings from real world setting where the "phenomenon of interest unfold naturally" (Patton 2001, 39). Semi-structured interview is a verbal interaction where the interviewer asks a series of open-ended questions from the respondent in order to gather information about a topic of interest. It allows the respondent to focus on issues that s/he feels are important, thus, giving the interview a conversational manner (R. Longhursts 2003, 143).

As a researcher I decided to use a semi-structured qualitative research method for data collection, because it suits the research questions of the thesis. Some of the issues, especially the cultural aspects of this thesis are very hard to find answers to with only quantitative methods. By using a qualitative method, the respondents were able to answer naturally to the questions presented without being directed to any specific direction. They were also able to give broader answers, as well as, highlight the issues they thought were the most important. In addition, the semi-structured research method gave me a chance to use observation as complementary data collection method. By observation it was possible to recognize more clearly the strength of the respondents' attitudes and the lack of importance of certain topics.

The research data was collected via anonymous and individual interviews with the participants during the fall of 2019. Most of the interviews were private face-to-face meetings and a few were done over the phone. The interviewer guided the interviews with questions attached in the thesis, and presented more specific questions in case they were needed. The interviews were recorded for the purpose of saving time and keeping the conversations as natural as possible. The recordings were later on transcribed and analyzed thoroughly. The interviews with the French

interviewees were conducted in English and the interviews with the Finnish interviewees were conducted in Finnish.

The questions used in the data collection were meant to find out the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in the participant's country. They were categorized into three sub-categories: entrepreneurship in the country in general, characteristics of entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurial factors (age, experience, education). There was a total of 8 participants in the study: 4 from both countries. The participants were selected without any precise requirements. They represent both genders and different ages in both countries as well as different backgrounds. However, all the respondents felt like they possess proper knowledge and have formed an opinion concerning entrepreneurship in their country. The research results were analyzed using constant comparative methodology, in order to develop emerging themes and concepts.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Perceptions About Entrepreneurship in General

The first part of the interview was planned to identify the general attitudes towards entrepreneurship in the respondent's home country. The respondents were asked how they perceive entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs on a societal level, and what they think about the fears, regulations, and competition related to entrepreneurship in their own country. They were also asked to predict what the future of entrepreneurship in their country might include.

The Finnish respondents had relatively positive feelings concerning entrepreneurship in Finland. On a personal level, all of them considered self-employment as a good career option, and those who already had experiences about it, felt like they had made the right choice when becoming entrepreneurs. They also believed that the Finnish government is encouraging entrepreneurship and it benefits the whole society by creating jobs and services for other people. However, three of them added that not every Finn feels the same way. Due to reasons like lack of understanding, jealousy or just not being suited for entrepreneurship, some people might have negative feelings concerning entrepreneurship.

The French, on the other hand, had mixed feelings concerning entrepreneurship in France. Even though all of them agreed that entrepreneurship increases employment and benefits the whole society as well as offers new possibilities, two of them believed that self-employment is not a good career option. They mentioned that because the nature of entrepreneurship is so uncertain and risky, it prevents most people from pursuing self-employment. In addition, they feel like succeeding as an entrepreneur is too hard in France, which is why the overall perception is that the government doesn't support entrepreneurship enough.

When the respondents were asked about the respect or admiration towards entrepreneurs, all of the Finns believed that entrepreneurs are well respected in Finland. They feel that Finnish people see entrepreneurs as people who work hard for their own well-being, and at the same time, help the society as a whole. However, even

though entrepreneurs are respected in Finland, three of the respondents believe that succeeding and making a lot of money is "forbidden". Other people will become jealous of entrepreneurs who are successful.

"People look positively of entrepreneurs, and respect them. But on the other hand, it also involves the nature of Finnish thinking, which means that people become jealous. Other people become jealous when they see how well you are doing and that you don't have financial troubles." -Finnish respondent A

The French, much like previously, had divided opinions concerning respect towards entrepreneurs. Two of them considered entrepreneurs equally respected as paid-employment sector workers, and saw no differences between the two. The other two French respondents believed that especially small entrepreneurs are respected for their hard work and courage. Similarly to the Finns, they also mentioned that becoming successful and making a better living than most people will make other people jealous, and thus, decrease the level of respect. The French people in general might even believe that the big companies must have done something wrong and illegal to become so successful. Hereby, the French differentiate the small companies from the big ones when it comes to respect.

When the respondents were asked to name the biggest fears concerning entrepreneurship in their country, almost all of them mentioned that bankruptcy and other financial fears are by far the greatest. Especially, the consequences of a bankruptcy are what people are scared of the most: losing their savings and house, not being able to support their family, and being forced to start from scratch again. Both, the Finns and the French, believed that risks involved in entrepreneurship are usually financial, which is why they raise the most concern. In addition, two of the Finns mentioned the fear of losing one's health by working too much, and two of the French respondents believed that the fear of failure is also apparent in entrepreneurship.

Next, the respondents were asked to share their opinions about regulations involved in entrepreneurship in their country. Three of the French respondents felt that the number of rules and fees concerning entrepreneurship in France is excessive. They

strongly believed that the regulations, especially the taxes, are overwhelming, which makes it hard to succeed as an entrepreneur in France. They also felt that the regulations are holding the entrepreneurs back to a certain level. Thus, the government should decrease the amount of regulations, especially for the smaller companies, because they are in a weaker position than the bigger ones. The fourth French respondent also agreed that there are a lot of taxes and fees that regulate entrepreneurship, but not more than they should.

"A lot of taxes and fees for the employees that you need to hire: pensions, insurances, and other fees that you have to pay for your employees. Also, there is a lot of different taxes and fees that you have to pay just by running the business. There are way too many regulations. It is hard for an entrepreneur. It is hard to fire employees. Running a business is difficult in France." -French respondent B

Similarly to the French, all of the Finnish respondents agreed that there are a lot of different regulations concerning entrepreneurship in Finland. But, unlike the French, the Finns did not feel that entrepreneurs are being held back by the regulations, but they can operate relatively freely. Furthermore, the Finns believed that even though entrepreneurship includes a lot of taxes and fees, the fact that they are the same for everyone makes them fair and compliable. They also recognized that the penalties and fines for violating the rules are considerable, which makes breaking them even less desirable.

When the respondents were then asked to describe the competition involved in entrepreneurship in their country, three of the French recognized that there is a lot of competition in their country. They believed that is due to the fact that there are so many people in France, that the number of similar type of businesses is extensive. However, all of the French respondents felt that the competition is fair and the general atmosphere between the companies is good. Every business is responsible for its own survival, but not on others' expense. Three of the Finns said that the amount of competition depends on the domain of the business, but in general Finnish entrepreneurs do not really see each other as competitors but rather as businesses which can work with and benefit from each other.

Lastly, the respondents were asked how they see the future of entrepreneurship in their country. Three of the French respondents were uncertain about what is going to happen in the future. They did not have any positive nor negative expectations. However, two of them were sure that there is going to be changes made by the government, but they were not sure how they are going to affect entrepreneurs. The Finns, on the other hand, had quite negative expectations, because of the parliament election that just took place in Finland. They are expecting that the government will raise taxes and fees regarding entrepreneurship. However, in overall they were not overly worried about the state of Finnish entrepreneurship.

4.2 Characteristics of Entrepreneurs

The second section of the interview was to collect information about the characteristics of entrepreneurs. It aimed to find out the respondents' opinions concerning the personal characteristics that are important when engaging in entrepreneurial behavior and succeeding in it. When the respondents were asked whether or not a person needs certain kinds of personality traits in order to become an entrepreneur or succeeding as one, the ruling was almost unanimous. All of the French and three of the Finns thought that entrepreneurship is not something everyone can do, and it requires certain characteristics. Only one Finnish person believed that every skill or characteristic concerning entrepreneurship can be either learned or developed over time.

When the respondents were asked to name the most important personal characteristics that a person needs in order to become an entrepreneur and succeeding as one, both countries agreed that the *ability to handle risks* is one of them. All of the Finns and three of the French respondents believed that the ability to face risks and handle uncertainty is one of the most important characteristics that entrepreneurs have in common. They did not perceive the risk-taking ability as a person's willingness to take risks, rather than his ability to tolerate them. Entrepreneurship involves a lot of uncertainty and stress due to the risks involved, which is why those self-employed poses a greater tolerance for risks than paid-employment sector workers in general.

"An entrepreneur needs the ability to tolerate risks and pressure. An entrepreneur can wake up in the middle of the night thinking about the problems he might face the next day, which is not the case with normal employees, because they probably don't care as much." - Finnish respondent A

Another characteristic that most of the respondents from both countries believed that is vital in entrepreneurial behavior is the *need for achievement*. Three of the French respondents believed that a chance for success is one of the biggest motivators behind people's decision on becoming an entrepreneur. They also emphasized that without the will and motivation to achieve, it is extremely unlikely for a person to succeed as an entrepreneur.

Similarly to the French, all Finnish respondents named the will for achievement as one of the most important characteristics of entrepreneurs. However, only one of them believed that the possibility for success is an original motive behind the decision to become self-employed. The Finns suggested that the need for achievement stems from the fact that a person's own assets are on the line, and it is the driving force that pushes an entrepreneur towards his goals.

Innovativeness was a characteristic that divided opinions between the respondents in both countries. Two Finnish respondents mentioned innovativeness as a key characteristic of entrepreneurship. They saw innovativeness as a tool that makes an entrepreneur able to do things differently from anyone else, and thus, helps him/her to be recognized from others. In addition, they recognized that a person with great innovative skills might be lacking in some other important entrepreneurial skill, because the innovation is the reason behind the success. However, two Finns believed that a person can become an entrepreneur even without great innovative skills.

Three of the French respondents also saw innovation as an important characteristic to an entrepreneur. They believed that innovation is important in every aspect of life, and being able to figure out a way to make your business better gives a competitive advantage against other businesses. One of them, however, felt that innovation is not necessary in successful entrepreneurship, but it helps. One French re-

spondent believed that an entrepreneur can become successful without any innovative skills.

Based on the interviews, both countries seemed to think alike about *internal locus of control*, with some small differences. All of the French respondents emphasized the importance of hard work. They believed that the basis of entrepreneurship is the ability to work hard. Entrepreneurs are constantly working and it requires sacrifices from the entrepreneur as well as from his/her family. In addition, when asked about the effects of luck, chance or faith to successful entrepreneurship, all the French respondents believed that when it comes to the business world, they are not decisive factors. They considered "luck" as a by-product of doing things the right way and good planning.

"Not especially luck. Luck doesn't have anything to do with success. You have to be in the right place at the right time, but it is not about luck, it's about you knowing where and when to be." - French respondent D

All of the Finnish respondents agreed that luck, chance or faith do not have an input in successful entrepreneurship. Similarly to the French, they believed that something that might seem like luck to other people, is really a reaction to the entrepreneur's ability to recognize opportunities and take advantage of them. The Finns also believed that the ability to work hard is essential to a successful entrepreneur, but contrary to the French, they emphasized that it is not nearly enough. A successful entrepreneur has knowledge and skills to support the ability to work hard, otherwise the hard work goes to waste.

Other important characteristics that the respondents believed are important to successful entrepreneurship are the ability to work with other people, leadership and responsibility. In Finland three of the respondents mentioned the ability to work with other people as a key characteristic of entrepreneurs. They suggested that an entrepreneur needs to be able to take other people's (employees, partners etc.) opinions into account and understand that s/he might not know everything. Hence, successful entrepreneurship requires the ability to work in a team. They also added that rarely one person has all the right characteristics for successful entrepreneurship,

which is why it is helpful if a business has a good mix of personalities that complete each other. Contrary to the Finns, only one of the French respondents listed the ability to work with other people as a key characteristic of entrepreneurship.

"I think that its good if the company has a good mix of personalities. It's not often that one person has everything required. Nowadays, it's kind of a fashion to use a mentor, a business veteran (consultant) that helps you with the business. Then after a while you might learn something more in the process." -Finnish respondent D

Furthermore, two of the French and all of the Finnish respondents mentioned leadership abilities when discussing the characteristics of entrepreneurs. Even though both countries consider leadership as an important characteristic, they described it in different ways. The French described a good leader as a person who has excellent organizing and social skills as well as the ability to express feelings. One of the French respondents thought that only "leaders" can have the ability to succeed as entrepreneurs, and "followers" should work in the paid-employment sector.

The Finns, on the other hand, described leadership as more hierarchical way. They believed that a leader, in addition to organizing skills, has the ability to show authority and firmness as well as understand that being friends with every employee is sometimes a luxury one cannot afford. However, in regard to what was mentioned before, leaders also possess the ability to work with other people. They are able to consider other people's opinions, but in the end, they are the ones bearing the responsibility of the final decision.

Another important characteristic that the respondents considered to be important in entrepreneurial behavior in both countries was responsibility. Two of the French and three of the Finnish respondents mentioned that an entrepreneur needs to be responsible for his/her own actions as well as take care of the responsibilities that entrepreneurship includes. As mentioned before, entrepreneurship involves a lot of different kind of rules and fees in both countries, which is why an entrepreneur needs to be aware of the obligations and financial requirements the business has to deal with. In addition, an entrepreneur has to handle those obligations even if one

might not feel like it and it might seem hard at the moment. According to the respondents, neglecting responsibilities and bad financial management can "sink the ship" quickly.

In summary, both nationalities believed that engaging and succeeding in entrepreneurship requires certain characteristics. They agreed that the ability to face risks and handle uncertainty is one of the most important characteristics entrepreneurs have in common. Both countries also considered the will to achieve as an important characteristic. However, the possibility for success motivates the French to become self-employed more than it does the Finns. Innovativeness split opinions in both countries. Even though some of the French considered innovativeness as not so important characteristic in entrepreneurship, they still viewed innovativeness as a more important characteristic than the Finns. This might stem from the fact that there is more competition (according to the interviews) in France than in Finland.

Furthermore, both nationalities gave great importance to internal locus of control. They believed that luck, chance or faith are not determined factors in the business world, and the actions of an entrepreneur are what matter. In addition, both nationalities believed that an entrepreneur needs to be able to work hard. The French considered the ability to work hard the basis of entrepreneurship, which can carry the entrepreneur a long way. The Finns, however, believed that hard work alone isn't nearly enough – it must be supported by proper skills and knowledge.

Both nationalities agreed that ability to work with other people is an important characteristic to entrepreneurs. Especially the Finns believed that succeeding in entrepreneurship requires a certain amount of team work and ability to share responsibilities. Also, the respondents believed that in order to succeed in entrepreneurial activity, a person needs leadership abilities. The French considered a leader as a person who has good organizational and social skills as well as an ability to express feelings. The Finns, however, believed that a leader needs to be able to show authority and firmness, if needed, when leading employees. In addition, both nationalities agreed that entrepreneurship requires responsibility. An entrepreneur has to be responsible for his actions and take care of the obligations that running a business entails.

4.3 Other Entrepreneurial Factors

The third section of the interview collected information about the other factors that might affect entrepreneurial behavior: age, experience and education. When the respondents were asked about the effects of a person's age on entrepreneurial behavior, all of them in both countries agreed that a person's age is not a determined factor when deciding to become or succeeding as an entrepreneur. However, it does affect the motivation and business methods of an individual. Both nationalities agreed that a person needs a sufficient amount of knowledge and ability to work hard. This suggests that a person can be too young if s/he has not had the time to gather enough knowledge or too old if s/he can not cover the work load.

In Finland, three of the respondents felt like age does affect the motivation of becoming an entrepreneur, as well as, the ways one does business. Also, half of the Finnish respondents thought that hard work suits younger people better, which is why it is better to start a business while still relatively young. Also, Finns recognized that young people might need a greater support group behind them who can be used as mentors or other kind of help. The French highlighted the importance of experience over age. Three of the French respondents thought that a person can have sufficient experience needed for successful entrepreneurship between the ages of 20 to 25 the earliest.

When the participants were asked about the effects of education to entrepreneurial behavior, the French in general agreed that education is not an important factor. They also believed that education might have a positive effect on a person's willingness to become an entrepreneur. Half of the French respondents thought that the French education system doesn't support entrepreneurship or other kind of "real life" work well enough. They suggested that the French education system lacks the concept of practical training during studies.

The Finnish respondents, in general, felt like education is more important to entrepreneurial behavior than the French. Three of the respondents said that, even though a person does not need to be highly educated, some sort of education that supports

entrepreneurship in a particular field is required. They believed that a person without any kind of education or expertise cannot become a successful entrepreneur.

When asked about the effects of work experience to entrepreneurial behavior the respondents in both countries emphasized its importance. In general, the respondents believed that experience is needed in order to increase a person's knowledge and know-how about business life. However, three of the French respondents believed that previous work or entrepreneurial experience does have its upsides and downsides. They suggested that previous experience can have a positive or negative effect on entrepreneurial behavior depending on the type of experience. All of the Finnish respondents thought that previous work experience is required in successful entrepreneurship. They said that previous experience teaches a person different ways of doing business, gives tools to leading other people, and increases a person's knowledge, which are all requirements of successful entrepreneurship.

In summary, the main difference between France and Finland is the appreciation towards education. The Finns give greater importance to education than the French. The Finns think that education and experience complement each other and give a solid foundation to successful entrepreneurship. The French clearly emphasized the importance of experience over education. They feel like education doesn't support entrepreneurship well enough, which is why previous work experience is more important. Both nationalities agree that age does not have a significant effect on entrepreneurial behavior, as long as a person possesses the required amount of knowledge and ability to work hard.

5. RESULTS ANALYSIS

Cultural differences

This chapter discusses what the research results tell about the cultures in Finland and France. The culture analysis is done by comparing the research results with the previously mentioned theories about national cultures, Geert Hofstede's 6D model and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's seven dimensions theory. As a result of the analysis, it should be possible to identify the main differences between the cultures of Finland and France.

5.1 Cultural Analysis Using Geert Hofstede's 6D-model

Individualism (versus collectivism) ("I" vs "We")

According to the interviews both countries are somewhat individualistic, but the French culture showed more individualistic features than Finnish. The French saw the competition in entrepreneurship as fair and agreed that everyone has their responsibility towards society. However, they also felt that every entrepreneur is primarily responsible for his/her own well-being and assisting others is relatively rare. Also, the majority of the French respondents thought that innovation is important in entrepreneurship, as it is in other aspects of life, which is a sign of an individualistic culture.

The Finnish culture is more individualistic than collective, but it has some collective features as well. Finnish entrepreneurs respect the rules of the society, but don't feel like being bound by them. Instead, they feel relatively free and independent from the society. They also value innovation in entrepreneurial activity. However, Finnish entrepreneurs see each other more as cooperation possibilities, who can benefit from each other than fierce competitors. Also, they recognize the importance of team work within an organization, as well as every entrepreneur's responsibility towards the society.

Power distance

The power distance index measures the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Based on the interviews, Finnish culture is low on power distance, and the French culture fairly high. Some of the French felt like the smaller entrepreneurs are respected for their courage and hard work, but the bigger organizations were seen as dubious, which earned them less respect. In addition, some of the French believed that the government should decrease the amount of regulations to smaller companies, because they are in a weaker position than the large ones. This implies that the smaller individuals in France see that power is distributed unequally and the larger operators have more power in society.

The answers of the Finnish respondents showed signs of a low power distance index in the Finnish culture. They felt that the regulations towards entrepreneurship are fair and compliant, because they are the same for everyone. This implies equality between the companies regardless of their size. Also, the Finns didn't differentiate the smaller entrepreneurs from the larger ones when asked about respect towards entrepreneurs. In addition, the Finns emphasized that a leader should be able to share responsibilities and work together with other people within an organization, which is also a sign of equality and low power distance culture.

Masculinity (versus femininity)

The interviews showed small differences on the level of masculinity in the cultures of Finland and France. In general, both cultures could be defined as somewhat feminine, as the majority of the respondents from both countries believed that every entrepreneur has a responsibility towards the society and succeeding on the expense of others is wrong. This suggests that caring for other people's well-being and taking care of the members of the society is important in both cultures. Also, some respondents mentioned that especially the small entrepreneurs are respected for their hard work and effort, which implies that modesty is also appreciated in both cultures.

However, based on the interviews the French culture is slightly more masculine than the Finnish culture. Three of the French respondents agreed that there is a lot of competition between entrepreneurs in France, as opposed to Finnish respondents who saw very little competition between Finnish entrepreneurs. This implies that the French culture is more competitive, and thus, more masculine than the Finnish culture. All in all, the level of masculinity in the Finnish culture is very low, and in the French a little higher, yet more feminine than masculine.

Uncertainty avoidance

According to the interviews, both cultures show signs of low uncertainty avoidance. However, Finnish culture is slightly higher in uncertainty avoidance than the French culture. All of the respondents from both countries emphasized the importance of risk tolerance and internal locus of control when discussing the characteristics of entrepreneurs. This suggests that people in both cultures recognize the uncertainty in their lives, but are not intimidated by it, because they believe that their own actions are what determine the outcome in uncertain situations. As locus of control is associated with the uncertain nature of entrepreneurship, internal locus of control suggests low uncertainty avoidance in a society.

Furthermore, the majority of the French respondents clearly disliked the regulations concerning entrepreneurship and felt that there are too many of them, which implies to low uncertainty avoidance. This was contrary to the Finns, who saw the regulations and laws as a relatively positive things, that bring structure and control to the society, which is an indication of strong uncertainty avoidance. The Finns also valued innovativeness less than the French in entrepreneurial activity. This suggests that Finland has a slightly stronger uncertainty avoidance than France.

Long-term orientation (versus short-term orientation)

The dimension of time orientation was hard to interpret from the interviews, since the interviews lacked some specifications on the matter. With that said, both Finland and France seemed to be long term-orientated cultures. Even though the Finnish

and French respondents had different kind of expectations concerning entrepreneurship in their country in the future, all of the respondents were clearly thinking forward in time. None of the respondents mentioned past as a significant factor to the future, nor were they notably concerned about the present. This suggest that both countries are long-term orientated.

Indulgence (versus restraint)

According to the interviews Finland has a more indulgent culture than France. First of all, Finnish respondents were more satisfied with the choices they have made over the years, and had more positive feelings towards entrepreneurship from a personal perspective. In addition, even though they admitted that there are plenty of regulations towards entrepreneurship in Finland, they did not feel like being held back by them. Also, they felt like they are free of pursuing happiness and success in their own terms. These factors imply that the Finnish culture is highly indulgent.

The French culture, however, seemed to be more restrained. The majority of the French respondents felt like the rules and regulations towards entrepreneurship control them too much, and they are unable to focus completely on their own gratification of needs. Also, due to several reasons, they were unhappier with the personal experiences in entrepreneurial activity, which made them more suspicious towards entrepreneurship. This implies that French culture is more restrained than the Finnish culture.

5.2 Cultural Analysis using Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner theory

Universalism vs Particularism

Based on the interviews the Finnish culture seems to be more universalist, or in other words rule-based, than the French. Finnish people see the rules concerning entrepreneurship as fair and compliable, because they are the same for everyone. This suggest that people are equal and treated the same regardless of their status or other external factors. In addition, Finnish people recognize that the punishments for breaking the rules are considerable, which indicates that exceptions to the rules are not easily permitted.

The French culture could also be described as universalist, but not as much as the Finnish, because it has some particularist tendencies. The French respect the rules set by the government, but also feel that they should not be the same for everyone. They consider the smaller entrepreneurs to be in a weaker position than the big ones, and in order to make it more fair, the amount of societal responsibility of entrepreneurs should be based on their present economic situation. Therefore, French people see some inequality in their society.

Individualism versus communitarism

This dimension is the same or extremely similar to Hofstede's individualism dimension. Due to the similarity, the same analysis that was previously done with Hofstede's individualism dimension, applies here. Finnish culture is individualistic, but not as much as the French. Finnish entrepreneurs feel independent and free from the society, but also recognize the responsibility they have for the society. Finnish entrepreneurs value team work within an organization, but still emphasize the entrepreneur's own responsibility on decision making.

French culture is more individualistic than the Finnish culture. French people agree that everyone has a responsibility towards the society, but contrary to the Finns, believe that entrepreneurs are primary responsible for their own well-being. They also dislike the regulations set by the government and would prefer more freedom to do as they please as entrepreneurs.

Specific versus diffuse

The responses of Finnish respondents showed signs of a specific-orientated culture. When talked about leadership, the Finns described it in a very hierarchical way. They believed that a good leader poses the ability to show authority, as well as understand that being friends with every employee is sometimes impossible. This suggests that for the benefit of a company in Finland, the work relationship between a manager and an employee should remain professional, even if they are friends outside the work place.

The French, on the other hand, believed that a leader has excellent organizing and

social skills, as well as the ability to express feelings. A manager should be able to establish a relationship with an employee and not be afraid of showing true passion or enthusiasm. This suggests, that in the French culture there is no real distinction between work and private life, which is a sign of a diffuse-orientated culture.

Emotional versus neutral

According to the interviews the French culture is more emotional than the Finnish culture. As mentioned above the French respondents believed that a leader poses the ability to be social and express feelings while managing employees, which is a sign of a emotional culture. Finns, on the contrary, mentioned that the relationship between an employee and a manager should remain professional at a work place. This suggests, that the Finnish culture is more neutral, and people do not express their emotions. Instead, they act in a more controlled and moderate way.

Achievements versus ascription

The interviews suggested that both Finland and France are more achievement-based cultures than ascription-based. All of the respondents did not see age as a determinant factor when engaging in entrepreneurial activity or succeeding in it. They also emphasized the importance of experience, because it increases an individual's knowledge and know-how about business life. These attitudes imply that both countries value the achievements of individuals more than their ascribed status.

However, the French culture is more achievement based than Finnish culture, due to their lack of appreciation towards education. The French clearly emphasized the importance of experience over education, because they felt that the education system in France does not support employment well enough. The Finns, on the other hand, believed that education is as important as experience, and that together they form a solid foundation for successful entrepreneurship. The appreciation towards education in Finland suggest that the Finnish culture is more ascription-based than the French culture.

Past versus Future (time-orientated dimension)

As Hofstede's dimension about long-term versus short-term orientation is the same as this dimension, the same analysis that was done above on Finland's and France's time-orientation applies here. Both countries have future orientated cultures, because none of the respondents mentioned past events when trying to interpret the future of entrepreneurship in their country. Thus, both cultures give little significance to past events when trying to predict the future.

Internal versus external (environmental-orientated dimension)

Since the interviews with the respondents lacked information about the environment's effects on entrepreneurial behavior, no culture analysis can be done concerning this dimension.

6. RELIABILITY & VALIDITY

In a conventional positivist research, such as in quantitative research, reliability is defined as the "replicability or repeatability of results and observations". Meaning that the research results should be able to be reproduced under a similar methodology (Golafshani 2003, 598). Validity determines whether the research results truly measure what they were intended to measure and how truthful the research results are (Joppe 2000, 1). However, the analysis of the results of a qualitative research differs from the conventional positivist method, because it is more natural and interpretative by nature. Thus, making the conventional definitions of reliability and validity unsuitable for testing its results. In addition, in terms of validity, some researchers claim that there is no such thing as truth in qualitative research, and that everything is the personal opinion of the researcher at the end (Shank 2006, 111).

As a result, instead of reliability and validity, researchers have started using terms like quality, rigour and trustworthiness, when measuring the reliability and validity of a qualitative research (Golafshani 2003, 602). Hence, I will use quality, rigour and trustworthiness as measurements for the reliability and validity of the research process of this thesis.

I carefully planned and prepared the interview questions, using the first interview as a pilot interview to test the quality of the questions. The questions were also based on the reliable theories about characteristics of entrepreneurs and national cultures used in this thesis. The interviews were conducted separately with the respondents in a natural setting in a conversational manner, giving the respondents an opportunity to answer questions without any guidance. Complementary questions were also asked if they were needed, in order to fill the research purpose. The interviews were also transcribed afterwards, in order to ease the analyzing of the answers, and to conserve the truthfulness of the interviews.

The subject of this thesis complicates the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the research results. According to Hofstede, any cultural researcher should keep in mind, that individuals of a society do not necessarily relate to the average culture

of that society (Website of Geert Hofstede 2013), meaning that an individual's opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the whole society. However, in my opinion, the sample size (4 respondents per country) is sufficient for this type of qualitative research, especially when the answers of the respondents showed similarities inside both countries and differences between the two.

One limitation of the thesis was the language challenge with the French when selecting and conducting the interviews in France. It turned out to be a challenge to find French people who spoke good enough English to answer questions on a rather complicated topic. Also, I believe that if I had been able to conduct the interviews in French I could have gotten broader answers from some of the French respondents. The interviews with the Finnish respondents were conducted in Finnish, which showed in the length of the answers. However, some of the answers of Finnish respondents did get off topic while answering questions. Another limitation that affected the interviews concerned the question about the future in Finland. The Finnish parliament elections had just taken place, and the reactions of the Finnish respondents to the results were rather negative, because of their assumptions that it would affect Finnish entrepreneurship negatively. However, it turned out that the parliament elections did not have any effect on Finnish entrepreneurship. Thus, the predictions of the Finnish people concerning the future of entrepreneurship could be different now than what they were during the interviews.

All in all, the theories used in this thesis as well as the data collected from the interviews support the research results and conclusions. The research questions of this thesis are also answered, which proves that the objective of the thesis is fulfilled. Therefore, it can be stated that this thesis is fairly high in validity and reliability, keeping in mind the research topic.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this thesis was to identify the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and France, and then conduct a comparative culture analysis of both countries based on those attitudes. The research about attitudes towards entrepreneurship included opinions concerning entrepreneurship in the country in general, characteristics of entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurial factors (age, experience and education).

The biggest differences this study managed to identify in the entrepreneurial attitudes of Finland and France concerned the regulations towards entrepreneurship, the effect of education on entrepreneurial behavior and innovativeness as an entrepreneurial characteristic. Even though both countries agreed that there are many regulations in the entrepreneurial field in their country, the Finns saw them as fair and compliant. The French, on the other hand, felt like the rules are excessive and restricting, especially for small entrepreneurs. Secondly, the Finns valued the importance of education in successful entrepreneurship more than the French, who believed that previous work experience gives an entrepreneur adequate tools for successful entrepreneurship. Both nationalities seemed to think fairly alike about the important characteristics of entrepreneurs, excluding the fact that the French valued innovativeness more than the Finns.

Finland and France are both industrialized European countries, which might explain the great amount of similarities they have in their cultures. However, by using the existing theories about national cultures by Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner, this study has managed to identify some substantial differences between the two cultures. The research managed to find several other smaller differences between the cultures of Finland and France, but in overall the two cultures are very similar. However, the practical benefits of the research findings are yet to be discovered.

As mentioned above, the culture analysis of Finland and France in this thesis is based on the attitudes towards entrepreneurship in both countries. According to Hofstede's theory, the biggest differences between the cultures of Finland and

France are in power distance and indulgence dimensions. To be more specific, the French culture is high in power distance, which means that they see that power is distributed unequally in their society, and bigger companies have more power compared to small ones. The Finnish culture is low in power distance, which on the other hand, means that Finns believe that everyone is equal in their society, regardless of their power status.

Furthermore, the Finnish culture showed signs of a very indulgent society compared to the French, which was more restraint, meaning that the Finnish people feel happy and are free to pursue happiness on their own terms, as opposed to the French, who feel like society is holding them back and are unable to fill their gratification of needs completely.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's theory showed notable differences in specific versus diffuse, and emotional versus neutral dimensions. Finland is a specific orientated society, where the work relationship between a manager and an employee remains professional for the benefit of the company. France is a diffuse orientated society, where the manager should be able to establish a relationship with the employee without any real distinction between work and private life. In addition, Finland has a neutral culture, where people do not express their feelings freely to each other. On the contrary, the French culture is emotional, where people can and are even expected to show emotions.

8. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The author proposes that the further research could be continued about this topic with focus on the level of entrepreneurship in Finland and France. The level of entrepreneurship should be assessed in order to clarify, what is good and bad in the entrepreneurial activity of Finland and France. Then, the effects of the culture to the level of entrepreneurship could be more easily identified. This way it could be researched what cultural dimensions have a positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior in a country, and in contrary, what dimensions effect negatively on entrepreneurship.

In addition, further research could include the study of how a culture could be altered in favor for better entrepreneurial performance. Or can a culture be altered at all. Furthermore, human attitudes can change over a period of time. So, further research could try to find out what kind of attitudes are best for entrepreneurship in a country, and how attitudes of a society could be altered.

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Appendix 1.

Thesis Research Questionnaire

Personal information

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Nationality:

Education:

Profession:

(In general: people's perception on entrepreneurship in the country)

What is the position of entrepreneurship on your country right now?

Is entrepreneurship a good career option?

Are entrepreneurs in general more recognized/respected than normal employees in your country?

What is your opinion on the regulations concerning entrepreneurship in your country?

Are entrepreneurs able to do business somewhat freely or are the regulations holding them back?

Do you feel like entrepreneurship is really competitive in your country or does entrepreneurs work more or less together/for the common good/try to help each other out?

Which one is more accurate:

1. Entrepreneurship creates jobs in a society and it benefits all?

2. Entrepreneurs exploit from others and only care about their own profit?

What is the future of entrepreneurship like in my country? Is it getting better or worse for entrepreneurs?

(Characteristics of an entrepreneur)

What motivates a person to become an entrepreneur?

What does it take to become a successful entrepreneur?

What are the risks and fears towards becoming an entrepreneur?

Why do/would/wouldn't you want to be an entrepreneur?

Can anyone become an entrepreneur?

What kind of personal characteristics could one need in order to become/succeed as an entrepreneur?

Does luck, faith, chance have anything to do with the success?

(Other factors)

What is a good age to start a business?

Can someone be too young/too old to become an entrepreneur? Why?

How does education effect on becoming an entrepreneur?

Does a person need a high education to become an entrepreneur?

How does working experience effect on becoming an entrepreneur?