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Aims and Scope:

Changing Societies & Personalities is an international, peer-reviewed quarterly journal, published in English by the Ural Federal University. *CS&P* examines how rapid societal-level changes are reshaping individual-level beliefs, motivations and values – and how these individual-level changes in turn are reshaping societies. The interplay of personality traits and sociocultural factors in defining motivation, deliberation, action and reflection of individuals requires a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge. Since an interdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the causes and consequences of the contemporary world's changing socio-political institutions, moral values, and religious beliefs, the journal welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions from a wide range of perspectives in the context of value pluralism and social heterogeneity of (post)modern society.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to

- value implications of interactions between socio-political transformations and personal self-identity;
- changes in value orientations, materialist and post-materialist values;
- moral reasoning and behavior;
- variability and continuity in the election of styles of moral regime and/or religious identity;
- the moral bases of political preferences and their elimination;
- social exclusion and inclusion;
- post-secular religious individualism;
- tolerance and merely “tolerating”: their meanings, varieties and fundamental bases;
- ideologies of gender and age as variables in political, moral, religious and social change;
- educational strategies as training for specific social competences;
- social and existential security.

The journal publishes original research articles, forum discussions, review articles and book reviews.

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EDITORIAL

Plurality of Cases – Plurality of Values

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The mission of the *Changing Societies & Personalities* journal is quite ambitious: the journal “examines how rapid societal-level changes are reshaping individual-level beliefs, motivations and values – and how these individual-level changes in turn are reshaping societies”. Fulfilling such a mission involves examining different cases happening to individuals in various countries, societies and communities. On the one hand, it is unlikely that we will ever face a lack of such cases; on the other, they demonstrate a vast diversity, thus requiring adequate and appropriate research methodologies. We hope that the current issue of CS&P is a good example of such adequacy and diversity through providing a tribute for authors from nine countries.

The authors’ team representing three countries – Mohmmmed Salah Hassan, Ali Najem, Asbah Razali (Malaysia), Hussam Al Halbusi, Fadi Abdel Muniem Abdel Fattah (Oman) and Kent A. Williams (Canada) – presents the results of a research study entitled *Risk Perception, Self-Efficacy, Trust in Government, and the Moderating Role of Perceived Social Media Content During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The authors stress that, in the turbulent times of the pandemic, the critical duty of the research is “to explore and understand behavioural responses to the risk of infection..., especially how people assert their risk perception and how these perceptions shape self-efficacy beliefs”. Additional important fields of the research include the exploration of the risk perception as an interpretation and subjective judgment about a current risk; the evaluation of the social media’ exposure of the appropriate information; the trust in the government, which is vital to the policy’s success during a crisis; and the study of the construct of self-efficacy. The researchers gathered data from 512 individuals (students and academics) based in Malaysia. In investigating the impact of risk perception on trust in government and self-efficacy during the COVID 19 pandemic, the authors have made conclusions concerning, in particular, how social media helped shape behavioural patterns and attitudes.

Dušan Lužný (Czech Republic) in the article *Religious Memory in a Changing Society: The Case of India and Papua New Guinea*, starts from the research field of memory studies with special attention to the interconnection of collective memory and collective identity and focuses on a specific aspect of collective memory, namely religious memory. In the article, particular examples of material culture (religious buildings and places) are analysed as elements of cultural memory in order to show their link to collective identity in India Papua New Guinea – the societies experiencing fundamental socio-cultural changes associated with the process of decolonization and the creation of a new national identity. Dušan Lužný points out two changes in collective memory: “The first is the emergence of national memory, when as a result of the global spread of the Western conception of the state, which is based on the principle of nationalism, and the strengthening of emancipatory efforts in the regions, efforts to create their own new state units arose and intensified” The second is a change in religious memory associated with Christianization, which went hand in hand with colonialization. “While in India, for example, Christianity remained marginal and is more or less limited to certain localities (e.g., Goa on the west coast), in Papua New Guinea it became dominant (more than 90% of the population professes its various forms)”. The author uses two specific cases – two culturally and socially different regions of Papua New Guinea and India as an analytical application of the concept of religious memory as part of collective memory.

The article *Digital Political Participation of Western and Eastern Parts of Germany Residents (based on Change.org Online Petitions)* by Nadezhda Radina and Daria Belyashova (Nizhny Novgorod, Russia) is focused on the “comparative analysis of digital political participation of residents of the eastern and western parts of Germany in the form of online petitions to discuss the role of historical experience in shaping modern civil action strategies”. A comparative perspective is essential when studying the Federal Republic of Germany in the context of its historical separation and unification. The total empirical base of the research includes 1,036 petitions and covers the period from the creation of the German-language version of the platform *Change.org* in 2012 to March 2018. The authors developed a thematic classifier, which was used to divide the petitions into thematic groups: human rights, animal protection, culture, politics, migration issues, transport system, Internet, support for people with disabilities, financial issues, environmental protection, housing, alcohol/tobacco/drugs, healthcare, elderly people, sports, education, etc. A comparative analysis of petitions from West and East in accordance with the classifier reveals both similarities and differences in motivating the creation of online petitions in the west and east of the country. The authors stress that the analysis of winning petitions is a relevant source of information about efficient relations between the authorities and citizens.

Giorgia Salis and Martin Flegl (México) in their article *Cross-Cultural Analysis of Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship*, underline a significant gender gap in the likelihood of starting a business venture, which still exists in most countries (notably, gender gap in early-stage entrepreneurship activity is more prominent in developed countries than in the developing ones) despite the statistically

established importance of women's entrepreneurial action for the economy and for the society. The objective of the article was to deepen the existing research work "by attempting to find out what variables and/or mix of variables affect gender gap in entrepreneurship". For this reason, G. Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the Human Development Index of 55 countries were tested. The authors formulate research hypotheses with respect to seven independent variables in order to explain the notion of gender gap; as a result, some of them were confirmed and some rejected. In addition, the conclusion is made "that rather individualistic, pragmatic and flexible societies in terms of societal change, which at the same time are adverse to risk and uncertainty related to the future, tend to have a lower rate of gender gap in entrepreneurship".

In the article *Intergenerational Cooperation and Stereotypes in Relation to Age in the Working Environment*, Danijela Brečko (Slovenia) points out that rapid changes, especially in the developed world, that occurred after World War II have significantly increased the share of the elderly population in relation to the younger population. The article is aimed at analysing such a category as the "older employee" – the age group of 50 or 55. Because most companies today have a rich mix of generations among their employees in order to use their unique experience and knowledge for the benefit of the company, it is equally important to avoid intergenerational conflicts in the workplace. In the article, Danijela Brečko presents the results of studying the intergenerational cooperation and age management in a Slovenian company in the technological industry with over 2,000 employees from four generations, with a large share of older employees, and the average age of around 44.8 years. The research sample of 150 employees was surveyed using an observation method (focus groups). The research seeks to elucidate stereotypes concerning the characteristics of different generations of employees, and the nature of their beliefs in terms of the company's expected attitudes toward their work.

The article *Influence of Self-Perception and Importance of Body Image on the Methods Implemented to Enhance the Physical Appearance* by Mithunasri L V and Anil Jadhav (India) is based on the assumption that, in the 21st century, "we live in a society that considers physical appearance as one of the most important parameters to judge others' personality and richness. Surrounded by the extreme influence of media, we are constantly compelled to see people with perfect looks around us – be it in magazines, on the news, in the movies and all over the internet". The research is aimed at achieving a deeper understanding of the impact of physical appearance on the self-satisfaction of an individual. The authors propose three research questions: Does the level of satisfaction attained through physical appearance impact the importance given to it? Does the contentment on the personal body image significantly affect the usage of various methods to enhance the physical appearance? Does the importance given to physical appearance of an individual have an effect on the various techniques implemented to improve the body image? The data for the research was collected through a questionnaire-based survey across people living in Tamilnadu; 462 responses were obtained. The results have proved some of the hypotheses, while rejecting others.

The BOOK REVIEW section contains a review by Louie Galvez Giray (Philippines) of the American social psychologist Deborah H. Gruenfeld's book (2020) *Acting with Power*. The power is interpreted as a social contract dependent on the context. The reviewer finds this book "powerful, compelling but accessible to a wide audience due to lively examples, narratives and historical scenarios, which illustrate the ideas" of the author.

Discussions around the topics raised in the present issue will be continued in the subsequent issues of our journal. In planning to introduce new interesting themes, we welcome suggestions from our readers and prospective authors for thematic issues, debate sections or book reviews.

For more information, please visit our journal web-site: <https://changing-sp.com/>



ARTICLE

Risk Perception, Self-Efficacy, Trust in Government, and the Moderating Role of Perceived Social Media Content During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The public's actions will likely have a significant effect on the course of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Human behavior is conditioned and shaped by information and people's perceptions. This study investigated the impact of risk perception on trust in government and self-efficacy. It examined whether the use of social media helped people adopt preventive actions during the pandemic. To test this hypothesis, the researchers gathered data from 512 individuals (students and academics) based in Malaysia during the COVID-19

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pandemic. Our results suggested that risk perception had a significant effect on trust in government and self-efficacy. Moreover, these correlations were stronger when social media was used as a source for gathering information on COVID-19. In some cases, it even helped users avoid exposure to the virus. This study assessed the relationship between risk perception and the awareness gained from using social media during the pandemic and highlighted how social media usage influences trust in government and self-efficacy.

KEYWORDS

risk perception, trust in government, self-efficacy, social media, coronavirus, COVID-19

Introduction

The current pandemic is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). As of mid-April 2020, 2,074,529 confirmed cases and 139,378 deaths had been recorded worldwide, including 5,182 confirmed cases in Malaysia. No treatments or vaccines had been developed, and preventive and quarantine measures were considered the best methods to avoid infection (World Health Organization, 2021). Therefore, preventive measures were promoted at the individual level: regular hand-washing, avoiding touching the face, and maintaining an appropriate distance from other individuals ("social distancing"). Many countries promoted social distancing to contain the outbreak (World Health Organization, 2020).

In Malaysia, the government implemented social distancing by enforcing a movement control order, a set of regulations intended to control the disease's spread. These measures included the immediate suspension of cross-border movements and the closure of public and private schools, universities, and nonessential businesses (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia, 2020). However, the ability to limit the spread of viruses such as COVID-19 fundamentally depends on how people behave. Therefore, it is vital to collect data on people's perceptions of risk and their behavioral responses during a pandemic and provide information to policymakers on how people respond to public health issues (Slovic, 2000).

It is critical to explore and understand behavioral responses to the risk of infection during a pandemic, especially how people assert their risk perception and how these perceptions shape self-efficacy beliefs. One critical aspect of this exploration is understanding how social media exposure to information affects the relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1990b; Chew & Eysenbach, 2010; Isa et al., 2013). Furthermore, it is essential to provide information to people when public health issues arise so they can understand the risks and respond effectively. Hence, public risk perception and self-efficacy can help individuals understand and manage their responses (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Vos & Buckner, 2016).

The media play a critical role in providing information to the public during crises. Sources such as television and newspapers have long shaped people's risk

perceptions and self-efficacy during public health crises, as was seen during the H1N1 outbreak (Lin & Lagoe, 2013). In the information age, social media plays a primary role in how the public acquires information and communicates about crises and catastrophes (Schultz, Utz, & Göritz, 2011). Notably, the number of people using social media platforms to gather information, especially during a crisis, has dramatically increased (Liu, Fraustino, & Jin, 2012). Hence, social media platforms (e.g., Facebook¹, Twitter², Instagram³, YouTube⁴, and WhatsApp⁵) have become the primary source of information for many people.

Social media is considered the primary source of health information as well, influencing people's risk perception and self-efficacy in preventive behavior (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016; Young & Rice, 2011). Therefore, social media's importance in helping people make sense of the news during public crises needs to be examined. Regarding this, it is crucial to understand whether using social media as a primary source of information shaped the relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theory

Risk Perception

Paek and Hove (2017) defined the concept of "risk perception" as "people's subjective assessment of the possibility that negative outcomes or diseases may occur" (p. 1). Two main dimensions govern this perception: one, the perceived susceptibility dimension, which refers to how people perceive risk and the likelihood of contracting diseases, and two, the severity dimension, which refers to people's ability to process information about risks and understand the seriousness and aggressiveness of diseases (Balog-Way & McComas, 2020; Dryhurst et al., 2020; El-Toukhy, 2015; Pask & Rawlins, 2016). According to protection motivation theory, susceptibility and severity play important roles in shedding light on risk perception (Rogers, 1983). The two constitute the main dimensions of information when individuals consider the threats from a hazard. The theory assumes that individuals tend to feel pressured to adopt health recommendations to protect themselves from any harm. It further posits that a high level of perceived risk is needed to adopt healthy behaviors during a crisis. Meanwhile, the extended parallel process model (Witte, 1992) highlights that risk perception is a pivotal element that influences behavioral response during a crisis (Rimal & Real, 2003b).

When people evaluate their susceptibility to the harm they might endure during a crisis, they often make assumptions using a heuristic process. Individuals who are more aware of the risks are also more likely to assume that risks occur more frequently than they do (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982). For instance, when individuals are heavily exposed to media coverage focused on a disease like the H1N1

¹ Facebook™ is a trademark of Facebook Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

² Twitter™ is a trademark of Twitter Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

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virus, they tend to have a higher perceived risk of contracting the virus compared to others (Paek & Hove, 2017). Risk perception is mainly an interpretation and subjective judgment about a current risk (Slovic, 2000). Hence, it is an essential element of risk-based decisions, such as adopting healthy behaviors during a crisis. Therefore, risk perception is explicitly associated with natural disasters, such as hurricanes or pandemics, as well as human-made disasters, such as nuclear radiation exposure (El-Toukhy, 2015; Rimal & Real, 2003a).

Risk perception has a profound impact on society. How the public assesses the severity and susceptibility of a hazard can influence individual behaviors during a crisis, which profoundly affects the success of any policies and regulations implemented to address the crisis. The outbreak of COVID-19 is no different. Risk perception can substantially impact the precautionary measures that individuals undertake to reduce their exposure to disease transmission. Risk perception shapes people's decision-making in promoting preventive measures during a pandemic (Choi et al., 2017).

Another element of risk perception is optimistic bias; this concept states that individuals tend to believe that the risks posed by a disaster will be less severe for them than for other people. This tendency to underestimate a disaster's adverse effects – underestimating both the probability and the severity – is mainly dependent on the information disseminated regarding a hazard (Weinstein, 1980). Specifically, analyzing risk perception involves individuals' cognitive judgment of their susceptibility to risk. However, such analysis ignores the effect of the information sources in shaping perception. Slovic (2000) argued that perceived susceptibility and severity are generally influenced by individual emotions while making decisions or perceiving risk. Human beings might perceive risk as more threatening when they dread it intensely. Nonetheless, cognitive assessment and emotional judgments are often intense, determining people's risk prospects and behavior (Loewenstein et al., 2001).

Generally, research regarding the factors influencing risk perception has focused on how individual perception is affected by media content and the social, cultural, institutional, and political processes. This widely accepted view highlights that understanding people's risk perception is determined not only by evaluating the scientific information they obtain or their physical experiences with a hazard. McCarthy, Brennan, De Boer, and Ritson (2008) argued that one critical factor affecting risk perception is how the media shape public risk perception. They also cited various factors that affect the public's risk perceptions, such as the media content, amount, tone, and the source's trustworthiness. When public issues arise, people tend to perceive the risks to themselves (Pask & Rawlins, 2016). Hence, the manifestation of infectious diseases that arise without warning, such as COVID-19, often leads to immediate public perceptions of risk (Oh, Eom, & Rao, 2015). Thus, examining risk perception is essential to understanding how it shapes self-efficacy beliefs.

Trust in Government

Citizen's trust in government as a whole is a fundamental topic in the study of social psychology (Hetherington, 1998; Houston et al., 2016; Miller, 1974; van der Meer, 2010; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010). Gamson (1968) defined trust in government as

“the probability (...) that the political system (or some part of it) will produce preferred outcomes even if left untended” (p. 54). Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) described trust as a subcategory of risk: the expectation of gain or loss, which determines whether or not citizens will trust the government. Trust is never absolute but always conditional and contextual (Ruscio, 1996). Levi & Braithwaite (1998) argue that citizens often have widely different perceptions and identified two ways citizens can trust their government: one, they can trust everyone in the government as an institution, and two, they can trust that the decisions taken by the government are in the best interest of all citizens. This definition is based on the conceptual framework of game theory and the assumption that granting trust to the government is based on individual interest, so trusting the government depends on individuals’ strategies to maximize utility. In short, individuals’ trust in the government is based on self-interest (Blackburn 1998; Levi & Stoker, 2000).

Trust in government is a critical factor that can determine the success of any policy. Historically, during crises, trust in government has played a crucial role in shaping public behavior – specifically, people’s willingness to comply. Trust in government also influences people’s support for government policies during crises, specifically health policies (Sankar, Schairer, & Coffin, 2003; Tomes, 2000). Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn (2000) argued that public trust in the government is one of the most significant factors influencing public risk perception and ultimately shapes public policymaking. Therefore, trust in government highlights the importance of public support during a crisis. Greater trust levels will minimize conflicts between the public and the government officials enforcing the rules (Metlay, 2013). For example, if the public does not trust their government during a disaster – specifically, a health crisis – there will be a high degree of noncompliance and conflict between the public and the government institutes and their policies. Negative risk perceptions can influence the public will and increase public opposition to government activities during a crisis (Pijawka & Mushkatel, 1991).

Empirical evidence on epidemics has shown that trust in government is vital to the any policy’s success during a crisis. For instance, Slovic, Flynn, and Layman (1991) concluded that trust in government would decrease if the public viewed their government as abusing its power and being dishonest. During the 1894 smallpox outbreak in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the government forcibly isolated poor immigrants in hospitals but allowed wealthy families to stay at home; thus, trust in government declined and deteriorated, leading to a month-long riot that accelerated the spread of smallpox (Leavitt, 2003). At the core of trust in government during a crisis are the questions of how people trust government agencies and how risk perception shapes public behavior (Smith & Mayer, 2018). Specifically, research has focused on the effect of risk perception on trust in government, although the number of studies has remained small. Earlier works have examined how risk perception influences trust in government, a crucial link to understanding how people deal with public threats or epidemics (Smith & Mayer, 2018).

In the COVID-19 pandemic context, the amount of health-related information grew exponentially, and people gathered this information from many different sources.

In such cases, their trust in their government will likely affect their determination of the risks and benefits associated with the pandemic. In turn, this determination might influence their acceptance of government health measures to combat COVID-19 (Siegrist & Cvetkovich, 2000). If citizens trust the government responsible for responding to a hazard, their risk perception will be positively influenced. Their trust will help ensure public acceptance of and cooperation with government agencies (Siegrist & Cvetkovich, 2000; Tumlison, Moyer, & Song, 2017; Vainio, Paloniemi, & Varho, 2017). Not surprisingly, studies that have focused on understanding the risk perception of different hazards have found a strong correlation between risk perception and trust in government (Bronfman & Vázquez, 2011; Keller, Visschers, & Siegrist, 2012; Vainio et al., 2017).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy helps shape individuals' ability to overcome a social difficulty (Bandura, 1990a, 1990b). This can be understood as individuals' belief in their ability to manage a difficult task (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) added that the primary understanding of self-efficacy theory is "people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their actions" (p. 7). The theory argues that efficacy belief is a part of psychological adjustments during a crisis. Self-efficacy is evident during public health crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. It plays a vital role in motivating people during hazards, driving specific changes in their behavior and attitudes (Dorsey, Miller, & Scherer, 1999). Thus, numerous studies have examined how self-efficacy is shaped by risk perception (e.g., Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Mishra & Fiddick, 2012).

However, the ability of self-efficacy beliefs to encourage a sense of competence and control over the perceived outcomes of a specific unwanted situation is seen as a higher level of self-efficacy that leads to a greater probability of enacting and adopting health measures during a public health threat (Reid & Aiken, 2011). Thus, self-efficacy can also be seen as a social construct. Although such constructs can differ depending on culture, individuals' need for control seems universal, and studies have examined how individuals in different cultures practice self-efficacy (Young, Oei, & Crook, 1991). For example, many studies have examined how self-efficacy changes behavior when dealing with health threats, such as smoking (Carey et al., 1989). Their primary interest concerns people's perceptions and behavioral responses – particularly prevention measures recommended during health crises (Girtli Nygren & Olofsson, 2020; Isa et al., 2013). Self-efficacy is viewed as a motive and need for control that can also be viewed as a behavior-altering drive. However, this drive is not a permanent personality trait. Self-efficacy is the ability to direct skills to accomplish a desired goal in specific circumstances, usually created by a threat (Chen et al., 2001; Sherer et al., 1982; Smart, Kellaway, & Worthington, 1984). According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is an action motivated from within rather than enforced by an environment. The theory has two central ideas. First, individuals' cognitive capabilities are powerful tools that allow them to develop a course of action based on experience; testing hypothetical actions using our mental

capabilities will predict the outcome (Bandura, 2001; Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, 1997). Second, humans are capable of self-regulation; that is, to achieve a goal, individuals will regulate and change their behaviors. Self-regulation can help people anticipate expectancies and tap past knowledge and experiences to form beliefs about future events (Molden & Dweck, 2006).

Therefore, the construct of self-efficacy needs to be studied further. The present study sought to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy during a pandemic. Risk perception and self-efficacy are affected by information regarding a hazard. People gather information regarding a public health issue, which shapes their reactions and behaviors during a crisis (McCarthy et al., 2008; Song et al., 2015).

Perceived Quality of Social Media Content

Traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television, were once most people's primary information sources (Dudo, Dahlstrom, & Brossard, 2007; Paek, Oh, & Hove, 2016). These media sources are crucial sources of information on public health crises (Lin & Lagoe, 2013; Oh et al., 2015). Chang (2012) described the association between risk perception during the H1N1 outbreak and the information disseminated by television.

Today, however, social media has transformed how individuals obtain information. Reveling in the rapid and continuous changes in the communications industry, people worldwide have shown an increasing inclination to obtain their information through social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Thus, as Lin, Zhang, Song, and Omori (2016) observed, people primarily obtain their health information during crises from social media platforms, which they consider most convenient. Unlike traditional media, social media enables users to acquire, generate, and share critical health information. For example, many people used social media as a central public platform to discuss and exchange information during the H1N1 outbreak (Davies, 2009). Social media platforms are a primary contributor to people's risk perception about public health crises and provide information that influences their protective health measures (Chung, 2016). Since the H1N1 outbreak, social media has become the primary means for people to express their emotional responses to health issues and virus outbreaks, such as worry and fear (Chew & Eysenbach, 2010; Signorini, Segre, & Polgreen, 2011). During the MERS outbreak, social media platforms played a significant role in disseminating factual information, including updates on the systems in place and prevention methods (Song et al., 2015). However, popular and easy-to-access platforms are also associated with negative emotional responses to public health issues and are considered a primary contributor to fear and anxiety among the public (Fu & Zhu, 2020; Paek & Hove, 2017; Signorini et al., 2011).

Aladwani (2017) found that the perceived quality of social media content encompassed four dimensions: (1) *reflective quality*, which concerns individuals' beliefs about how the content supports their interests; (2) *practiced quality*, which concerns how the content meets their needs and shapes their behaviors; (3) *advocated*

quality, which concerns how people's behaviors support and promote the information, and (4) *stimulated quality*, which concerns individuals' feelings about the content and how it serves their immediate needs.

People's perceptions of the quality of social media content depend on how much they value and trust the information. The primary considerations are considered the content's accuracy and whether the information benefits the users. Risk perception incorporates the susceptibility and severity of public hazards (El-Toukhy, 2015). Therefore, social media content's perceived quality shapes perceived susceptibility by providing information about the increasing number of people affected by a particular public health hazard; it shapes perceived severity by focusing on the hazard's adverse impacts, such as death or severe injury (McWhirter & Hoffman-Goetz, 2016). Hence, exposure to negative information, such as potential pain caused by MERS or H1N1 outbreaks, is positively associated with people's perceived severity of a threat; information about the increasing number of deaths and infections could be associated with perceived susceptibility. Social media content is assumed to increase people's risk perception during a public health crisis (Choi et al., 2017). Vos and Buckner (2016) concluded that social media content plays a critical role in spreading information about a crisis and making sense of public health issues. However, researchers have also cautioned that social media disseminates only limited information on self-efficacy.

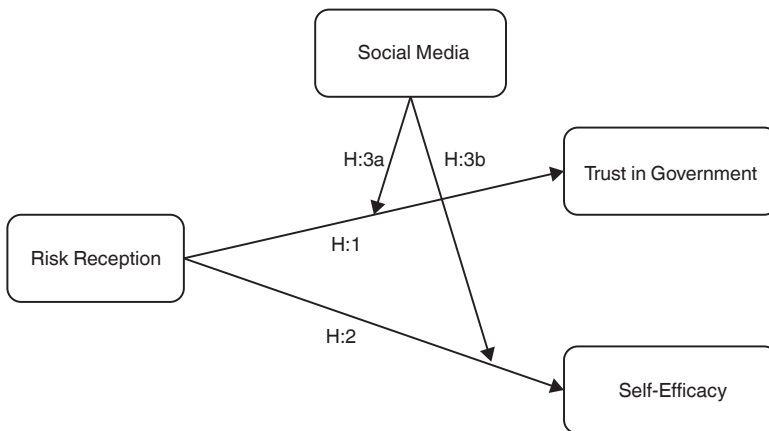
Risk perception and self-efficacy also are constructs that depend on the information obtained about a crisis (Agha, 2003). During the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, conspiracy theories spread around the globe. The resultant racism, panic buying, and inaccurate information have all been linked to the dissemination of information on social media. Widespread misinformation generated panic among the public (Depoux et al., 2020). Subsequently, some social media platforms, such as Facebook, directed users to the expert sources (e.g., the World Health Organization) and myth-buster and fact-checker websites (e.g., FactCheck.org, Snopes.com) to combat misinformation about COVID-19 (Merchant & Lurie, 2020). Twitter began collating COVID-19 information into lists to make it easy for users to search for updates (Josephson & Lambe, 2020). Experts suggest that worldwide public panic is best ought with fact-based content ("COVID-19: fighting panic", 2020). As a primary source of information, social media can influence public health responses by providing accurate (or inaccurate) content. For example, during China's quarantines following the initial outbreak, the government used social media platforms to provide advice and reassurance to the public about the quarantine rules and to promote its ability to manage the outbreak. Hence, social media can boost awareness of a health hazard, including how to prevent infection by following protective measures (Depoux et al., 2020). As of January 2021, 4.2 billion people worldwide are active social media users (Statista, 2021). Thus, the information shared could reasonably be expected to have shaped the public's decisions during the pandemic and influence their trust in government and self-efficacy beliefs (Depoux et al., 2020; Jin, 2020; Merchant & Lurie, 2020).

Based on the above information, we formulated the following research hypotheses:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between risk perception and trust in government.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy.
- H3a: Perceptions of social media content quality moderate the relationship between risk perception and trust in government, such that the relationship is stronger when the perceived quality of social media is higher.
- H3b: Perceptions of social media content quality moderate the relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy, such that the relationship is stronger when the perceived quality of social media quality is higher.

Figure 1

Research framework



Method

Sample and Procedure

For data collection, the researchers used an online survey designed using Google⁶ Forms which was circulated to students and academics at the University of Malaya (UM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The survey was conducted during the Restriction of Movement order (ROM) that began on March 18, 2020. The survey’s cover letter explained the purpose of the study and assured the confidentiality of the participants’ responses.

Variable Measurement

All the variables were measured using a self-report measure of multi-item scales derived from previous studies. All the measures were assessed using a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree (All items are presented in the Appendix 1). Researchers using measures to examine a latent construct must choose carefully between reflective or formative indicators (Becker

⁶ Google™ and the Google Logo are trademarks of Google Inc. in the U.S. and other countries.

et al., 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2019). Reflective measurements, commonly recommended when personality and attitudinal variables are modeled, are highly correlated indicators (interchangeable) thought to be caused by a targeted latent construct. The formative measures involve indicators that might determine the construct without necessarily being highly correlated (not interchangeable), making traditional reliability and validity criteria inappropriate and irrelevant (Cheah et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2019). The aforementioned criteria could be applied to distinguish between reflective and formative constructs (i.e., the direction of causality, interchangeability, covariation, and antecedents/consequences of indicators or dimensions) (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The current study encompassed the two types of reflective and formative variables: multiple first-order constructs that represented important aspects of the targeted construct and second-order constructs. Given its complexity, we modeled social media as a second-order formative construct. Determining the type of formative construct is important because excluding any dimensions could alter the conceptual domain (e.g., Becker et al., 2012; Cheah et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

To measure risk perception, we adapted four items from Witte (1996). We reflectively measured risk perception as a first-order construct. We also positioned trust in government as a dependent variable and measured it reflectively using three items as a first-order construct, a method borrowed from Grimmelikhuisen (2012). We reflectively measured the first-order construct self-efficacy using five items adapted from a prior study (Rimal & Real, 2003a). Finally, we measured social media content using nine items slightly modified and adapted from Aladwani (2017). Thus, the perceived quality of social media content encompassed four dimensions: reflective quality (two items), practiced quality (two items), advocated quality (three items), and stimulated quality (three items). We reflectively measured these four dimensions as first-order constructs. Later, we used them to describe social media's perceived benefits: high scores indicated a stronger perceived benefit of social media content.

Data Analysis and Results

To examine the proposed hypotheses, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) with the partial least squares (PLS) method, using Smart PLS 3.2.8 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). This is a powerful and robust statistical procedure (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). Therefore, this method did not require strict assumptions about the distribution of the variables, making it appropriate for complex causal analyses with both first- and second-order constructs (Hair et al., 2017). To test the statistical significance of the path coefficients, we used the PLS analysis with 5,000 subsamples to generate bootstrap *t*-statistics with $n-1$ degrees of freedom, where (*n*) was the number of subsamples.

Demographic Analysis

We collected data on the participants' sex, age, education, and job experience. As presented in Table 1, most of the participants were under 35 years old and female; almost half had at least a bachelor's degree.

Table 1
Profile of participants

Demographic item	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	18–24	168	32.8
	25–34	154	30.1
	35–44	129	25.1
	45–54	47	9.2
	55 and above	14	2.8
	Total	512	100.0
Sex	Female	302	59.0
	Male	210	41.0
	Total	512	100.0
Education level	Pre-university	32	6.3
	Bachelor's degree	227	44.4
	Master's degree	151	29.5
	Doctoral degree	62	12.1
	Academician	40	7.7
	Total	512	100.0
Position	students	314	61.3
	staff	198	38.7
	Total	512	100.0

Note: sample size = 512

Common Method Bias Assessment

Common method bias (CMB) refers to variances attributable to the measurement method rather than the constructs being measured, such as when the difference between the trait and the measured scores occurs through using a common method to take more than one measurement of the same or different traits (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). CMB could imply a risk in blindly accepting social science research results, given that bias can affect findings due to systematic errors. Thus, in the current research, we attempted to prevent CMB during the research design phase by applying the procedural remedies proposed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff (2012). Moreover, we used a statistical technique to detect potential CMB situations, namely, a full collinearity test based on variance inflation factors (VIFs) (Kock, 2015). We followed the guidelines described by Kock and Lynn (2012). They proposed that test to assess both vertical and lateral collinearities and indicated that a VIF achieving a value greater than 3.3 would indicate pathological collinearity, warning that CMB might impair the model. Our model's maximum VIF was 2.112 (see Table 2).

Table 2
Common Method Bias Assessment Using Full Collinearity Estimates Criteria

Variables	Risk perception	Social media usage	Trust in government	Self-efficacy
VIF	1.419	1.201	1.496	2.112

Note: VIF = Variance inflation factor

Measurement Model Assessment

To achieve a reflective measurement model, individual item reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity must meet specific criteria. In terms of item reliability, the results shown in Table 3 revealed no significant problems. Most items exceeded the recommended level of 0.707 (Hair et al., 2017). To evaluate the constructs' internal consistency, we used composite reliability ranging from 0.847 to 0.916, higher than the suggested cutoff threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). In support of convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) for the constructs ranged from 0.658 to 0.809, more than the recommended threshold of 0.5

Table 3

Measurement Model: Item Loading/Weight, Construct Reliability, and Convergent Validity

First-order constructs	Second-order constructs	Items	Scale	Loading/weight	CR/VIF	AVE/ f-value	p-value
Risk perception		RSP1	reflective	0.882	0.916	0.732	NA
		RSP2		0.900			
		RSP3		0.878			
		RSP4		0.756			
Reflective quality		REQ1	reflective	0.685	0.898	0.718	NA
		REQ2		0.696			
Practiced quality		PRQ1	reflective	0.853	0.847	0.711	NA
		PRQ2		0.770			
Advocated quality		ADQ1	reflective	0.807	0.883	0.715	NA
		ADQ2		0.855			
		ADQ3		0.838			
Stimulated quality		STQ1	reflective	0.859	0.896	0.715	NA
		STQ2		0.864			
		STQ3		0.735			
	social media content quality	reflective quality	formative	0.315	1.461	3.793	0.000
		practiced quality		0.322	2.932		
	3.313	0.000					
		advocated quality		0.411			
	1.264	4.739	0.000				
	stimulated quality		0.402				
1.462	4.280	0.000					
Trust in government		TRA1	reflective	0.863	0.851	0.658	NA
		TRA2		0.686			
		TRA3		0.872			
Self-efficacy		SEF1		0.898	0.911	0.809	NA
		SEF2		0.906			
		SEF3		0.921			
		SEF4		0.893			
		SEF5		0.877			

Notes: CR = composite reliability; VIF = variance inflation factor; AVE = average variance extracted; NA = not applicable.

(Hair et al., 2017). For discriminant validity, shown in Table 4, we uncovered no issues, as the AVE for each construct was greater than the variance that each construct shared with the other latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017).

The formative variables revealed minimal collinearity, as the respective VIFs ranged between 1.264 and 2.932 (see Table 3), far below the standard cutoff threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, collinearity did not reach critical levels in any of our formative constructs. Moreover, we examined the significance and relevance of the outer weight's *t*-value and *p*-value of the formative constructs. As shown in Table 3, all the formative indicators were significant (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, our formative measurement model was successful.

Structural Model Assessment

In explaining the dependent variables of this study (i.e., trust in authority and self-efficacy), none of the demographic variables (i.e., age, sex, and education level) showed a significant effect (see Table 5). Table 5 presents the findings related to H1–H3, which involved the direct and interaction effects. In support of H1, the direct effect of risk perception was significantly and positively related to self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.533, t = 4.104, p < 0.001$); thus, H1 was supported. H2 also showed a significant direct effect of risk perception on trust in government ($\beta = 0.283, t = 2.832, p < 0.002$); therefore, H2 was also supported.

Regarding the interaction effect, H3a assumed the interaction effect of risk perception and social media usage on trust in government, for which we found a significant interaction ($\beta = 0.210, t = 2.289, p < 0.011$). Thus, H3a was supported. Finally, H3b also showed a significant interaction between risk perception and social media on self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.506, t = 3.571, p < 0.001$). Hence, the second interaction was also supported. To interpret this interaction, we followed Dawson (2014), plotting high versus low social media usage regression lines (+1 and -1 standard deviation from the mean). This step indicated that the positive relationship between risk perception and trust in government was stronger (a more pronounced slope) when social media usage was high rather than low (Figure 2). Moreover, the positive relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy was stronger when the use of social media was high rather than low (see Figure 3).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Matrix, and Discriminant Validity

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Risk perception	5.885	1.190	0.856						
2. Self-efficacy	6.072	1.060	0.386	0.899					
3. Social media content	5.746	1.473	0.523	0.588	0.901				
4. Trust in government	4.322	0.677	0.539	0.470	0.480	0.969			
5. Age	2.280	1.092	0.405	0.307	0.253	0.030	NA		
6. Sex	1.498	0.606	-0.119	-0.005	-0.134	-0.037	-0.028	NA	
7. Education	2.705	1.022	0.149	0.184	0.161	0.168	0.618	-0.060	NA

Note: SD = standard deviation; NA = not applicable. Bold values on the diagonal are the square root values of the extracted average variance, shared between the constructs and their respective measures. Off-diagonal elements below the diagonal are correlations among the constructs, where values between 0.12 and 0.15 are significant at $p < 0.05$, and values of 0.16 or higher are significant at $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).

Table 5*Structural Path Analysis: Direct, Indirect, and Interaction Effects*

Hypothesis	Direct Effect	Std beta	Std error	t-value	Bias and corrected bootstrap (95% CI)			Decision
					p-value	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	
H1	Risk Perception → Self-Efficacy	0.533	0.130	4.104	0.000	0.286	0.723	Supported
H2	Risk Perception → Trust in Government	0.283	0.100	2.832	0.002	0.121	0.441	Supported

Control Variables								
-	Age → Trust in Authority	-0.294	0.127	0.316	0.310	-0.434	0.083	NS
-	Sex → Self-Efficacy → Trust in Authority	0.009	0.046	1.166	0.215	-0.027	0.176	NS
-	Education level → Trust in Authority	0.001	0.051	0.258	0.423	0.022	-0.214	NS
-	Age → Self-Efficacy	0.095	0.032	0.021	0.221	-0.011	0.312	NS
-	Sex → Self-Efficacy → Self-Efficacy	0.007	0.012	0.112	0.322	-0.021	0.242	NS
-	Education level → Self-Efficacy	0.081	0.034	1.108	0.281	0.011	-0.254	NS

Hypothesis	Interaction Effect	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	Bias and corrected bootstrap (95% CI)			Decision
					p-value	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	
H3a	RIP*SMU → Trust in Government	0.210	0.092	2.289	0.001	0.030	0.342	Supported
H3b	RIP*SMU → Self-Efficacy	0.506	0.142	3.571	0.000	0.257	0.714	Supported

Notes: N = 512; bootstrap sample size = 5,000; SE = standard error; LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit 95% bias-correlated CI; NS = not significant

Keys: RIP*SMU → Trust in Government = Risk Perception*Social Media content quality → Trust in Government, RIP*SMU → Self-Efficacy = Risk Perception*Social Media content quality → Self-Efficacy

Figure 2
Interaction Plot of Risk Perception × Effect of Social Media Usage on Trust in Government

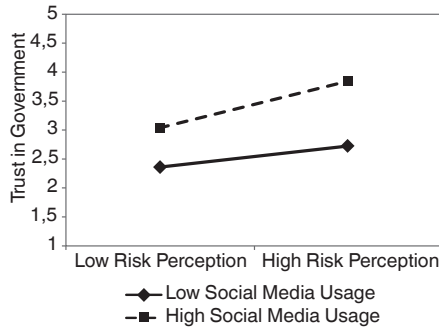
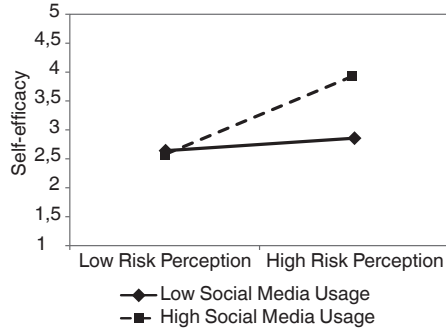


Figure 3
Interaction Plot of Risk Perception × Social Media Usage on Self-Efficacy



Regarding its explanatory power, our model revealed moderate to substantial R^2 values of 0.491 for trust in government and 0.513 for self-efficacy (Hair et al., 2017). We used the Stone–Geisser blindfolding sample-reuse technique to determine the predictive relevance of our model. This technique revealed Q -square values greater than 0. Thus, our research model effectively predicted both trust in government ($Q^2 = 0.220$) and self-efficacy ($Q^2 = 0.241$) (Hair et al., 2017).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of risk perception on trust in government and self-efficacy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Significantly, this study introduced the contingent role of social media usage as a critical element during the crisis. In particular, risk perception, trust in the government, and self-efficacy during a public health threat were fundamentally dependent on information regarding the hazard (Vos & Buckner, 2016). Other scholars have highlighted the importance of empirically investigating the potential effects of social media on behavioral responses (Agha, 2003). Hence, the present study provided new information on how social media helped shape the relationship between these constructs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, most governments and international agencies, such as the World Health Organization, adopted social media as a primary conduit for distributing information to the public (Mejia et al., 2020).

Our investigation derived several significant findings. First, risk perception positively influenced our participants' trust in their government (Malaysia). This relationship can be understood as follows: people who perceived the risk of public health hazards were likely to increase their trust in the government during a public crisis (Vaughan & Tinker, 2009). We also found that individuals demonstrated significant compliance with the Malaysian government's policies to combat the public threat of COVID-19. This finding contributes to the current knowledge of how people might trust their government during a pandemic, highlighting that people's perceived

risk will increase their trust in the government during any health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Slovic, 2000). In particular, taking into account the trust and confidence model, the public's judgment of risk affected their trust in government and their indirect acceptance of government measures to combat a public hazard. The model also emphasized that people with high trust in the government (in this case, the Malaysian government) were more likely to comply with government measures during a crisis (Siegrist, Earle, & Gutscher, 2003). Meanwhile, risk perception influenced how the public trusted the government during the pandemic, confirming previous findings (Paek et al., 2008; Vaughan & Tinker, 2009). Hence, this study concluded that there was a significant link between risk perception and trust in the government.

Second, this study also revealed that risk perception significantly influenced individuals' self-efficacy, in line with previous findings. This relationship highlighted that people's risk perception of COVID-19 positively impacted their self-efficacy; people who perceived higher risk of susceptibility and severity of the outbreak adopted behavioral changes to implement protective measures against the virus (El-Toukhy, 2015). According to the extended parallel process model, individuals who perceive high risk and high efficacy are called *responsive individuals* (Witte, 1992). These individuals are aware of the severity of and their susceptibility to the disease and are highly motivated to implement preventive measures (Flora et al., 1997). Moreover, according to protection motivation theory, during a crisis, public risk perceptions will be high, which can influence the public to adopt protective measures (van der Weerd et al., 2011; Voeten et al., 2009). Earlier research on this relationship has shown mixed results. Weinstein (1983) and Weinstein, Sandman, & Roberts (1990) found that risk perception and self-efficacy had a positive relation. However, whereas van der Velde, Hooykaas, & van der Joop (1992) found that risk perception had a negative correlation with self-efficacy. Rimal and Real (2003b) argued that these results not as contradictory as they sounded since all the findings concerned different public health issues. Hence, our study contributes to the literature by reflecting that the relationship between the risk perception of COVID-19 and self-efficacy was significant.

Third, we found that risk perception was significantly related to trust in the government. However, this relationship must be viewed as dynamic in this era of rapid technological advances, especially when the government has little or no direct control over social network sources or social media content. Our result indicated that the positive relationship between risk perception and trust in government would be stronger with higher social media usage to acquire information on COVID-19. Previous research has highlighted that risk perception and trust in the government fundamentally depended on information regarding a hazard, especially when the government's disseminated information was consistent with that on social media – for example, numbers of infections and recovered cases of COVID-19 (Braun & Gillespie, 2011). Moreover, Braithwaite (1998) argued that risk perception and trust in government were contingent on the information people acquired during a public threat; that is, the source of information played a critical role in the relationship. In our study, social media usage strengthened the relationship between risk perception and self-efficacy. However, this relationship can be understood as more people becoming aware of the virus's

consequences from information gathered from social media, increasing their risk perception of COVID-19 and spurring them to adopt protective measures. Thus, our finding supported the argument that social media could promote healthier behaviors. Our study's results are relevant as they highlight the process through which social media can influence behaviors during a pandemic. We confirmed how social media usage could significantly influence risk perception and self-efficacy (Agha, 2003).

Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution in light of several limitations. The first the study's cross-sectional data design. Such a design makes it difficult to provide definitive conclusions regarding causality. However, as this study had to measure sensitive issues, such as the respondents' ethical behavior (Randall & Gibson, 1990), we needed complete anonymity for the participants (Randall & Fernandes, 1991), which made it difficult to run a longitudinal analysis (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Second, all the respondents were chosen from one institute, the University of Malaya. Future work should expand the scope to include multiple organizations of different types and in different locations. Our approach's one clear advantage was that the data we collected from this distinct sector (students and academics) was more reflective of the broader population than data collected from a more restricted setting, such as a single organization (Randall & Fernandes, 1991).

Finally, this study was conducted in Malaysia, and the results might be limited to the Malaysian population and government. The results might not be generalizable to other countries owing to geographic, political, cultural, and other differences.

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Conflict of interest: All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Risk Perception:

1. How likely do you think it is that you might get infected with COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2) in the near future?
 2. If I get the COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2), it will be severe.
 3. If I get the COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2), it will be risky.
 4. If I get the COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2), I would not be able to manage daily activities.
-

Trust in Government:

1. During the current pandemic, the government cares about the well-being of citizens.
 2. During the current pandemic, the government keeps its promises.
 3. During the current pandemic, the government carries out its duties effectively.
-

Self- Efficacy:

1. I am confident in my ability to protect myself from the COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2)
 2. I am certain that I will take required actions even if they are difficult or inconvenient.
 3. I have the willpower to engage in precautionary actions.
 4. I am confident that I can carry out precautionary actions.
 5. I am certain that I can control myself to reduce the chances of getting the COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2).
 6. I am confident in my ability to protect myself from the COVID-19 (Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2)
-

Perceived Social Media Content Quality:

(1) Reflective Quality:

1. The outstanding content related to COVID-19 shared on social media can serve my needs well (e.g., using a mask, social distance, etc.).
2. I can do many things with excellent content related to COVID-19 on social media such as sharing with my family members and friends.

(2) Stimulated quality:

1. I feel positive that the excellent content regarding COVID-19 on my social media account can be helpful when I need it.
2. I have faith in the outstanding content relating to COVID-19 of my social media account that it can meet my needs.
3. I am optimistic that the superior content regarding COVID-19 of my social media account can be useful for my purposes.

(3) Practiced Quality:

1. I feel positive that the excellent information of COVID-19 on social media can be helpful when I need that very fast and free.
2. I have faith in the outstanding content of COVID-19 on social media that it can meet my needs whenever I can.

(4) Advocated Quality:

1. I would talk openly about COVID-19 using my social media account.
2. I would join an active group to speak about COVID-19 using my social media account.
3. I would speak publicly sharing any information I think can be useful for others using the outstanding content obtained from social media.



ARTICLE

Religious Memory in a Changing Society: The Case of India and Papua New Guinea

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzes the place of religion in the national collective memory and the changes that have taken place in the field of religion in connection with the modernization and emergence of modern nation-states in India and Papua New Guinea (PNG). In the case of PNG, we look at the place of Christianization in the process of modernization, while in the case of India, we analyze the use of Hinduism in the process of forming national identity. Both cases are analyzed with the use of selected cases of material culture in specific localities and they show the ongoing struggle for the incorporation or segregation of original religious tradition into national identity. Both cases are analyzed on the basis of field research. In the case of India, we look at Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar, and in the case of Papua New Guinea, the *tambaran* building in the village of Kambot in East Sepik Province. While Bharat Mata Mandir demonstrates the modernization of tradition and the incorporation of religion into modern (originally secular) nationalism, the decline in *tambaran* houses is a result of Christianization and the modernization of PNG. The study shows that if there is a connection between religious memory and national memory (or national identity), the religious tradition is maintained or strengthened, whereas when religious memory and national memory are disconnected, religious memory is weakened in a modernizing society.

KEYWORDS

religious memory, national identity, India, Papua New Guinea, Haridwar, Kambot, Brahat Mata Mandir, *tambaran*

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Introduction

South and Southeast Asia is an area that has undergone significant, fundamental and also dramatic changes over the last century. In the period after World War II, the process of decolonization and the associated formation of nation-states culminated there (cf. e.g. Berger, 2004). Some states gained independence earlier (e.g. Bhutan in 1885, Mongolia in 1911, Afghanistan in 1919), but mostly it did not occur until after the end of World War II (Indonesia in 1945 or rather 1949, India in 1947, China in 1948). The process of decolonization and the independence of the new nation-states continued, so that Papua New Guinea, for example, did not gain independence until 1975, twenty-eight years after India.

At the same time, these newly created states became involved (to varying degrees) in the world economy system, which often led to significant socio-cultural change and also to a relative increase in the wealth of these countries. Many countries underwent rapid economic growth (Japan, North Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, followed by Thailand, Vietnam and especially China), which was so significant that East Asia became a distinct global region (Arrighi, Hamashita, & Selden, 2003). Economic growth went hand in hand with other changes that affected all areas of life – from work to leisure. Above all, new forms of consumption became widespread (especially with the growth of the middle class), the demographic character of individual countries changed significantly and countries underwent significant urbanization (resulting in the emergence of huge cities). Some countries became global powers (India, China, Japan), and others regional powers (Indonesia). As a result of these megatrends (Biswas, 2016), there was also a change in security, both at the international and national levels (international conflicts, terrorism) as well as local (crime). The speed of these changes was very dramatic, so some regions underwent dramatic changes over just a few generations. What had taken centuries in the European environment (or even several centuries) happened in these countries often over one human lifespan.

These processes of social and cultural transition took place (and continue to take place) in certain historical and socio-cultural conditions that frame them, and at the same time the transition processes and their consequences transform this framework retrospectively. One of the components that frames social and cultural transition is the collective identity of the community. It is then further subdivided, although with regard to the national character of modern states, national identity is the most important. As Brubaker claims: “‘Nation’ is so central, and protean, a category of modern political and cultural thought, discourse, and practice that it is hard indeed to imagine a world without nationalism” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 10). In many Asian countries, however, there is still a strong communal identity that is tied to a particular locality or a narrower community. In India, for example, community identity plays an important role, connecting individuals with a caste or religious community. In PNG, there is a strong ethnic identity as well as a clan identity. The basic part and necessary precondition of all these collective identities is the collective memory, which integrates individuals, local groups and the wider national community in a lasting timeline – it connects the present with the past and also with the potential future.

Memory and the Nation State

Memory studies is now a relatively developed discipline with a clear intellectual tradition (cf. e.g. Assmann, 2006; Assmann, 2008; Boyer & Wertsch, 2009; Erll & Nünning, 2008; Halbwachs, 1925/1992; Misztal, 2003; Olick, 1999; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Roediger & Wertsch, 2008; Wang, 2008; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). Memory as an analytical category began to be used in the social sciences only in the second half of the twentieth century in connection with the changing nature of developed western societies. Memory appears as a topic as well as a concept in situations where it is itself problematised and where there is talk of memory loss, forgetting and amnesia. It appears, therefore, as part of social, economic and cultural changes that make the collective identity of communities uncertain, as it often finds its foundations in the past. The theme of collective memory is thus closely linked both to the theme of cultural or national identity (e.g. Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Hewer & Kut, 2010; Hilton & Liu, 2017; Verovšek, 2016; Yamashiro, van Engen, & Roediger, 2019) and to the theme of socio-cultural changes.

The theme of memory appeared intensively in the countries of Western Europe in connection with the efforts to deal with the traumatic experiences of the Second World War, which represented a significant discontinuity in the development of individual national communities. The tragic events of the war and the roles that individual nations and their members played in the war (such as collaborating with the occupiers and leaning towards fascism) seriously called into question their collective identity. In the post-war period, the individual national memories were reconfigured. At the same time, some European countries had to deal with their colonial past. In the 1980s, memory reappeared as a topic related to the search for ethnic and national identities and the identities of individual social (state) structures as a result of the fall of communism.

In Europe, this mainly concerned the division of Yugoslavia and of Czechoslovakia, i.e. the formation of new states and the structuring of individual societies. In the post-Soviet region, there was an emergence of a number of states whose territory was formerly part of the Soviet Union. In other parts of the world, the topic of collective memory previously appeared in connection with the emergence of new states as a result of the disintegration of colonial rule. The emergence of new states in Asia and Africa led to a new look at history, which would allow the legitimization of new state sovereignty. One of the essentials for the creation and legitimacy of the new states was the need to enforce the idea of a nation that united previously isolated social units (e.g. tribes). However, creating the idea of a nation (as an imagined community, cf. Anderson, 2006) required a new conception of the past, i.e. the creation of a (new) collective (national) memory. Part of these processes was the new framing of history, which included the formation of new collective identities (including the formation of the continuity of these identities) and new legitimizations of these collective identities.

It is obvious that “memory” becomes a topic when it becomes a problem, i.e. when the previous understanding of the past is questioned in some way and when

there are strong efforts to reinterpret the past. This thematization takes place both in the social reality itself (e.g. as a result of political upheavals and transitions) and in the social sciences (or in both of these areas).

Memory in the Social Sciences and Humanities

At least three internal discourses can be identified in the social sciences, the development of which has led to a boom in the study of memory – multiculturalism and decolonization, postmodernism and conflict theory (Jakobs & Hanrahan, 2005, pp. 255–256). The basic principle of multiculturalism – equal rights of all cultures and attributing the same value to all forms of culture, or rather rejection of the evaluation of any culture – leads to the discovery of various (especially concealed) notions of superiority and their historical roots. This approach necessarily leads to a discussion about the reproduction of the historically conditioned domination of the West, about the formation of stereotypes about other cultures and their use in the power dominance of “Western” culture and the subordination of all other cultures. In this respect, multiculturalism is close to the critique of Orientalism and postcolonial criticism, which reveals, among other things, the role of the social sciences and humanities in the control (symbolic and power-related) of other cultures (including Asian).

In this, multiculturalism approaches postmodernism, the constitutive foundations of which include questioning the legitimacy of so-called great narratives (Lyotard). From our point of view, we can understand it as certain parts or forms of collective memory, or rather as an essential part of the social frameworks of memory and the highest forms of legitimacy, from which the individual elements of collective memory are derived and embedded in the continuity of the past and present. By questioning great narratives, the collective memory is questioned and the need to reconstruct, restructure or re-create the past is established.

Both of these approaches illustrate that the past is not seen as something immutable, but as an area that is created and that needs to be fought for. Memory is thus a component of power and also of conflicts. According to multiculturalism, memory also includes hitherto neglected and marginalized cultural memories, i.e. the cultural memories of marginalized groups (e.g. the memory of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans or other groups from different parts of the planet, but also people of different sexual or gender identity). Postmodernism then questions the existing power that framed memory (cultural and individual) and proclaims that it is open to any innovation and recombination of cultural memory. To this is added the theory of conflict (or interpretive models of conflict), which examines collective memory as an expression of power interests of the privileged and as a tool for control. Collective memory can thus be seen as an ideology expressing the hidden interests of the ruling class. In other words, multiculturalism (and decolonization), postmodernism, and conflict theory show cultural memory as an expression and a tool of power: whoever controls memory controls society, and whoever controls the past controls the present.

The basic foundations for using the category of memory as a tool for social analysis are the following:

- Memory is a social construct. Memory, or rather the specific content of memory and its organisation, is the product of a particular historical moment. “Remembrance” or “remembering” (at the level of the individual and the community) always takes place within predetermined social frameworks and is always a social matter (Halbwachs, 1925/1992).
- Memory (content of memory) is a time-dependent image of the past that is created to explain the present. Remembering does not come from the will of individuals, but is a reaction to a specific need of the time.
- Collective memory is always objectified (embodied) in some material entities and transferred to a space (e.g. Bergson, 1896/1990), or in the digital age it can take on a virtual form (e.g. Reading, 2011; Reaging & Notley, 2015). There is always a memory space, which serves as a tool for reminding, or rather for memory transfer and reconstruction. It is always possible to identify “realms of memory” (Nora, 1984/1996) or “landscapes of memory” (Assmann, 2008).
- At the same time, however, in addition to maintaining memory, there is a strong tendency to forget (e.g. Connerton, 2009). A separation of the connection between the memory storage tools or stored memory contents and current parties may happen. They can stop using the memory space, or they can fill it with other content, i.e. redefine the content of the memory space.
- Memory is always associated with identity and power. There is control over the spread and maintenance of memory (Assmann, 2008).
- Memory is a tool for maintaining the cohesion of the group and has an integrative function. Memory provides a basic interpretive framework legitimizing the very existence of a given group and it strengthens both group and individual identity. It provides not only interpretive frameworks, but also symbols of the group’s identity.
- “News of origin” or founding narratives, by which the group’s existence is firmly integrated in the world and in a wider cosmogony, play a major role in this (cf. e.g. Smith, 1999).
- Memory not only integrates, but also creates differences and borders. It defines group boundaries, thus distinguishing those who find themselves behind them.
- Memory can be maintained, innovated, but also newly invented (cf. e.g. Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

From the point of view of our topic, it is necessary to mention two important facts in this context: in modern society (and thus also in transforming societies) “invented” traditions are closely related to nationalism and the effort to gain the support of a mass democratic society, or with an effort to create new social cohesion and group (in this case national) identity. Related to this is the second factor, which is the weakening of religion as an integrating force or tradition. The need to “invent” traditions may be due to the fact that existing traditions and memory no longer have enough power to integrate society – the decline of religion and the need for newly invented traditions go hand in hand, as religion (as part of a wider cultural memory) no longer provides

enough integrative elements (cf. Hervieu-Léger, 1993/2000). However, it can be used to some extent by newly invented traditions (new collective memory).

Conceptual Framework: the Religious Memory as a Part of Collective (Cultural) Memory

This research is built on the broad research field of memory studies; it studies on the interconnection of collective memory and collective identity (Assmann, 2006; Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Boyer & Wertsch, 2009; Erll & Nünning, 2008; Halbwachs, 1925/1992; Hewer & Kut, 2010; Hilton & Liu, 2017; Misztal, 2003; Olick, 1999; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Pušnik, 2019; Roediger & Wertsch, 2008; Verovšek, 2016; Wang, 2008; Yamashiro, van Engen, & Roediger, 2019), while focusing on a specific part of collective memory, namely religious memory. It primarily deals with Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory and his distinction between cultural and communicative memory (e.g. Assmann, 2008). We understand cultural memory as externalized, objectified and sedimented symbolic forms that speak of the past. Cultural memory is fixed (e.g. in elements of material culture) and thus stable, which means that it tends to decelerate socio-cultural changes. Cultural memory is an established and sedimented structure of thought, notions, values and attitudes that is transmitted intergenerationally and that structures our perception of the present. It is a form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared by a group. However, despite its cultural conservatism, it serves the interests of contemporary actors, so it becomes part of the struggle for control of the interpretive framework that legitimizes the present by referring to the past.

In addition, an important part of cultural memory is religious memory, because religion is a part not only of individual identity, but also of collective identity, including national identity. In the sociology of religion, the most commonly mentioned work in this context is that of Danièle Hervieu-Léger (1993/2000) and Grace Davie (2000), who use the concept of religious memory, or rather the concept of religion as memory, as a metaphor suitable for a better understanding of the process of secularization within European countries. Our study is based more on Gerald O'Collins and David Braithwaite's concept of religious memory, which was used for the analysis of Christian (or rather Catholic) memory, as well as the theoretical work of Guy G. Stroumsa, and Harvey Whitehouse's concept of modes of religiosity (based on different forms of memory), based on research in Papua New Guinea.

Gerald O'Collins and David Braithwaite (2015) suggest viewing the whole Christian tradition as collective memory, the core of which is Jesus (remembering Jesus) and the "primary actor" is the Holy Spirit (who maintains and directs the Christian tradition). In addition to these "actors", the Christian memory contains a number of other characters who serve as role models and lead to the strengthening of the individual's commitment to a group, or rather a tradition. Christian memory (like any group memory) is a tool for finding meaning and strengthening group (in this case, Christian) identity. This is done by a number of elements of memory, including key rites of remembrance such as baptism and the Eucharist, but also various physical

activities such as prayer, making the sign of the cross, gestures before the sacraments, reading liturgical texts, singing songs, or celebrating and commemorating holidays (such as Christmas or Easter) or pilgrimages. These are associated with significant places that recall important moments in the past of the religion – Bethlehem, Lake Galilee, Jerusalem, Rome, etc. An integral part of Christian memory is also various buildings (churches, basilicas, pilgrimage crosses, etc.).

In this regard, the approach of these authors gets closer to the concept of religious memory as introduced by Guy G. Stroumsa (2016). His text is a unique attempt to explicitly conceptualize religious memory, for which he not only uses the approach of history and cognitive anthropology, but also the material of early Christianity. According to him, it was the work of the first generations of Christians transforming their oral memory into texts which was a fundamental (paradigmatic) shift in the organization of memory. Of course, texts existed before, but it was Christianity that strengthened the importance of reading (progressively in the direction of silent reading, which strengthened the privatization and internalization of selected texts). Thus, two systems of religious memory functioned side by side – a system of implicit religious memory, based on oral religious traditions (dominated by myths, mysteries, proverbs, fables and stories), and a system of explicit religious memory, based on written texts that are read and interpreted. Thus, religious memory has shifted from ritualism and orality to hermeneutics and textuality (Stroumsa, 2016, p. 338). These types of memory correspond to two types of declarative memory (semantic and episodic) and two modes of religiosity, as introduced by the cognitive anthropologist Harvey Whitehouse (2002). He distinguishes between the imagistic type and the doctrinal type. Importantly, these two systems of memory are not opposed, but work together (one memory strengthens the other) – “religious memory, initially essentially ritual, or pictorial and intuitive, becomes stabilized as theological, or doctrinal, and discursive” (Stroumsa, 2016, p. 338), and thus sedimented, e.g. in elements of material culture.

Our study analyzes specific examples of material culture (religious buildings and places) as elements of cultural memory which are religious in nature (they are therefore part of religious memory) and tries to show their (growing or weakening) link to collective (national) identity in selected societies. These societies underwent a rapid development, which included fundamental socio-cultural changes associated with the process of decolonization and the creation of a new (i.e. national) identity. These two examples illustrate two forms of transformation of religious memory (places of religion in cultural and national memory) in two selected postcolonial societies of Asia.

The methodology used is also related to this conceptual framework. The basis was fieldwork, or rather ethnography (Fife, 2005; Jackson, 1987; Robben & Sluka, 2007; Scheyvens & Storey, 2003; Spradley, 1980), which included many data creation techniques, from participatory observation and interviews through material studies to various methods of documentation (especially audiovisual) and field notes. During time spent in India (between 1998–2019), data were created for Bharat Matar Mandir in Haridwar (most recently during November 2019); for the village of Kambot (PNG) –

for the period 2018–2019. In this text, with regard to the chosen topic (in connection to visual anthropology, e.g. Collier & Collier, 1986; Hockings, 1995; Pauwels, 2015), primarily audiovisual data and documents were analyzed (while taking into account other types of generated data). The descriptions of the selected religious sites which we address in this text are based on repeated visits to them.

Concept as a Project – the Use of Concept in Research in Countries in South and Southeast Asia

It is certainly disproportionate to try to express common elements in the development of contemporary Asian societies, as the variability of the historical development of individual Asian countries is wide. However, we can identify the potential benefits of using the concept of collective memory in Asian countries and regions.

The most significant benefit can be seen in the connection between the concept of collective memory and the processes of cultural change. The vast majority of Asian countries have undergone and continue to undergo processes of cultural change, which are related both to the disintegration of colonial rule, or to the disintegration of the bipolar world order and the weakening of communism, and to the process of modernization and nation-state formation. In many countries, these changes have long been associated with a change in worldviews, especially in the field of religion.

Let us now look in general terms at two changes in collective memory. The first is the emergence of national memory, when as a result of the global spread of the Western conception of the state, which is based on the principle of nationalism, and the strengthening of emancipatory efforts in the regions, efforts to create their own new state units arose and intensified. These units had to be based on the idea of a collectively shared (national) identity, which, however, required a new conception of the history (and thus the past) of the newly created political entities (nations). Thus, for example, the idea of one Indian nation was created (internally, however, considerably differentiated linguistically, ethnically and socially), which could thus become a hegemon and the basis of a new state.

The basis of the national mythology of the Indian nation was the declaration of belonging to a long tradition of several thousands of years dating back to the period of Harappa culture, or the Vedic “golden age” (Bhatt, 2001; Hansen, 1999; Jaffrelot, 1996). The idea of one nation was created in a similar way, for example, in Papua New Guinea (Chauvel, 2005; Kavanamur, Yala, & Clements, 2003), even though the vast majority of the island’s or rather islands’ population, lives their daily lives in isolation from each other in small settlements whose social organization is based on local and clan identities (cf. May, 2004, pp. 48–106). We could continue with similar examples, but it always happened that local and group identities were overlaid or covered by a common national identity, based on a collectively shared idea of a common past, i.e. a shared collective memory.

The second change is a change in religious memory, which is associated with Christianization in many Asian countries. This, of course, went hand in hand with colonialization, but the individual regions differed significantly in terms of the success of

Christianization. While in India, for example, Christianity remained marginal and is more or less limited to certain localities (e.g. Goa on the west coast), in Papua New Guinea it became dominant (more than 90% of the population professes its various forms).

Christianization (in itself, regardless of the above-mentioned nationalism) meant a completely different perception of one's own past, which had to be rejected as pagan. However, in reality, hybrid states which coexist and in which the original past and traditions are sometimes mixed with new traditions always arise. This is illustrated, for example, by the appearance of the basic exhibition at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby (capital of PNG), which predominantly contains exhibits from pre-colonial times, which are complemented by World War II weapons – right next to wooden boats, bows and arrows there is a machine gun and an automatic rifle (in front of the museum are the remains of combat aircraft). There is not a single mention of Christianity in the National Museum. The hybrid coexistence of the original past and today's modernity is evidenced by the building of the National Parliament, which is in close proximity to the National Museum and whose architectural form is tied to the houses of men (*tambaran*), which used to be at the centre of life in every village and which are almost non-existent today as a result of Christianization.

We are going to look at specific cases of analytical application of the concept of religious memory (as a part of collective memory) in two culturally and socially different regions of Asia, namely Papua New Guinea and India. As we will see, they are examples of a hybridization that mixes various collective memories and of the tension between the continuity and discontinuity of time and changes in collective identity in a postcolonial context. However, both selected cases illustrate different ways of coping with social and political change.

The First Case – Tambaran and Religious Forgetting in the Village of Kambot (PNG)

An integral part of the original cultural traditions throughout PNG were the sacred *tambaran* houses, which were located in each village and formed a central place in them (Sillitoe, 2000, p. 250). They were richly coloured and decorated houses with a distinctive high gable. Inside on the columns, walls, but especially by the gable ceiling there were drawings or wooden figures, ancient ancestors, animal spirits and deities. Massive garamut drums were also there. The houses served as places for men to be initiated (Dougoud, 2005, p. 239). Today, these houses no longer exist, or there are only ruins of them. This is due to the work of Christian missionaries who managed to convert the majority of the population to Christianity and remove most elements of the original collective memory. The collective memory thus lost its carriers, or its places of memory and commemoration.

The practical impact of Christian missions on daily life varied, and there were also differences depending on the type of mission. Although Catholic and Protestant missionaries pursued the same goal, that of converting all the inhabitants to the "true and only faith," Catholic missionaries were more conciliatory to the original traditions than Protestants, who clearly associated the original traditions with belief in Satan and sought their total extinction. Perhaps that is why the village of Kambot on the Keram

River (a tributary of the Sepik) kept its carving tradition. In this village we find both a relatively large Catholic church (built of iron and sheet metal) [Figure 1] and a small Protestant prayer house (a building in its traditional form built of wood and bamboo, or reeds and dry grass) [Figure 2] [Figure 3] as well as a traditional tambaran house [Figure 4]. However, this no longer serves its original purpose, but functions as a kind of “cultural place” where a local carver offers his products. In addition, there is still

Figure 1

Catholic Church in Kambot (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 2

Protestant Church in Kambot, interior (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 3

Protestant Church in Kambot, exterior (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 4

Tambaran House in Kambot, (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

an initiation house for young men, which is, however, considerably dilapidated and nobody takes care of it. In this house we can find colourfully painted columns and rafters, as well as a large wooden statue mounted by the ceiling. The material that covers the genitals of the statue indicates that some attention is paid to this building or rather to this statue. The colours are faded, but you can still sense the impact of the original appearance of the house. In other villages on this river, however, tambaran houses can no longer be found at all. Often there are only empty spaces in them with a few remnants of load-bearing columns, without decorations [Figure 5]. However, the fact that the places where the tambarans stood are not used in any way (e.g. that they are not built up with residential houses) indicates that they still exist in the collective memory and that these spaces are still associated with some cultural or religious meanings. In addition, in the surrounding houses there are sometimes some objects (e.g. large drums), which are no longer used for worship, but are, like the empty spaces where the tambarans used to be, shown to tourists.

We see that the original religious memory is weakening, as are the places that are supposed to maintain it. On the other hand, it is also clear that the original (pre-Christian) memory still persists, although with less strength.

Of the pre-Christian forms of religion, i.e. ancestor cults, cults related to plant growing, male cults and cults of sacred flutes (Lawrence & Meggitt, 1965; Sillitoe, 1998), magic has maintained its strongest position. Religion in PNG, as in the whole of Melanesia, is characterized by a tendency towards syncretism, in which both the original religious tradition and the new religion (in this case Christianity) are innovatively transformed. Religions in PNG (also elsewhere) are a synthesis of stability and change, past and present, as well as diachronicity and synchronicity (cf. Sahlins, 1985, p. 144).

Figure 5
Ruins of Traditional Tambaran House (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

In specific forms of lived religion, religious and non-religious elements are mixed, as are original and new religions. Regina Knapp, who studied religious syncretism in the Papuan group of Bene, says that culture can be understood as the processual and continuous synthesis of different elements and categories (and their meanings) that encounter and interact with each other, acquire a new functional value that again affects other related categories, and leads to transformations in their meanings, use, and structure (Knapp, 2017, p. 9).

Nonetheless, dilapidated (or missing) sacred houses are evidence of forgetting rather than maintaining memory. However, even in Kambot, there are parties who help maintain memory. The concept of collective memory presupposes the existence of “guardians” of memory. There are two types of activity in Kambot. The first is an old man who in his house draws parts of scenes from sacred houses on bark. He redraws sacred scenes on paper and then paints them on relatively large sheets of bark [Figure 6]. He also acts as a local expert on the meanings of paintings, so he serves as their guardian. However, due to the fact that the locals do not use the drawings and mostly do not perform the original group rituals, his role is different to that which he would have played in the original community. So why does he draw visual elements from sacred houses?

Here we come to another significant factor that affected the functioning of religious memory. In addition to Christian missionaries, tourism also contributed to the transformation of the maintenance of the collective memory of this village (as well as of the entire area of East Sepik). It was based on the operation of luxury cruise ships, which brought tourists, who were attracted by the idea of visiting savages and cannibals, to this relatively inaccessible area several times a month (mostly Australians, Americans and Europeans). For thirty years, these boats carried rich tourists to Kambot and other villages, where they bought items cheaply that were tied to the original local

Figure 6

Man Re-Drawing the Motives from the Traditional Tambaran House in Kambot (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

traditions (masks, shields, drawings, etc.). The activities of tourists and missionaries there connected and caused the disappearance of virtually all elements of the original material culture. With some exaggeration we can say that what the missionaries did not physically destroy was taken away by the tourists. The villagers were left with only their houses, boats and paddles. And, of course, their skills in procuring food, especially fishing and taro cultivation (Silverman, 2018). It is very likely that the man who reproduces drawings from sacred houses does so primarily with respect to tourists.

Related to this is the second type of activity of maintaining collective memory, or rather its transformation. It is a phenomenon that is very specific and is associated only with this area, where there is a long tradition of carving. In the 1970s, a new tradition was created in connection with the development of tourism. To meet the demand of tourists for local souvenirs, the local woodcarvers created a new element of local material culture – storyboards (Dougoud, 2005; Soukup & Lužný, 2019). These are wooden carved boards containing various motifs, where, in addition to scenes from the lives of the natives (crocodile hunting, taro cultivation, fishing, etc.), elements from the decoration of tambarans appear. It is mainly a depiction of various mythological characters and animals [Figure 7].

Destruction of key elements of religious memory in the form of sacred tambaran houses and modification of the carving tradition, or the emergence of a new tradition of storyboard production are all evidence of the dynamic development of the local community, which has become part of global processes, three of which are the most important: Christianization, modernization and international tourism. At the same time, we can understand the current state as a specific form of cultural adaptation or as part of the mechanisms of cultural exchange (Knapp, 2017). However, we believe that the consequence of all these processes is a state of cultural forgetting (Connerton, 2008).

Figure 7
Storyboard from Kambot (East Sepic, PNG)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Case Two – The Temple of Mother India in Haridwar (India) and the Consolidation of Religion-National Identity

One form of modernization of the Indian cultural tradition is the emergence of Indian nationalism, without which it would not have been possible to achieve the full independence of India and enforce the establishment of an independent Indian state (which took place in 1947). This nationalism takes many forms, two of which are the most important: secular (represented, for example, by Jawaharlal Nehru, creator of Indian secularism, first prime minister and prominent leader of the Indian National Congress) and cultural-religious (i.e. Hindu, represented by V. D. Savarkar, author of the concept of “Hindutva” and leader of Hindu Mahasabha) (e.g. Andersen & Damle, 2019; Graham, 1990; Hansen, 1999; Jaffrelot, 2005; Jaffrelot, 2007; Sharma, 2015). Nationalism represents a specific form of collective memory, as it creates an idea of a national cultural tradition that forms the basis of the collective, that is, national identity (Anderson, 2006; Brubaker, 1996; Brubaker, 2012; Silverman, 2011; Yamashiro, van Engen & Roediger, 2019). Two forms of Indian nationalism find their expression in two temples of Mother India: (a) a secular version of Indian nationalism (the basic principle of which is cultural and political inclusiveness, as evidenced by the fact that the opening ceremony was attended by about 25,000 members of various religious communities, i.e. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Parsees, Buddhists and also “Untouchables” (Ramaswamy, 2006, p. 177) is associated with the religiously neutral Mother India Temple in Varanasi (opened in 1936 by Mahatma Gandhi), which is set apart from Hindu religious memory; (b) the religious version of Indian nationalism (based on the idea of “Hindutva” and religious exclusivity) is associated with the Hindu Mother India Temple in Haridwar (built in 1983 by the leading organization of Hindu nationalism, Vishwa Hindu Parishad), which is part of modernized Hindu religious memory. Interestingly, both temples have the same name: Bharat Mata Mandir. In this text, we do not focus on the secular temple in Varanasi (see Ramaswamy, 2010, pp. 151–169; for a portrayal of Mother India see Ramaswamy, 2014), but exclusively on the Temple of Mother India in Haridwar, which is part of a strong (and growing) stream of religious (in this case, Hindu) nationalism.

The Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar is conceived in an unusual way, namely as a museum, or an educational centre where statues of deities are placed; these do not serve as part of complex religious rituals, but as a reminder (revival and consolidation of collective memory). This temple is located in the area of Sapt Sarovar (about 5 km from the centre of Haridwar), where a large number of ashrams and temples are located, and on the street leading to it we can find other similarly designed religious-educational temples [Figure 8] [Figure 9]. These temples are markedly different from other Hindu temples in that their primary purpose is not to be sacred places associated with the worship of specific gods and deities, but places that resemble the great and noble entirety of India’s religious culture. The interior spaces are also adapted to this – there is a winding “path” (corridor, with adjoining spaces), which guides the visitor through mythological scenes and altars, dedicated to various gods and goddesses.

Figure 8

Mandir Mata Lal Devi Ji Bharat Darshan in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 9

India Temple in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Most “classical” Hindu temples are dedicated to a specific god or goddess who is central to the temple, although we can find a number of other gods and goddesses (e.g. if it is a Shiva temple, we will certainly find a lingam, another depiction of the god Shiva, a statue of the white bull Nandin, Shiva’s trident, Shiva’s wife in various forms, Shiva’s son Ganesha, but also probably the Vishnuist Hanuman, or other deities from both the Shivaist and Vishnuist or Shaktic traditions). However, all these gods, goddesses and deities are worshipped and offered sacrifices (e.g. Klostermaier, 1994; Smith, 2003).

The Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar is different at first glance – it has a different appearance and overall composition. It is a relatively tall building that rises above other buildings in the area and looks more like a tall administrative or residential building [Figure 10]. It is a white (formerly red and white) eight-storey building with a rectangular floor plan and a small dome on the roof, or rather on the eighth floor. As in other Hindu temples, it is not possible to step into the building wearing shoes, which indicates the sacred character of the building.

On the 1st floor visitors enter a large room, in which on the opposite side (in relation to the entrance) there is (behind glass) a large figure of the goddess Bharat Mata with loose black hair and ears of grain in one hand and a bowl with a lotus bud in the other [Figure 11]. Visitors take the elevator to the 7th floor and can then go up one floor (to the dome on the roof), which is dedicated to Shiva, whose standing figure with a trident (also the lower sitting figure of Shiva as a yogi) has a view of the landscape with the river Ganges [Figure 12]. All other floors (except the 5th floor) have a different composition – they are circular rooms with a number of glazed alcoves, in which are placed figures of gods, goddesses and heroes.

However, each floor is dedicated to different figures – the 7th floor shows various forms of the god Vishnu, including avatars and their wives (e.g. Krishna and Radha, Narayana and Lakshmi, Rama and Sita; but also the deity Dattatreya, which symbolizes the Trimurti, i.e. the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in one figure); the 6th floor is dedicated to goddesses, collectively understood as forms of the goddess Shakti (such as Skandhamata and Abhaji); the 4th floor is called “Sant Mandir” and is dedicated to figures of various religious traditions of India (there are statues of Buddha, Mahavira – the

Figure 10
*Bharat Mata Mandir in Sapt Sarovar,
Haridwar (India)*



Photography: Dušan Lužný

founder of Jainism, the mythological poet Tulsidas, Guru Nanak – the founder of Sikhism, and modern figures such as Swami Vivekananda, and even contemporary ones e.g. Sai Baba); the 3rd floor is called “Matru Mandir” and is dedicated to female warriors, and many of the characters depicted, in the spirit of the official doctrine of conservative Hinduism and Hindu nationalism, were burned together with their deceased husbands (all are labelled as Sati along with other names), a specific exception is two figures from the West – theosophist Annie Besant, and also a disciple of Swami Vivekananda Sister Nivedit; however, both were highly active in the Indian independence movement and are thus integrated into Hindu nationalism; and the 2nd floor called “Shoor Mandir” is dedicated to male heroes who were instrumental in Indian independence (we find here the figures of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhimrao Ambedkar, and Savarkar, but also the figures of real or legendary kings such as Maharana Pratap, Shivaji Maharaj and Maharaja Agrasen), although this series of male figures also includes female figures such as Jhansi Ki Rani, a 19th century Indian queen who, as the leading figure of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, became a symbol of resistance to British rule for Hindu nationalists.

While most floors represent prominent figures in Indian history, including gods and goddesses, the 5th floor is designed differently. It is called the Assembly Hall and represents the coexistence of all the traditions and places in India. On this floor are presented the individual Indian states, or rather based on the depiction of the local

Figure 11

Statue of Mother India – Ground Floor of the Bharat Matar Mandir in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 12

The Top Floor of the Shiva Shrine Within the Bharat Matar Mandir in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)



Photography: Dušan Lužný

landmarks of these states, the richness of India's cultural traditions is emphasized. Each state (e.g. Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Gundarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, etc.) is given a "bulletin board" with several pictures and an explanatory label in English and Hindi. Significant monuments are shown here, which are mostly religious buildings and temples (Khajuraho Temple, Jagannath Temple in Orissa, the Golden Temple in Amritsar) and other monuments (drawings and other pictures from the rock temples in Ajanta and Ellora), as well as typical local crafts, costumes or festivals, natural features and also prominent figures (such as Rabindharath Thakur and Gandhi). Overall, this floor gives the impression of a "tourist catalogue", i.e. a presentation of local attractions that need to be visited or seen. It is a kind of pictorial publication about India, or rather about its regions and attractions. This floor disrupts, or rather complements, the otherwise dominant religious (mythological) plane of the whole building. The floor is a specific form of "tourist guide", which gives brief information about a particular place and selects the most significant sights or significant places that the visitor should see or know about.

The temple was founded by Swami Satyamitranand Giri (1932–2019) and was ceremonially opened on 15 May 1983 by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is primarily aimed at Indian visitors, because in addition to descriptions in English (which is one of the official languages of India), there are descriptions only in Hindi, in the Devanagari script. The whole temple is a form of national "exhibition", i.e. a presentation in which the most significant "objects" are presented, which, however, are meant to demonstrate the richness (internal diversity) of the unified cultural tradition of India. The temple therefore presents the cultural unity of the nation and is actually a specific form of "national museum". And because every unity must be protected and fought for, an integral part of the exhibition is shown by the heroes and heroines who have contributed to the preservation of this unity. Bharat Mata Mandir is thus an example of the effort to create, or retain, collective (national) memory. It is an institution whose goal is the education and strengthening of national consciousness, which is based on religious tradition. It is also no coincidence that this temple was built in Haridwar, as it is a significant place of pilgrimage, where not only the kumbh mela takes place, but also every evening thousands of pilgrims take part in the ritual of worshipping Mother Ganges. Undoubtedly, Haridwar plays a key role in India's religious topography.

Comparison of Cases – Partial Conclusion

The examples of the tambaran house in the village of Kambot in PNG and the Bharat Mata Mandir temple in Haridwar in India demonstrate different strategies for dealing with collective memory. While Bharat Mata Mandir is an example of the active formation and strengthening of the collective religious memory associated with the newly formed Indian nation, the demise of traditional tambaran houses in PNG is evidence of the active destruction of traditional cultural memory associated with pre-Christian tribal forms of religious life.

Bharat Mata Mandir seeks to document the unified continuous tradition of the Indian nation and the patronage of this tradition by religious authorities (gods and

deities). It connects religious mythology (gods, goddesses, deities and related mythological narratives) with national mythology (prominent figures of modern Indian history, who are associated with the effort to achieve Indian independence) and thus creates the appearance of internally non-conflicting national tradition (under one roof are statues of Gandhi and Savarkar, who was imprisoned in connection with the organization of the assassination of Gandhi).

It is an expression of the strong position of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics, in which the Bharytiya Janata Party political party is finding increasing strength. The Bharytiya Janata Party is one of the two dominant Indian political parties (alongside the Indian National Congress), has been the main government party four times since 1998 and won 37.5% in the 2019 elections. This party is based on the ideology of Hindutva and builds on the religious and political activities of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organization, which, among other things, built Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar. The temple can thus be seen as an official expression of contemporary government ideology, but the idea of building temples associated with Hindu nationalism is older – as early as 1924, Swami Shradhdhanand, leader of the Arya Samaj (another neo-Hindu organization), advocated that in every Indian city a “Hindu Rashtra Mandir,” a temple consecrated to India (Smith, 2003, p. 192) be built.

If the Bharat Mata Mandir Temple in Haridwar can be seen as a demonstration of the winning collective memory in India, then the ruins of the tambaran house in Kambot (but also elsewhere in PNG) can be seen as a picture of the destruction of the original collective memory and evidence of the loss of the original cultural and religious traditions of PNG. The original tribal religions, of which the tambaran houses were an integral part and material basis, were relatively quickly replaced by Christianity in its various forms. Robust and forceful Christian missions (Catholic and Protestant) effectively disrupted the existing forms of religious life, resulting in a situation where the vast majority of the population professes Christianity (according to the 2011 census 96% of inhabitants identified as Christian) (Aerts, 1998a, p. 1). So we can say that, like some other countries in South and Southeast Asia (such as the Philippines), PNG is a country dominated by Christianity.

However, this does not mean that the original religious ideas have completely disappeared. Despite the dominance of Christianity, in many places, for example, the tradition of magic or healing has been maintained, while some original religious concepts (such as ideas of mana life force) have taken a different form and been brought into line with Christian doctrine. In PNG, the original religious traditions and the new religion (i.e., Christianity) that was imported were quite specifically synchronised (Aerts, 1998b; Gibbs, 2015; Knapp, 2017; Nehrbass, 2012; Rio, MacCarthy, & Blanes, 2017; Robbins, 2004; Shaw, 2018). Although it might seem that the original religious traditions have completely disappeared, and with them the tambaran houses, the fact that some tambaran houses are still standing (i.e., they were not immediately destroyed) and that some new buildings (such as the National Parliament building in the capital city, Port Moresby) use elements or even the overall architectural concept of tambaran houses proves that the original collective memory has not been destroyed and that there are some parties who protect or at least commemorate this memory.

This is clearly evidenced by the appearance of the current paper notes, as the front sides of the Papuan banknotes all contain a depiction of the National Parliament building with distinctive ornaments from tambaran houses.

Although both examples point to a different treatment of collective religious memory, they illustrate some of the above-mentioned theoretical postulates. Above all, they show that collective memory is materialized and stored in a space. Both examples are (albeit in different forms) an example of a mnemotype, as they represent certain places of memory that either serve to maintain and share memory or are evidence of collective forgetting. They also demonstrate the integrative function of memory, as the function of Brahat Mata Mandir (in Haridwar) is to strengthen national, cultural, and religious identities, while the ruins of the tambaran are evidence of the reconfiguration of collective consciousness and the creation of a new collective and individual identity. Both examples also clearly demonstrate the connection of collective memory with power, i.e. with power that actively shapes or changes collective memory.

Conclusion and Discussion – Religion and National Identity in a Changing Society

One of the constitutive elements of global modernity is the nation state. The development of global modernity at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century has clearly shown the one-sidedness of the false generalization of European cultural experience, which unambiguously links modernity (and the modern state) with secularity. Global developments have shown that the modern state in different parts of the world and in different cultural contexts can coexist with religion, or rather that religion can be an important systemic part of it. However, this does not mean that religion does not change in the context of modernity. The coexistence of religion and modern society leads to changes in religion. The process of modernization in individual states brings about a radical transformation of society as a whole, as well as its parts (collectives and individuals).

Both India and Papua New Guinea underwent a radical change in the last century, based on a broad process of modernization that has affected all areas of life for the people of the two countries. Part of the creation of new (national) states was also the creation of a new national identity. A comparison of the two selected examples showed the important role of religion in maintaining a collective identity. Although the original traditions were weakened in both countries, the need for national unification (creation of a unified nation) revived some elements of the religious tradition and incorporated them into the structure of national identity. India is a case where the new national identity was built on the idea of a unified (albeit internally diverse) long religious and cultural tradition. The basis of collective identity and collective memory is the idea of continuity, where all discontinuous elements are either included (and thus lose their discontinuous character, e.g. Buddhism or Sikhism) or are excluded from this tradition (e.g. Islam). The PNG case illustrates a different situation, based on discontinuity (Christianization, or overall religious change), which has not yet been overcome and which creates a schizophrenic situation where official collective identity and memory work with elements of the original culture and the new religious and cultural character of

the new nation is not emphasised much, but at the same time the country is undergoing a radical social change associated with modernization, which does not correspond in any way with the original traditions. Our study shows that if there is a connection between religious memory and national memory (or national identity), religious tradition is maintained or strengthened, whereas when religious memory and national memory are disconnected, religious memory is weakened in a modernizing society.

For the social sciences and humanities, both examples show the need for openness both in the field of theory and in the field of methodology. Reality seldom corresponds to theoretical concepts or textbook methodological procedures. If we study the forms of social and cultural change, the social sciences and humanities must also be open to change and to theoretical and methodological innovations.

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ARTICLE

Digital Political Participation of Western and Eastern Parts of Germany Residents (based on Change.org Online Petitions)

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ABSTRACT

The article shows the results of a study aimed at finding the determinants, which describe the petitioning activity of the residents of the western and eastern parts of Germany. The research material consists of 1,036 petitions from the German-language segment of *Change.org* during the period of 2012–2018 (322 petitions from eastern part of Germany, 714 petitions from western part of Germany). A thematic classifier based on the analysis of electronic petitions was created. It subdivided all the petitions into 18 thematic groups, for example, human rights, animal protection, culture, politics, migration issues, proposals for reforming certain areas of life, transport system, Internet, protection and support for people with disabilities and rare diseases, financial questions, environmental protection, housing issues, weapons/spirits/tobacco/drugs, healthcare, elderly people, education, sports, sustainable development. Statistically significant differences between western and eastern territories were found only in the animal protection thematic group. It is stated that the bipolar construct East/West rooted in the historical logic of the legacy of socialism and capitalism on the German territories could not explain the logic of the petitioning activity of the contemporary Germans. Moreover, the historical heritage/separation factor is found in the socio-economic problems of the regions, but it is not critical while determining the values and civic activism of German people.

KEYWORDS

Germany, online petition, electronic petition, digital political participation, *Change.org*

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Introduction

Contemporary Germany has a complex of territories that are both connected and divided historically. The unification of Germany at the end of the 20th century formed a unique platform that allows researchers to study and compare the processes occurring in the western and eastern parts of Germany in the context of historical (namely socialist) heritage and at the same time in the context of the formation of modern relations between European territories. The purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of digital political participation of residents of the western and eastern parts of Germany in the form of online petitions to discuss the role of historical experience in shaping modern civil action strategies of the studied territories.

The problem of the division of Germany can be presented in a variety of contexts: centuries-old fragmentation of territories, mismatch of the borders of the German-language space with state borders, absence of a unified capital for a long period, confessional division of German lands into the Protestant north and the Catholic south, etc. (Rogozhin, 2011). Throughout its existence, Germany experienced not only regional, confessional, etc. “disintegration”, but also an especially acute split of the national identity of the population after the Second World War (Shultse, 2007).

The reunification of Germany in 1989 was “epoch-making” (Weidenfeld & Körte, 1991); it opened up opportunities for new searches in identity-building (Klein, 2014; Korotetskaya, 2012). At the same time, the period of existence of the East Germany (officially the German Democratic Republic), and the West Germany (officially the Federal Republic of Germany), according to researchers, formed rigid ideological and political borders that divided the east and the west of the country, the so-called “mental barrier” appeared in the minds of Germans, which differentiated all Germans on the basis of their belonging to the lands of the GDR or FRG (Kauganov, 2013; Poptsov, 2015). The last thirty years of the coexistence of German territories, have undoubtedly changed the self-awareness and self-perception of a united society, however, researchers looking at economic, cultural, political, psychological, social, etc. differences between the eastern and western lands do not give an unambiguously positive answer to the question of “equalization”, “achievement of similarity” or complete integration of territories. Comparing eastern and western parts, researchers study:

- socio-economic and demographic problems, which, as a rule, are more acute in the eastern lands, namely unemployment (Semerkova, 2014), labour productivity (Burda & Severgnini, 2015); health (Prütz et al., 2014), birth rates (Klüsener & Goldstein, 2012; Vatterrott, 2011); education and IQ (Roivainen,

2012); cultural problems (including the problem of “second-class citizens”) (Ushkevich, 2003), etc.;

- problems of internal migration from the eastern to western part and within eastern lands (Heiland, 2004; Sander, 2014), as well as the impact of external migration on regional imbalances (Scherr, 2013);
- problems of decentralization and recentralization of the German federal system (Wollmann, 2017), including the problem of “levelling” of the territories (Lavrovskiy, 2001), territorial inequality (Best, 2011; Zawilska-Florczuk, 2011), and the reproduction of neocolonialist relationships between eastern and western lands (Klyuter & Klyuter, 2001).

Only a few researchers express optimistic or non-trivial ideas (for example, in favor of the eastern territories) reproducing the context of comparison of the Eastern and Western lands (Klüsener & Goldstein, 2012; Zawilska-Florczuk & Ciechanowicz, 2011). The majority of them, however, state that the rapprochement of East and West within the borders of one country is slower than it was expected with the unification of Germany in 1989 (The process of unification of Germany: 9 November 1989 [fall of the Berlin Wall] – 3 October 1990 [German Unity Day]). Researchers approach comparative studies of the western and eastern parts of Germany in the political sphere even more carefully, since the question of the “Soviet legacy” is still very delicate (Molodikova & Lyalina, 2017).

Electronic Petitions and Digital Political Participation

In this study, a comparative analysis focuses on the field of digital political participation of German population in the form of creating and supporting electronic petitions. In modern political science, political participation is one of the main theoretical categories and is defined as an activity whose main purpose is to influence the actions of the authorities (Golbraykh, 2016).

Researchers distinguish between conventional (regulated by law, legal) and non-conventional (rejected by most of the society for religious, moral and other reasons) forms of political participation (Malinovskiy, 2013). Conventional forms include participation in elections, petition signing, meetings with political functionaries, legal strikes, demonstrations, etc. Unconventional forms include participation in unauthorized demonstrations, illegal strikes, seizure of official buildings, traffic blocking, pickets, etc. (Lamprianou, 2013).

With the development of information technologies and digital political communication, offline political participation has also “grown” into digital forms of activity. Researchers focusing on different forms of digital political participation (van Deth, 2014) believe that there is no fundamental difference between online and offline activity. They distinguish between offline forms of political participation, hybrid forms, universal forms (such as electronic petition, whose digital format is determined exclusively by information technology), and those typical only of the online format (online commenting, reposts, links, in exceptional cases, even “likes”, etc.). Considering that the electronic (online) petition is a universal form of political

participation combining online and offline forms, digital activity allows online petitions to reach a new level of publicity, to become a more effective instrument of political influence (Lindner & Riehm, 2009).

In contemporary research, online petitions are seen as a form of democratic innovation and a way to involve new populations in civic engagement (Demushina, 2016). A number of analytical works convincingly prove that online petitions represent informative material for studying civic initiatives, political culture, various forms of civic resistance, etc. (Berg, 2017). Online petitions are submitted or filed on the Internet using special portals, which can attract the widest public attention possible to the problem (Lin, 2012). In addition to national resources for creation of online petitions and organizing polls, there exist international ones that operate in various languages, such as the online platform *Change.org* (Halpin et al., 2018).

Methods and Materials

This study is based on the concept of digital political participation understood as actions taken by ordinary members of the political system to influence the results of its activities. We use thematic mapping of petitions with the AntConc software (analysis of lexical units in electronic texts), hierarchical cluster analysis, and χ^2 criterion (Chi-square of Pearson) to determine statistically significant differences between numerical indicators.

The empirical base of the study was extracted from the online platform *Change.org* using the tools written in the Python programming language. It consists of German-language texts related to Germany. The total empirical base includes 1,036 petitions and covers the period since the creation of the German-language version of the platform *Change.org* (from 2012 to March 2018). 322 petitions were originated in the lands of East Germany (Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, Berlin) and 714 petitions in the lands of West Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Bremen Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein). Among all the petitions filed, 193 petitions received the status of “victory” (63 petitions from the eastern part of Germany and 130 from the western part).

We have chosen the digital resource *Change.org* due to the fact that this international platform for creating electronic petitions is one of the most popular non-governmental and publicly available online petition platforms in Germany as in many other countries.

Results

Submitting petitions and collecting votes for petitions is a common practice of civic activism in Germany. In accordance with the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany as amended on 17 July, 1975 (Article 45c), a special Petition Committee was created in the Federal Republic of Germany. Complaints and requests forwarded to the Bundestag go directly to the Petition Committee whose representatives consider

the complaints received. However, a petition must collect at least 50 thousand votes in order to be in the spotlight of the petition committee.

The non-governmental German-language version of the platform *Change.org* was launched in July 2012 and currently has more than 3.5 million users. Any Internet user can create a petition or sign the petition for which one is ready to cast one's vote on the *Change.org* platform.

To create a petition, one must register on the website or log in to the website from a Facebook¹ account. No limit of votes has been established to determine the success (victory) of the petition – it all depends on the specific problem and the conditions for its resolution.

After collecting votes and organizing a public relations campaign on social networks, the creator of the petition passes it to the authorities to solve the problem. If the problem is resolved, the author of the petition marks it as successful/completed on *Change.org*. Thus, submitted petitions reflect the aspirations of the population, and those supported reflect the willingness of the authorities or business to resolve a range of problems formulated in the petitions.

Classification of Petitions

We identified, classified, and grouped keywords to create a thematic classifier from the collection of downloaded petition texts using the AntConc software.

As a result, eighteen thematic groups united by a common problem were identified:

- human rights (Recht, Unterstützung, Demokratie, etc.);
- animal protection (Hund, Tier, Wolf, Zirkus etc.);
- culture (EastSideGallery, Weimar, Bach, Kultur etc.);
- politics (Politik, der europäische Feiertag, etc.);
- migration issues (Flüchtlinge, Integration, etc.);
- proposals for improvement of certain areas of life (Sommerzeit, Zeitumstellung, Verbraucherschutz etc.);
- transport system (Bahn, Verkehr, Flughafen, etc.);
- Internet (Livestreamgarantie, TeamViewer, network etc.);
- protection and support for people with disabilities and rare diseases (Hilfe, Behinderung, Erkrankungen, etc.);
- financial issues (Geld, discounter, Grundeinkommen etc.);
- environmental protection (Ozeane, Abgas-Skandal, etc.);
- housing issues (Bezahlbare Wohnungen, BGB-Vorschriften etc.);
- weapons/alcohol/tobacco/drugs (Kleinwaffen, Todesopfer, freies Verkaufsrecht, die Spätis, Alkohol, Tabak etc.);
- healthcare (Krankenversicherung, Psychologische Hilfe, medizinische Kontrollinstanz etc.);
- elderly people (Ghettorenten Gerechtigkeit, gegen Einsamkeit im Alter, Senioren etc.);
- education (Ganztagsschule, Studenten, Grundschule, etc.);
- sports (Olympischer Sportbund, Sport etc.).

¹ Facebook™ is a trademark of Facebook Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

- sustainable development (ToxicSubstances, Windenergieanlagen, Gefahrentutlagers etc.).

This thematic classifier was used to divide the petitions into thematic groups: all the petitions were assigned to one or another thematic group with the keywords used in the petition (one of eighteen). Petitions that ended up in the “human rights” group included appeals calling against any discrimination. Animal protection petitions called for humane attitude toward animals. The “culture” group addressed problems associated with the preservation of historical and cultural heritage objects (galleries, theaters, museums, historical parks, squares, reserves, etc.).

The “politics” group included petitions related to both domestic and foreign policies of the state. “Migration issues” combined petitions in support of refugees, as well as petitions against the policy of “open doors”, etc. The group “proposals for improvement of certain areas of life” included petitions to cancel the clock being put forward daylight saving time in Germany, ban the installation of garbage bins in front of the houses, cancel fireworks on New Year’s Eve, etc. The “transport system” group included petitions of the respective subject. The “Internet” group included petitions about video games, creation of the South Park application for Android², change of Twitter³ interface and others. The group “protection and support for people with disabilities and rare diseases” comprises petitions on the social protection of these population categories.

The “financial issues” group combined petitions related to the state budget system (equitable financing, minimum wage, basic income, etc.). The “environmental protection” group included petitions on limiting the negative impact of human activity on nature (limiting atmospheric emissions, preserving forest complexes and marine ecosystems, etc.) The “housing issues” group included petitions on affordable housing, speculation in residential and commercial real estate, on rent increase, laws to promote housing cooperatives, etc. In the group “weapons/alcohol/tobacco/drugs” were petitions on restriction of arms sale, free sale of alcohol and tobacco, legalization of marijuana, etc. The “healthcare” group included petitions representing a set of medical measures aimed to strengthen and preserve the mental and physical health of citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany, make the quality medical care accessible, and expand preventive measures in the field of health. The group of “elderly people” included petitions calling for social protection of citizens of elderly for insurance of their high standard of living (clubs for older people, reduced retirement age, programs against loneliness in old age, etc.).

The “sports” group included petitions related to change of Olympic sports rules, exclusion of wrestling from Olympic disciplines, ban of pepper spray at football stadiums, preservation of men’s teams in tennis, etc. The “education” group included appeals for recruitment of teachers to elementary schools, introduction of “Nature Management and Environmental Protection” course into kindergarten curriculum, maintenance of educational forums, winter holidays for all students, etc.

The “Sustainable Development” group was made of petitions with proposals for improvement of environmental and technological profile of people’s lives: resolution to

² Android™ is a trademark of Google Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

³ Twitter™ is a trademark of Twitter Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

the problems of working at hazardous nuclear power plants in Belgium, health threat of toxic substances and pesticides, expansion of wind generators, and protection of people living nearby on the electricity routes, etc.

Based on the identified eighteen topics, all German-language petitions territorially associated with Germany were retrieved from *Change.org* archives (1,036 petitions), divided into eighteen groups and analyzed in the context of lands (modern territorial units of Germany), taking into account the historical division of East/West Germany.

Subjects/Themes of Filed petitions: Eastern and Western Parts of Germany

For the period from 2012 to 2018, the number of online petitions created on *Change.org* varies significantly across federal lands. Three groups of territories are distinguished: territories where the activity of creating and promoting petitions on *Change.org* is low, medium and high.

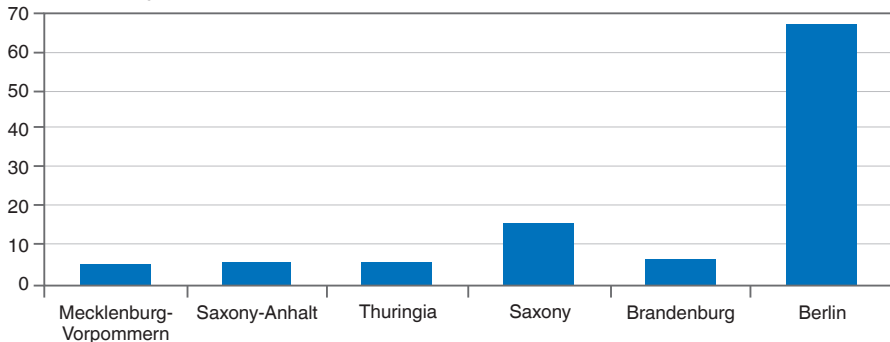
Federal states with low petition activity: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (13 online petitions), Saxony-Anhalt (15 online petitions), Free State of Thuringia (16 online petitions), Brandenburg (18 online petitions), Saarland (12 online petitions), the free Hanseatic city of Bremen (10 online petitions), the free state of Saxony (42 online petitions), Rhineland-Palatinate (37 online petitions), Schleswig-Holstein (32 online petitions).

Territories with medium activity: Baden-Württemberg (98 online petitions), Lower Saxony (80 online petitions), the free Hanseatic city of Hamburg (72 online petitions), Hesse (62 online petitions). Areas with high activity in creation and promotion of petitions: Berlin (218 online petitions), North Rhine-Westphalia (178 online petitions), the free state of Bavaria (133 online petitions). It follows that the total number of petitions filed in eastern Germany is 322 petitions, and in western Germany is 714 petitions.

This disproportion is due to the population, since the population of the western part of Germany is four times bigger than the population of the eastern part (Wollmann, 2017). At the same time, there is a significant differentiation in the number of requests in the eastern part of Germany: a high concentration of online petitions is in the capital of Berlin (218 petitions), and 104 petitions (one third of the total) fall on the rest of the land (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

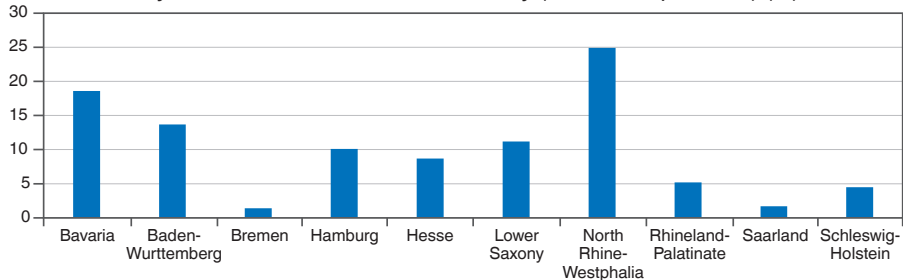
Petition Activity of the Eastern German Lands (number of petitions) (%)



Berlin is a unique territory in Germany that is highly focused on the advancement of online requests (it is also a territory integrating socialist and capitalist heritage). In the western part of Germany, creating online petitions on *Change.org* seems to be even more (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Petition Activity of the Western Lands of Germany (number of petitions) (%)



A comparative analysis of the petitions in western and eastern parts of Germany representing thematic groups in accordance with the classifier presented above confirms that the problems motivated the creation of online petitions are similar in east and west. Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between online petitions created by residents of the western and eastern parts of Germany are present only in relation to petitions for animal welfare: the theme of animal welfare is a priority for seven western federal lands. In the eastern part of Germany, the theme of “animal welfare” is also popular, but it is just one of many significant problems, while in the west it is a leading one. When comparing statistically insignificant differences between the reasons for petitioning of western and eastern lands, the regional specificity is obvious, which, without statistics, can be attributed to speculation.

However, the list of eastern lands “special petitions” (petitions on housing issues: petitions against weapons/alcohol/tobacco/drugs, petitions on the elderly/senior citizens), and the list of petitions typical only of western lands (petitions on education, sports, sustainable development of society) are evidently different. The challenges of the eastern (“survival”) territories contrast with the challenges of western (“development”) territories.

These signs seem to preserve the deprivation motives in the description of the eastern lands and the super-prosperity motives of the description of western ones; however, the identified differences do not look convincing enough against the background of the dominant similarity of the territories.

Subjects/Themes of Winning Petitions: Eastern and Western Parts of Germany

Petitions registered on *Change.org* and their voting indicators reveal the character of the public problems of territories being more or less supported (and shared) by other residents. At the same time, online petitions with the status of “victory” indicate the interests of those institutions and groups who are the recipients of electronic communications and have the power to “execute petitions”. By analyzing the winning

petitions, one can obtain information on the spheres and problems of public life in which the real interaction between the authorities and citizens is localized.

In the entire collection of online petition texts from eastern part of Germany, more than half are attached to the city of Berlin (63 of 322 filed electronic petitions have the status of “victory”, which is 20%, that is, every fifth petition). The winning petitions were from the thematic groups “animal welfare”, “human rights”, “preservation of cultural heritage”, “migration issue”, “politics”. However, the number of votes did not become a factor affecting success. For example, the petition aiming to develop the South Park application for Android was implemented, although the appeal received the smallest number of votes (33).

Example of a winning petition: FS (ID1518168) 09.05.2014 (33 participants) „Eine South Park App für Android!“ (South Park application for Android)⁴.

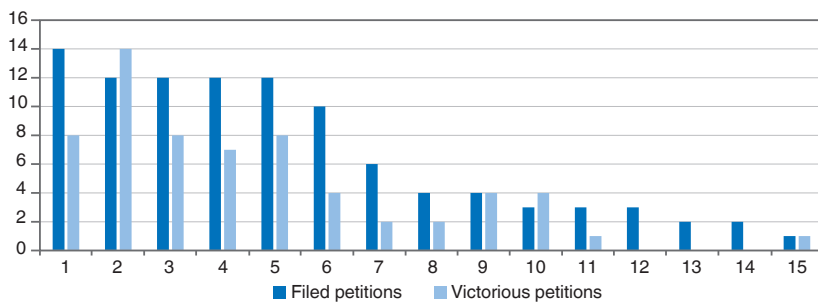
Example of a winning petition: Nico Trinkhaus (ID3664055) 29.06.2015 (463,969 participants) „Lassen Sie Raju, den weinenden Elefanten, in Freiheit leben!“ (Let Raju, the crying elephant, live in freedom)⁵.

The largest campaign among the winning petitions is the campaign for freedom of taking photographs in public places (555,232 participants).

In the eastern lands of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony-Anhalt, the two winning petitions (concerning financial issues, social protection of vulnerable groups, as well as the protection of animals and migration problems). In the lands of Thuringia and Brandenburg – three winning petitions per each (animal welfare, migration issues and financial issues). In Saxony – four (petitions on human rights, migration issues, etc.). Let us consider the frequency of winning petitions in the eastern part of Germany in a comparative context by subject (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Comparative Analysis of Topics of Winning Online Petitions on Change.org in the Eastern Part of Germany (%)



Note. 1 – Human rights; 2 – Animal protection; 3 – Culture; 4 – Politics; 5 – Migration issue; 6 – Proposals for improvement of certain areas of life; 7 – Transport system; 8 – Internet (games, Internet, networks); 9 – Protection and support for people with disabilities and rare diseases; 10 – Financial issues; 11 – Environmental protection; 12 – Housing issues; 13 – Weapons/spirits/tobacco/drugs; 14 – Healthcare; 15 – Elderly people

⁴ <https://www.change.org/p/south-park-digital-studios-llc-comedy-central-eine-south-park-app-f%C3%BCr-android>

⁵ <https://www.change.org/p/lassen-sie-raju-den-weinenden-elefanten-in-freiheit-leben>

The ratio of submitted and winning petitions shows not only the ranking of actual problems of the regions, but also the consistency of activity of those who submit petitions and vote for them and those who are authorized to fulfill the requests of the petitioners.

In the eastern part of Germany, petitions in favor of animal protection and petitions about financial problems are becoming outstanding in terms of the likelihood of their victory. Addressees authorized to solve the problems of petitioners eagerly respond to problems of finance and animal welfare (the winning percentage of petitions for financial concerns and animal welfare among all petitions is higher than the percentage of petitions created for finance and animals).

Example of a winning petition on animal protection: Laura Pastoors (ID12539674) 14.10.2017 (23,228 participants) „Gegen den Abschuss von 6 Welpen in Thüringen“ (Against the execution of 6 puppies in Thuringia)⁶.

Example of a winning petition on financial issues: Wendula Strube (ID826358) 28.10.2012 (792 participants) „Die Praxisgebühr von 10,00 EURO pro Quartal ersatzlos streichen“ (Practice fee of EUR 10.00 per quarter is cancelled)⁷.

Social protection issues for people with disabilities are also supported in a 1 to 5 ratio: every fifth petition on this subject has received the status of “victory”.

Here is an example of a winning petition on protecting people with disabilities:

Lebenshilfe (ID7437110) 30.06.2016 (71,290 participants) „Teilhabe statt Ausgrenzung von Menschen mit geistiger Behinderung!“ (Inclusion instead of marginalization of people with intellectual disabilities)⁸.

Problems related to housing, weapons (including alcohol, smoking and drugs), as well as healthcare, did not find support from the recipients of the petitions. Being representatives of the authorities, as a rule, they showed much less interest in petitions on environmental issues, the Internet and transport.

Petitions on migration issues, human rights, politics or the preservation of cultural heritage were supported by representatives of the authorities of the eastern part of Germany, but the likelihood of their support was generally lower than that of popular topics.

Example of a winning petition on migration issues: Daniel Zeller (ID7326347) 18.06.2016 (12,862 participants) „Familie Brkiss aus Potsdam braucht dauerhaftes Bleiberecht!“ (Potsdam’s Brkiss family needs permanent residency)⁹.

Example of a winning petition on politics: David Caspers (ID11842012) 20.03.2017 (18,800 participants) „Gegen alternative Fakten im Wahlkampf – mehr Informationen für Deutschland!“ (Against Alternative Facts in the Election Campaign – More Information for Germany!)¹⁰.

⁶ <https://www.change.org/p/gegen-den-abschuss-von-6-welpen-in-th%C3%BCrtingen>

⁷ <https://www.change.org/p/die-praxisgeb%C3%BChr-von-10-00-eur-pro-quartal-ersatzlos-streichen>

⁸ <https://www.change.org/p/teilhabe-statt-ausgrenzung-von-menschen-mit-geistiger-behinderung>

⁹ <https://www.change.org/p/familie-brki%C4%87-aus-potsdam-braucht-dauerhaftes-bleiberecht>

¹⁰ <https://www.change.org/p/gegen-alternative-fakten-im-wahlkampf-mehr-informationen-f%C3%BCr-deutschland?redirect=false>

Therefore, the recipients of the online petitions on *Change.org* related to the settlements of the eastern part of Germany, (the authorities, as a rule) willingly support petitions to protect animals, to resolve financial issues and petitions on the social protection of people with disabilities. Every fifth electronic petition created to address such issues was most likely to receive support.

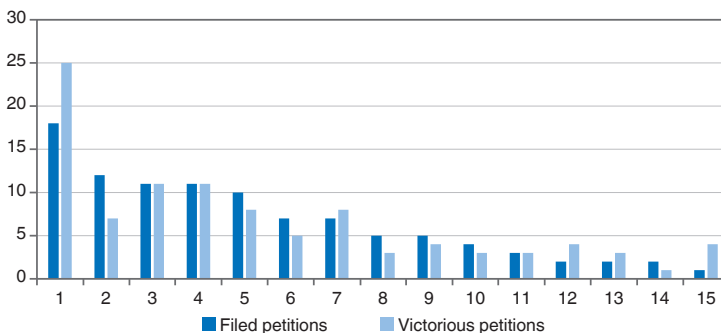
The total amount of the winning petitions in the western part of Germany for the study period is 130 (130 of 714 filed electronic petitions have the status of “victory”, which is 18% representing every fifth petition, as in the east). The most frequent topics of the winning petitions are “animal welfare”, “culture”, “migration issue”, “human rights” and “proposals for changing certain areas of life”. Most online petitions were implemented in the federal lands of North Rhine-Westphalia (30 petitions), Lower Saxony (22 petitions), Bavaria (21 petitions) and Hamburg (12 petitions). In the remaining lands, fewer than 10 successful campaigns were recorded. The least support among users was received by the petition, which was submitted to *Change.org* in support of FireTV AV-receiver modems.

*Example of a winning petition Karl Wester-Ebbinghaus (ID12807029) 29.11.2017 (9 participants) „Amazon: vollständige Unterstützung von FireTV Stick (2017) an technisch geeigneten AV Receivern!“ (Amazon: Full FireTV Stick (2017) support on technically suitable AV receivers)*¹¹.

A comparative analysis of submitted and winning online petitions posted on the non-governmental resource *Change.org* from the western part of Germany shows the following results (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Comparative Analysis of Topics of Winning Online Petitions on Change.org in the Western Part of Germany (%)



Note. 1 – Animal protection; 2 – Politics; 3 – Human rights; 4 – Migration issue; 5 – Proposals for improvement of certain areas of life; 6 – Environmental protection; 7 – Culture; 8 – Financial issues; 9 – Internet (games, Internet, networks); 10 – Transport system; 11 – Sustainable development; 12 – Education; 13 – Protection and support for people with disabilities and rare diseases; 14 – Healthcare; 15 – Sports

¹¹ <https://www.change.org/p/amazon-vollst%C3%A4ndige-unterst%C3%Bctzung-von-firetv-stick-2017-an-technisch-geeigneten-av-receivern>

Two topics – animal welfare and sports – are most likely to resonate with addressees of petitions (the first group). There are few petitions devoted to sports topics (11 petitions, 5 of them won), whereas popular problems of animal welfare among residents of the western part of Germany turned out to be even more popular with the recipients/addressees of petitions (usually representatives of the authorities) of the western part of Germany (every fourth petition with the status of “victory” belongs precisely to petitions defending animals).

Example of a winning petition on animal protection: Stefanie Braun (ID1015513) 15.02.2013 (60 participants) „Dr. Tonio Borg, EU-Kommissar: Verbieht Kosmetika die an Tieren getestet werden!“ (Dr. Tonio Borg, EU Commissioner: Prohibit animal-tested cosmetics!)¹².

Example of a winning petition about sports: Felix Schatter (ID1012226) 12.02.2013 (6,757 participants) „Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund: Votum gegen den Ausschluss des Ringens von den olympischen Disziplinen“ (German Olympic Sports Confederation: vote against exclusion of wrestling from Olympic disciplines)¹³.

The next group brings together online petitions, which have approximately the same percentage of created petitions, and winning petitions: petitions for human rights, migration issues, culture, education, social protection and sustainable development.

Example of a winning petition about the problems of education: Jan Waldmann (ID1304857) 17.09.2013 (5,058 participants) „Uni Hamburg: Lassen Sie uns nicht mit einem unfertigen Uniabschluss zurück. Unsere Zukunft hängt davon ab!“ (University of Hamburg: Do not leave us with incomplete higher education, our future depends on it!)¹⁴.

The third group of petitions contained problems that were less often supported in comparison with the frequency of their creation and posting online on *Change.org*. This group includes petitions about political issues, ecology, finance, the Internet, transport and healthcare. Comparing online petitions on *Change.org* related to the Federal Republic of Germany, it should be noted that the share of winning petitions in the total array of identified petitions is quite large: in fact, in the western and eastern parts of Germany, every fifth petition posted on *Change.org* gets the status of “victory”. The recipients of online petitions (usually representatives of the authorities) both in the western and eastern parts of Germany act in approximately the same way: the dominant support for petition activity of the inhabitants of Germany relates to animal welfare. Petition recipients also tend to help people: in the east (mainly in the capital), they usually resolve financial issues and social protection issues, whereas in the west, they support petitions about human rights, migration issues, cultural, educational, social protection, and sustainable development issues.

At the level of winning petitions, the differences between eastern and western lands increase. In addition to the expressed interest in the field of animal welfare,

¹² <https://www.change.org/p/dr-tonio-borg-eu-kommissar-verbietet-kosmetika-die-an-tieren-getestet-werden?redirect=false>

¹³ <https://www.change.org/p/deutscher-olympischer-sportbund-votum-gegen-den-ausschluss-des-ringens-von-den-olympischen-disziplinen-2>

¹⁴ <https://www.change.org/p/uni-hamburg-lassen-sie-uns-nicht-mit-einem-unfertigen-uniabschluss-zur%C3%BCck-unsere-zukunft-h%C3%A4ngt-davon-ab>

which combines the supported petitions of the east and west, the western and eastern petitions with the status of “victory” differ in the breadth of topics. In addition, in the east, two of the three petitions territorially connected with the capital (Berlin) receive the status of “victory”, while in the west, the winning petitions are distributed more evenly among the cities. Thus, the social (but more often the state) machine supports socio-economic differences as an element of inequality between regions, dividing Germany into east and west (among the recipients of the petitions there are also representatives of business, not just representatives of state authorities).

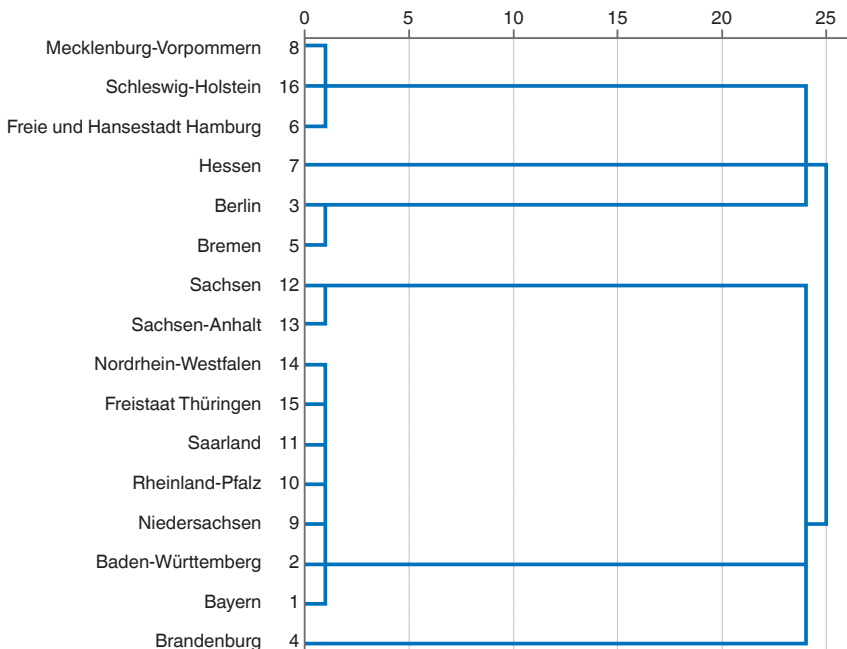
Does Petition Activity Reproduce the Historical Division of Germany into West and East?

Answering the question whether petition activity reproduces the historical division of Germany it should be acknowledged that it is not reproduced, as the analysis on the materials of submitted petitions shows.

First, civic activism associated with the creation and promotion of petitions is characteristic of all territories of Germany. Second, when classifying the themes of petitions (the problems articulated in them), western and eastern lands represented thematically close groups. The integration of the territories is proved by the results of the clustering of German federal lands according to their thematic preferences in submitting electronic petitions, which allows us to distinguish six groups of federal lands (groups of mainly mixed east-west type) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Groups of Federal Lands United by a Common Theme of Electronic Petitions



The first group (the upper one in the figure) consists of the federal lands of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (east), Schleswig-Holstein (west), Hamburg (west) which demonstrated a priority to political issues. Thus, residents of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern created petitions aimed to liquidate the Eurosceptic and right-wing conservative party Alternative for Germany. In Schleswig-Holstein, petitioners protested against the Pegida movement. Foreign policy petitions prevailed in Hamburg.

The second group is represented by the single state of Hesse. During the period covered in the study, the topics “animal welfare” (17.7%), “politics” (17.7%) and “human rights” (17.7%) turned out to be popular among residents of Hesse who submitted electronic petitions.

The third group includes the federal lands of Berlin and the free Hanseatic city of Bremen with the most frequent topic of electronic petitions being “human rights”, which involves the fight against racism and racial discrimination, the problem of gender identity, fight against violence against women and children, etc.).

Both territories are represented by modern metropolitan cities; however, all thematic groups are present in Berlin and in Bremen (a city with low petitioning activity). There are no online petitions on animal welfare, Internet problems and a number of other topics.

The fourth group is represented by the federal lands of the eastern part of Germany only – Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt – where migration issues lead in petition activity. According to the quotas for the distribution of refugees across federal lands of the Federal Republic of Germany for 2016, 5.08% of refugees arrived in Saxony and 2.83% in Saxony-Anhalt (the western land of North Rhine-Westphalia accepted most of the refugees [21.21%]) (Becker & Gurkov, 2016), however, this number of immigrants was enough to provoke protests of the local inhabitants of these lands. Most of the online petitions in these lands were submitted in support of the reception of refugees (as a response to the anti-migration speeches of fellow citizens), and the creators of the petitions insisted on preventing the deportation of citizens living for a long time in Germany.

The fifth and largest group includes the federal lands of North Rhine-Westphalia, Thuringia, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate, Lower Saxony, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria. The cluster consists of western and eastern lands (Thuringia) and is united by the common priority theme of “animal welfare”.

The last, sixth group is represented by one eastern federal land, Brandenburg. Brandenburg is the only land in Germany where the “transport system” is the leading issue. The thematic mixing in the groups of western and eastern lands convinces us that not the historical heritage, but the modern factors influence the petitioning activity of the inhabitants of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Online-Petition Activity of the Eastern and Western Parts of Germany: Discussion

Petitions filed on non-state platforms (without control through registration), especially in the case of multiple voting in their support, reflect the urgent problems that the population faced. An analysis of the problems reflected in the petitions helps the

outside observer in determining the quality and living conditions of the petitioners, as the texts of petitions disclose in detail: “He that is warm thinks all are so”.

Statistically significant differences between the western and eastern lands (a higher number of petitions for animal rights and for ecology, petitions about sports, sustainable development and education, etc.), may be indirect evidence of a higher standard of living in the west of the country.

Residents of the western territories can afford to worry about the future (ecology, protection and rights for all, including animals) while the eastern ones are still struggling with the problems of the present (housing issues, transportation problems, etc.). Nevertheless, the study showed that simply dividing west and east is not enough to interpret the differences in petitioning (civilian) activity of German population. Statistically significant differences only formally differentiate between west and east; a more detailed analysis indicates differences between territories within the western and eastern parts.

If we abandon the logic of “west/east” (interpretation by means of the historical legacy of capitalism/socialism), what other logic can be used to understand the reasons for the classification revealing the problems of the inhabitants of Germany? Is it the logic of regional features? urbanization? migration crisis? economic inequality of territories?

The so-called donor lands (according to the German model of regional alignment – Hesse, Bavaria, and Baden-Württemberg) have a medium or high petition activity. The key problem that worries their population is the protection of animals. Nevertheless, a number of regions with lower socio-economic indicators also ended up in the group with federal donor lands. The economic factor explains why donor regions were in this group of petition activity (they actively defend their rights and are concerned about the situation of the most discriminated group in the society – animals), but it does not explain why some of the less economically prosperous territories adhere to the same line of behavior in the field of creating petitions.

Regional features also only partially reveal the reasons for territories to fall into one group of petitioning activity. For example, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein are neighboring lands; the thematic proximity of their petitions is probably explained by the general problems of the “northern territories” of Germany (border, frontier territories). However, other border and northern territories do not share the guidelines of the “Hamburg group”. At the same time, the fifth (largest) group uniting a significant number of lands does not fit into regional explanation.

Migration problems can be divided into problems of refugees and problems of partially integrated migrants. The analysis of quotas for migrants does not explain the reasons for the lands that commonly create petitions on migration issues. At the same time, the fourth group (Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt) shows similar indicators for total numbers of unemployed (high rates) and unemployed migrants (low rates) (Khrishkevich, 2016). Probably, the migration theme (in its contradictory sound) is largely due not so much to the situation and the presence of migrants as to the socio-

economic status of the territory (economically successful territories are more patient toward migration issues).

The urbanization factor is especially evident when analyzing the formation of the third group (Berlin and Bremen). These are not just urbanized territories, but student cities with a pronounced liberal ideology. Perhaps their petitioning profiles are determined not by economic, frontier, or migration problems, but by social characteristics and intellectual traditions.

Thus, the results of the present study confirm the need to study economic inequality of Germany territories (Sirotin, 2008), including the analysis of the regions outside the east/west dichotomy (Heiland, 2004; Klüsener & Goldstein, 2012; Sander, 2014), as well as integration aspects of the inhabitants of Germany (Roivainen, 2012; Zawilska-Florczuk & Ciechanowicz, 2011).

Conclusion

When constructing the research design, initially, the east/west dichotomy was used as the focus in the study of the petition activity of the territories (federal lands) of contemporary Germany. It was assumed that this dichotomy would explain the quantitative and qualitative differences in the petition activity of the population. As a result of the study, it was discovered that the east/west bipolar construct, rooted in the historical logic of the legacy of socialism and capitalism in German territories, cannot explain the logic of the petition activity of modern German residents.

In the western and eastern parts of Germany, the population is actively creating petitions (and posting them on the *Change.org* non-governmental international petition platform), the content of the appeals is determined by a set of problems: the general socio-economic well-being (or disadvantage) of the territory, urbanization, regional features (the role of the frontier territories), the solution of migration issues in the context of the economic problems of the region, etc.

Statistically significant differences between online petitions created by residents of the western and eastern parts of the Federal Republic of Germany are present only in relation to petitions for the protection of animals (in the western part of Germany, animal protection is a key topic).

The share of winning petitions in the total body of petitions is large; both in the western and eastern parts of Germany, every fifth petition posted on *Change.org* receives the status of “victory”.

Online petition recipients (government and business representatives) in both the western and eastern parts of Germany are more likely to support petitions protecting animals. In addition, the winning petitions in the eastern part of Germany support the solution of social protection problems, while in the western part of Germany they support the solution of migration problems and address issues of education, culture, social protection and sustainable development.

At the level of winning petitions, the differences between the eastern and western parts are increasing; in the east, petitions linked to the capital (Berlin) are more likely to receive “victory” status, while in the west, winning petitions are distributed evenly.

Nevertheless, according to the results of the study, the historical heritage/separation factor is taken into account in the socio-economic problems of the regions, but it is not decisive in determining the values and civic activism of German residents.

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ARTICLE

Cross-Cultural Analysis of Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurs have progressively gained more space in what is mostly a man-dominated business world. However, a considerable gender gap in the likelihood of starting a business venture still exists in most countries in the world. Such gap can vary depending on the country and on its socio-cultural, legal and economic conditions among others. In this paper, Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the Human Development Index of 55 countries are tested in order to identify what factors have a positive effect on the gender gap. Results indicate that the most influential factor is the Human Development index, meaning that the more developed a country is, the lower the gender gap in the entrepreneurship is. In addition, the results also indicate that a lower level of gender gap is also observed in rather individualistic, pragmatic and risk-averse cultures.

KEYWORDS

female entrepreneurship, gender gap, Human Development Index, individualism, masculinity, socio-cultural environment

Introduction

In the past decades, female entrepreneurship has been object of public consideration and academic research across the globe, as it has progressively gained more space in what is a mainly man-dominated field (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2017). In fact, female entrepreneurs have proved

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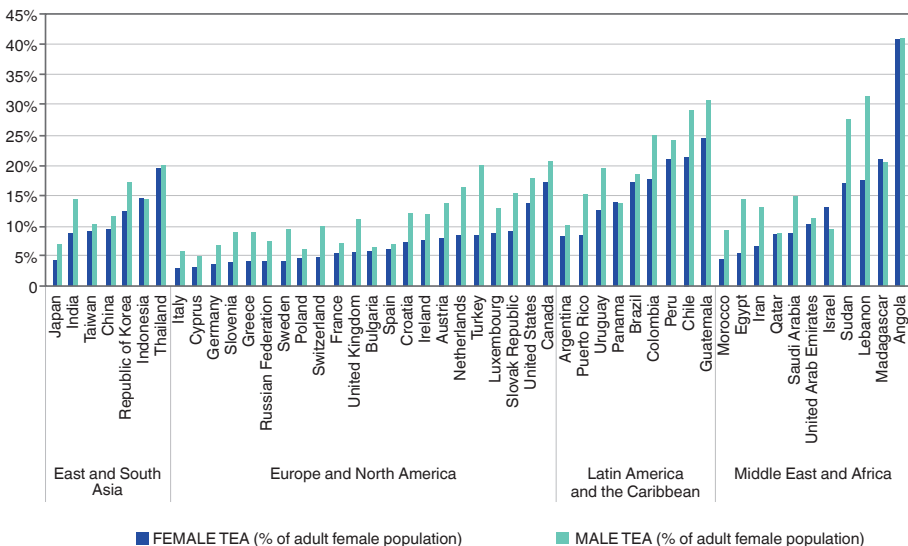
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themselves to be crucial for the countries' socio-economic growth (Bosse & Taylor, 2012), bringing added value to the overall life quality of societies due to their tendency of spending more than men on family needs, e.g. household health, nutrition and education (Nichter & Goldmark, 2009). In addition, through their participation in such business activity, women manage to improve their own status by emancipating themselves from the ascribed roles of masculine-oriented societies (Datta & Gailey, 2012; Treviño et al., 2018).

However, despite the statistically acknowledged importance of women's entrepreneurial action for the economy and for the society (Brush & Cooper, 2012), a significant gender gap in the likelihood of starting a business venture still exists in most countries (Hughes et al., 2012). As the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's report shows (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a), of 48 countries surveyed (including all 4 regions of the world, i.e. East and South Asia, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and Africa), only six countries show equal rates by gender of Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) (Figure 1). Two of them are found in the East and South Asia region (Indonesia and Thailand), one is in Latin America (Panama) and three are in the Middle East and Africa region (Qatar, Madagascar and Angola). As for the Europe and North America region, many economies lack gender equality. In fact, in six countries in this region, women start at less than half the TEA rate of men (Slovenia, Greece, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Turkey) and no country shows equal levels between genders.

Figure 1

Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Rates by Gender among Adults (ages 18–64) in 48 Economies, in Four Geographic Regions (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a)



Source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Adult Population Survey, 2018

As proven by these data, gender gap in early-stage entrepreneurship activity is more prominent in developed countries than in the developing ones. This is traditionally explained by the fact that in developing economies women face higher difficulty in entering the formal labour market and, therefore, have to turn to entrepreneurship as a way out of unemployment or poverty (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). However, there are several kinds of drivers determining such phenomenon due to its multifaceted nature (Welter, 2011). In fact, these may include both contextual factors such as economic, regulatory and socio-cultural conditions (Ahl, 2006; Estrin & Mickiewicz, 2011), as well as individual ones, such as personality traits (Malach-Pines & Schwartz, 2008), whereby the former ones show a more solid scientific support than the latter ones. Consequently, Dheer, Li and Treviño (2019) stressed the importance of adopting an integrative approach to the analysis in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. On top of that, it is important to consider that gender gap in the likelihood of starting a business venture varies at different levels, i.e. at the intra-national and national (or international) level (Dheer, Lenartowicz, & Peterson, 2015). As for the first level, this is due to inherent cultural and economic differences that might exist within the same country, whereas for the second level, as previously explained, the reason of possible variations lies in specific contextual and individual factors affecting different nations.

Hofstede's six-dimensional model (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede, 2003) offers the possibility to analyse gender gap in entrepreneurship on a cultural and international level. In fact, Hofstede theorizes that a national culture consists of six dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term vs. Short-Term Normative Orientation, Indulgence vs. Restraint. These cultural dimensions "represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other" (Hofstede, n.d.-a). In this regard, Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016) analysed the entrepreneurial gender gap in 55 countries from various regions of the world and, using Hofstede's model, assumed that countries with a higher level of Masculinity would result in having a higher level of gender entrepreneurial breach, as one might commonly believe. The authors divided the countries in groups depending on their level of Masculinity (i.e. high, medium-high, medium-low and low) and their state of development was also considered. According to their results, no group of countries analysed showed a clear link between the level of Masculinity and the rate of gender gap in entrepreneurship, as some rather feminine countries (e.g., Norway) showed a higher gap in entrepreneurship than the masculine ones and vice versa. Cardozo Crowe (2010) also confirms this result by stating that in rather masculine countries women might engage in entrepreneurial projects more easily than in countries with more feminine cultures. That is because the former ones are impregnated over such masculine values as achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success, while the latter ones will rather value cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life, which are indeed classified as feminine values (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

As a continuation of the above-mentioned research works, this paper aims to deepen the analysis of the issue at the same levels (i.e., cultural and international) in order to investigate whether a combination of more variables might effectively influence gender gap in the likelihood of starting business ventures.

Materials and Methods

Sample and data

As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, the objective of this paper is to deepen the research work that was carried out by Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016) by attempting to find out what variables and/or mix of variables affect gender gap in entrepreneurship. For this reason, the unit of analysis is the same geographical units as the above-mentioned paper, i.e. 55 countries from all regions of the world (East and South Asia, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East) excluding Africa.

For what concerns gender gap¹ (i.e. the *dependent variable* of the analysis), data were collected from *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019 Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Attitudes* report (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019b), whereby the majority of data is from 2018, while for the missing countries, data were retrieved from reports of previous years down to 2013. In particular, in the GEM report the calculation for determining gender gap is defined as Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Rates by Gender, “which is the percentage of female 18–64 population who are either a nascent entrepreneur or owner-manager of a new business, divided by the equivalent percentage for their male counterparts”². GEM’s team generates the above-mentioned data through a tool called Adult Population Survey (APS), which is given to approximately 2,000 randomly selected adults, and which “looks at the characteristics, motivations and ambitions of individuals starting businesses, as well as social attitudes towards entrepreneurship” (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019b).

As for the *independent variables*, as opposed to Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016), all of Hofstede’s six cultural dimensions were taken into consideration this time (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), i.e., Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV), Power Distance (PDI), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), Long-Term vs. Short-Term Normative Orientation (LTO), Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR), Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS):

- In *individualist* cultures, people are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families, as opposed to *collectivist* cultures, where people

¹ For convenience, the “gender gap in entrepreneurship” variable will sometimes be referred to as simply “gender gap” throughout the paper.

² Early-stage entrepreneurial activity means that the activity is centred on the period preceding and immediately after the actual start of a firm. In Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, the moment of start-up is defined by generating the first income from the sales of products or services. This early stage includes the phases of (i) nascent entrepreneurship when an entrepreneur is actively involved in setting up a business, and (ii) new business ownership, owning and managing a business in existence up to 42 months (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a).

expect relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty;

- *Power Distance* has to do with the way a society handles inequalities among people. This means that a society with a high degree of PDI will accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, and which does not need further justification. On the contrary, a low degree of PDI means that people demand justification for inequalities and strive for equal distribution of power;
- *Uncertainty Avoidance* is related to the way a society deals with risks about the future, thus a higher degree of UAI means that a society feels uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity and has rigid codes of belief and behaviour. On the contrary, societies with a low degree of UAI have a more relaxed attitude and give more importance to practice than principles. In other words, the former kind of society tries to control the future while the latter rather lets it happen;
- *Long-Term Orientation* has to do with the tendency of a society of accepting societal change that diverges with time-honoured traditions and norms, therefore societies that score low in this dimension see societal change with suspicion and vice versa. In the business context, societies that score high might also be defined as *pragmatic* (long term) and societies scoring low would be considered *normative* (short term) as the former ones encourage modernity and the latter are rather traditionalist;
- A society is *indulgent* when it allows gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun, while a *restrained* society suppresses gratification of needs and has strict social norms;
- *Masculine* cultures are generally considered “tough” and more competitive than the *feminine* ones, standing for such values as achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. On the other hand, rather *feminine* cultures are seen as more “tender”, standing for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life.

For each cultural dimension, a country has a score that ranges from 0 to 100, whereby a score is considered LOW to INTERMEDIATE when it is below 50 and HIGH when it is above 50. In order to develop this cultural framework, Professor Geert Hofstede initially analysed data from a large database of employee value scores collected within IBM between 1967 and 1973. Then he replicated and extended the research on different international populations and by different scholars, until the last edition of his book in 2010, which includes an analysis on 76 countries. Despite the long distance of time, the scores can be considered up to date as cultures change very slowly (Hofstede, n.d.-b).

The last *independent variable* used in the analysis is the Human Development Index (HDI)³ created by the United Nations (2018a), which indicates the level of

³ “The HDI simplifies and captures only part of what human development entails. It does not reflect on inequalities, poverty, human security, empowerment, etc.”. For more details, refer to <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

development of a country (i.e., very high, high, medium, low) from both a human and an economic perspective. In fact, this Index comprises three dimensions:

1. *Long and healthy life*, measured by the rate of life expectancy at birth;
2. *Knowledge*, measured by the number of years of schooling for adults aged at least 25 and by expected years of schooling for children of school-entering age;
3. *Decent standard of living*, measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.

As data for certain countries (i.e., Czech Republic, Guatemala, Israel, Jamaica, Panama, Suriname) were missing with respect to the Long-Term Orientation (LTO) and the Indulgence (IVR) dimensions, the *correlation coefficient* was calculated for the above-mentioned countries by considering the rest of Hofstede's dimensions and by comparing them with those of the countries that had complete data. The cut-off level was 0.70 as from this level up there is considered to be strong correlation between the units analysed. As a final step, an average from those countries was calculated to assign the missing data. Furthermore, as the HDI for Taiwan and Vietnam was missing as well, it was retrieved from other similar sources. For the former, the HDI taken into consideration is the one calculated by Taiwan's government (based on 2010 new methodology of UNDP) as the UN itself does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state⁴; as for the latter, the Index was retrieved from the UN's Human Development Report of 2018, which includes data up until 2017 (United Nations, 2018b).

Methodology and hypotheses

The methodology adopted is of econometric kind. A basic econometric representation can be expressed as follows:

$$W_i = a_0 + a_1 Y_{1i} + a_2 Y_{2i} + \dots + a_k Y_{ki} + U_i \quad (1)$$

where W_i is a dependent variable, Y_{ki} are the observed explicatory (independent) variables, i is an index referring to number of observations, and U_i is disturbance variable with a normal distribution with mean 0 and constant variance, so (Gujarati, 2004). Hence, for the purpose of this research work, W_i is gender gap in entrepreneurship and Y_{ki} are Hofstede's dimensions and HDI. The estimation of the effects of each independent variable and of their combination is based on simple and multiple linear regression. All data were first collected in an Excel file and then transferred to the software Stata/SE 11.0 in order to run the estimations.

As basis for the estimations, the following hypotheses were formulated with respect to the seven independent variables taken into consideration:

H1: *A higher level of Individualism makes gender gap in entrepreneurship decrease*

In individualist societies people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" and not "we" (Hofstede, n.d.-a), meaning that social consensus does not particularly affect one's self-perceived image. Thus, gender gap might be positively influenced

⁴ For more details, refer to <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/21/world/asia/taiwan-united-nations-joseph-wu.html>

by it in the sense that more women might be willing to follow their own ideas and determination and therefore start a business venture, without feeling restrained by the limits of a society in terms of entrepreneurial initiative, for example Davis and Williamson (2019).

H2: A lower level of Power Distance does not necessarily make gender gap in entrepreneurship decrease

Considering that people living in societies with a low degree of PDI demand justification for inequalities and strive for equal distribution of power, one might think that a low level of this variable should correspond to a lower rate of gender gap in entrepreneurship as women might be driven by that kind of innovative mindset. In reality, Kusterer (2014) and OECD (2016a) argue the opposite, as in the most egalitarian countries of the world, such as Iceland and countries belonging to the Scandinavian region (OECD, 2016b), there is still a considerable gender gap in the business area for what concerns women holding top corporate positions and their condition in starting entrepreneurial ventures.

H3: A high level of Uncertainty Avoidance makes gender gap in entrepreneurship decrease

As discussed by Bosse and Taylor (2012), the increased presence of women in the entrepreneurial field has a positive effect on the socio-economic growth of a country. For this reason, societies with a high degree of UAI might be open to more women entering the business world in leading positions, as they would be seen as a possibility of growth for the country, which would therefore minimize such risks as social decadence and economic stagnation.

H4: A higher level of Long-Term Orientation makes gender gap in entrepreneurship decrease

Societies with a high score of LTO are open to societal change and value a pragmatic approach to life and business, meaning that they do not blindly stick to time-honoured traditions and norms. This could mean that they are more open to women gaining power in social status by undertaking entrepreneurial initiatives.

H5: A higher level of Indulgence makes gender gap in entrepreneurship decrease

Similarly to the previous variable, indulgent societies do not have strict social norms and value personal gratification. For this reason, these kinds of societies could be open as well to women gaining power in society by starting business ventures.

H6: A high level of Masculinity does not necessarily correspond to high gender gap in entrepreneurship

H7: A country's level of development is not relevant in affecting gender gap in entrepreneurship

As proven by Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016), the levels of *Masculinity* and of *development of a country* do not seem to be relevant when looking at the

gender gap in entrepreneurship in different countries. However, they will be taken into consideration to see whether a combination of them with other variables from Hofstede might make a difference in the analysis.

Results

Among all estimations, a total of 27 models have been taken into consideration. First of all, Table 1 shows a one-to-one comparison of variables, meaning that each independent variable was taken singularly in order to assess which one(s) were relevant in affecting the dependent variable.

In this case, the results show that Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Human Development (HDI) and Long-Term Orientation (LTO) are the relevant influential factors affecting gender gap in entrepreneurship, with a level of confidence of 99% (***) for the former three and of 95% (**) for the latter. In particular, Power Distance (Model 1) has negative impact on the gender gap as the higher the PDI is, the higher the gender gap is. This result goes along with the Power Distance definition stating that societies with a high degree of PDI accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, and which does not need further justification. Vice versa, in societies with a low degree of PDI people demand justification for inequalities and strive for equal distribution of power. Similarly, the obtained result for Long-Term Orientation (Model 5) confirms the assumption that societies with high score in LTO are open to societal change. In fact, the result indicates that the higher the Long-Term Orientation is, the lower the gender gap in entrepreneurship is (constant -0.002), i.e., these societies are open for equal representation of gender in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the result for Individualism (Model 2) confirms the assumption that individualistic societies show lower levels of gender gap (constant -0.004), meaning that IDV has a positive effect on gender gap. Lastly, as opposed to the expectations, the level of development of a country, i.e., HDI (Model 7), turned out to be relevant in affecting gender gap. In particular, it has a positive effect as the constant is negative (-1.377) meaning that the higher the HDI is, the lower the gender gap in entrepreneurship is (as observed with IDV and LTO). In more technical terms, it means that if HDI increases by 1, gender gap decreases by .934.

However, the basic comparison does not capture the complexity of the matter and it would be wrong to make final conclusions over the stated hypotheses. Therefore, it was necessary to use the multilevel linear regression. Results of the multilinear regressions are shown in Table 2, whereby the Models focus on combinations of variables where the main variables taken into consideration are the relevant ones shown in Table 1.

In Model 8, all variables were considered together and, as most of them turned out to be irrelevant, this model has no significance. Only Human Development Index is significant on the confidence level of 90% (*). In this case, the effect of HDI is the same as in the previous one-to-one analysis (Model 7 in Table 1) where it is also relevant and negative. In Model 9, all variables but HDI were considered in order to see whether the absence of it affected the relevance of the other variables. In fact,

without HDI, Individualism and Uncertainty Avoidance are relevant, where the former has a confidence level of 95% and the latter of 90%. In addition, both are negative as in Table 1, therefore they have a positive effect on the gender gap. However, this Model cannot be considered significant as only two variables out of six are relevant.

Table 1

Basic Comparison of Variables

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Constant	.477 (.000)***	.883 (.000)***	.639 (.000)***	.783 (.606)	.828 (.000)***	.610 (.000)***	1.845 (.000)***
PDI	.003 (.009)***	–	–	–	–	–	–
IDV	–	-.004 (.000)***	–	–	–	–	–
MAS	–	–	.001 (.453)	–	–	–	–
UAI	–	–	–	-.001 (.284)	–	–	–
LTO	–	–	–	–	-.002 (.040)**	–	–
IVR	–	–	–	–	–	.001 (.271)	–
HDI	–	–	–	–	–	–	-1.377 (.000)***
R-squared	.121	.220	.010	.021	.077	.022	.283

Note. * $p \leq .1$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$

Table 2

Multilevel Linear Regression

Variables	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Constant	1.597 (.000)***	.936 (.000)***	.743 (.000)***	1.679 (.000)***	1.930 (.000)***
PDI	.000 (.940)	.001 (.368)	.004 (.002)**	.001 (.406)	–
IDV	-.002 (.135)	-.003 (.019)**	–	–	–
MAS	.000 (.571)	.000 (.453)	–	–	–
UAI	-.001 (.139)	-.002 (.052)*	-.002 (.051)*	-.001 (.114)	-.001 (.156)
LTO	-.000 (.679)	-.002 (.145)	-.002 (.018)**	-.001 (.174)	-.001 (.235)
IVR	.001 (.325)	.000 (.763)	–	–	–
HDI	-.934 (.057)*	–	–	-1.035 (.018)**	-1.273 (.000)***
R-squared	.390	.340	.255		.326

Note. * $p \leq .1$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$

In Model 10, only three variables that turned out to be relevant in previous models were taken into consideration, i.e., PDI, UAI and LTO. This Model is significant as all variables are statistically significant, with a confidence level of 95% and 90%. Similarly to the basic one-to-one estimations, Power Distance keeps its positive impact on the gender gap (the effect is even stronger in the multilinear regression: .004 vs. .003), as well as the Long-Term Orientation (with the same level). For what concerns Uncertainty Avoidance, results show that the higher the level of UAI, the lower the gender gap (constant $-.002$), which confirms the assumption that the more risk and uncertainty adverse a society is about the future, the lower gender gap in entrepreneurship is. What is more, when HDI was added into this estimation (Model 11), all three variables lost their significance and only HDI showed relevance. Additionally, in Model 12, HDI was combined again with those variables except for PDI, and HDI still turned out to be the only one relevant, with a confidence level of 99%.

As HDI turned out to be relevant both when considered alone and every time it was combined with other variables, in Table 3 all Models focus on further combinations of it with other two variables. Moreover, the focus was also on Indulgence (IVR) in order to test its relevance combined with HDI and other variables. As can be seen, in all Models 13–17, HDI is always relevant and negative (positive effect on the gender gap) with a confidence level of 99% and 95%. IVR is also relevant in all Models except for Model 13, where the third variable is LTO. In particular, it has a confidence level of 90% and it is positive (i.e., it has a negative effect on the gender gap), thus the more indulgent a society is, the higher gender gap in entrepreneurship is. In fact, this result does not correspond to what one might expect since indulgent societies do not have strict social norms. However, of the Models in Table 3, none can be considered relevant, as only two variables out of three are significant. Nevertheless, it was useful to consider those Models as a basis for further estimations and observations on the same relevant variables in different Models.

Table 3
Multilevel Linear Regression, Focus on IVR and HDI

Variables	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16	Model 17
Constant	1.787 (.000)***	1.880 (.000)***	1.666 (.000)***	1.757 (.000)***	1.603 (.000)***
PDI	–	–	.000 (.688)	–	–
IDV	–	–	–	–	-.001 (.188)
MAS	–	–	–	.000 (.692)	–
UAI	–	-.001 (.228)	–	–	–
LTO	.000 (.932)	–	–	–	–
IVR	.002 (.113)	.002 (.067)*	.002 (.060)*	.002 (.060)*	.002 (.071)*
HDI	-1.467 (.000)***	-1.456 (.000)***	-1.359 (.001)***	-1.444 (.000)***	-1.130 (.005)**
R-squared	.332	.351	.335	.334	.355

Note. * $p \leq .1$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$

In Table 4, all Models focus on the combination of almost all variables with Individualism this time. As can be observed, IDV is always relevant with a confidence level of 95 or 90% except for Model 22, where it is combined with HDI, which is in turn relevant and has a confidence level of 95%. In all cases, the effect of IDV on the gender gap is positive (similarly as in previous models) and with the same level. This means that the constant of Individualism, as HDI, is negative, meaning that the more individualist a society is, the less gender gap in entrepreneurship there is. Furthermore, Model 20 and 21 show that UAI and LTO are also relevant and negative as in other Models in Table 1 and Table 2. However, the same two variables did not turn out to be relevant in Table 3, whereby LTO is also positive as opposed to the other previously mentioned Models.

Table 4
Multilevel Linear Regression, Focus on IDV

Variables	Model 18	Model 19	Model 20	Model 21	Model 22
Constant	.809 (.000)***	.665 (.000)***	.934 (.000)***	.867 (.000)***	1.754 (.000)***
PDI	.000 (.594)	.001 (.393)	.001 (.427)	.001 (.438)	-.000 (.641)
IDV	-.003 (.011)**	-.003 (.019)**	-.003 (.008)*	-.003 (.029)**	-.002 (.129)
MAS	-	-	-	-	-
UAI	-	-	-.002 (.057)*	-	-
LTO	-	-	-	-.002 (.083)*	-
IVR	-	.002 (.154)	-	-	-
HDI	-	-	-	-	-1.09 (.012)**
R-squared	.224	.255	.278	.269	.315

Note. * $p \leq .1$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$

For this reason, Table 5 shows the last five Models, which are a final attempt of combination of variables that were repetitively relevant in the previous Models in order to see whether they keep their relevance among themselves. In particular, the relevance of LTO was mainly tested this time, as the relevance of the other variables had already been tested enough in the previous models. Model 23 is the most relevant in this group as all three variables put together, i.e., Long-Term Orientation, Uncertainty Avoidance and Individualism are all significant, with a confidence level of 90% for the former two and of 99% for the latter. Model 24 is not relevant as only Individualism shows significance at 99%, as well as Model 25, where only HDI is relevant. Model 26 shows that Power Distance loses its significance when combined with LTO, UAI and IDV, which are the relevant variables of Model 23. Lastly, Model 27 has the same significant variables as Model 26 plus HDI. It is the only model where two variables combined with HDI are relevant. In addition, in this case LTO loses significance.

Table 5
Multilevel Linear Regression, Focus on LTO

Variables	Model 23	Model 24	Model 25	Model 26	Model 27
Constant	1.132 (.000)***	.918 (.000)***	1.607 (.000)***	1.005 (.000)***	1.690 (.000)***
PDI	–	–	–	.001 (.277)	–
IDV	-.004 (.000)***	-.004 (.001)***	-.002 (.136)**	-.003 (.022)**	-.002 (.069)*
MAS	–	–	–	–	–
UAI	-.0021 (.051)*	–	–	-.002 (.038)**	-.001 (.079)*
LTO	-.002 (.073)*	-.001 (.252)	-.001 (.262)	-.002 (.054)*	-.001 (.200)
IVR	–	.000 (.644)	–	–	–
HDI	–	–	-.903 (0.027)**	–	-.818 (.041)**
R-squared	.314	.263	.329	.330	.369

Note. * $p \leq .1$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$

Finally, every variable was tested a total of 14 times except for Masculinity, which was tested only 11 times as it never turned out to be relevant⁵. In fact, Hypothesis H6 is not rejected, which means that MAS cannot be considered significant in affecting gender gap in entrepreneurship, as already proven by Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016). On the contrary, it can be observed that HDI is always significant and always has a positive effect on the gender gap (it turned out to be relevant in all 14 estimations), meaning that the *more developed* a society is, the *lower* the gap is. For this reason, Hypothesis H7 along with results provided by Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016) can be rejected. For what concerns IVR, it turned out to be significant 5 times out of 14 and it was always positive, meaning that the *more indulgent* a society is (i.e., the less strict it is in terms of social norms and personal gratification), the *higher* the gender gap. This result does not correspond to the expectations; therefore, Hypothesis H5 is rejected. However, this variable did not turn out to be relevant many times and it only did when it was combined with HDI.

As for the variables of the most significant Models (10, 23, 26 and 27):

- IDV was often relevant (11 times out of 14) and always negative, meaning that the *more individualistic* a society is, the *lower* the gender gap. Additionally, it turned out to be relevant in three of the above-mentioned Models (23, 26 and 27), therefore Hypothesis H1 is not rejected;
- LTO turned out to be relevant various times (6 out of 14) and it was always negative, meaning that the *more flexible and pragmatic* a society is in terms of

⁵ Not all estimations are included in the Tables as the aim of some of them was to further test the relevance of singular variables. As tested variables showed repeatedly the same behaviour, no more than 14 estimations were run. Only Models that were significant for the explanation of the gender gap are presented in the Results.

societal change, the *lower* the gender gap. In addition, it was present in three relevant Models out of four, therefore Hypothesis H4 is not rejected;

- UAI was relevant 6 times out of 14 and in all four relevant Models. Additionally, it was always negative, meaning that the *more risk-adverse* a society is about the future, the *lower* the gender gap is: therefore, Hypothesis H3 is not rejected;
- each time PDI was relevant (4 out of 14), it was also positive, meaning that the *more hierarchical* a society is, the *higher* the gender gap, which makes sense in theory. However, it only turned out to be relevant a few times and only in one significant Model (10). For the above-mentioned reasons, Hypothesis H2 is not rejected. In fact, as discussed in the previous section, Kusterer (2014) and data from OECD (2016a) already confirmed that even societies with low degrees of PDI still show considerable levels of gender gap in entrepreneurship, which justifies the low rate of relevance of positive PDI in the Models presented above.

To conclude, if taken singularly, *Human Development* and *Individualism* are the variables with the highest rate of relevance among all that have a positive effect on gender gap, followed by Long-Term Orientation, Uncertainty Avoidance and Indulgence. However, as proven by Model 23 and 26, it seems that the combination of high rates of *Individualism*, *Long-Term Orientation* and *Uncertainty Avoidance* is particularly relevant in decreasing gender gap in entrepreneurship. This would mean that rather *individualistic*, *pragmatic* and *flexible* societies in terms of societal change, which at the same time are *averse to risk and uncertainty* related to the future, tend to have a lower rate of gender gap in entrepreneurship.

Discussion

Comparison with other studies

Dheer, Li and Treviño (2019) adopted an integrative approach to the analysis of gender gap in the likelihood of starting business ventures, which gave the possibility to have a very articulate view on the matter. The focus of this paper instead is more specific as it is concerned with the cultural attributes and development conditions determining a lower level of gender entrepreneurial breach in a country.

As for the independent variables used, among many others Dheer, Li and Treviño (2019) included Hofstede's Masculinity index. As already suggested by Cardozo Crowe (2010), they observed that a high level of Masculinity seems to influence gender gap in a positive way, in the sense that the more masculine a society is, the less gender gap in entrepreneurship there is. In fact, the idea is that in such countries women are impregnated over masculine values (e.g., achievement, heroism, assertiveness, material rewards for success), which lead them to be more prone to engage in entrepreneurial ventures. In particular, their results show that when a country has a higher masculinity index, women are only 1% less likely than men to start a business as opposed to a 3% in countries with a lower masculinity index (Dheer, Li, & Treviño, 2019). However, they analyzed a total of 45 countries, while in this paper a sample of 55 was taken into consideration.

Data analysed in this paper show that Masculinity is not relevant in affecting gender gap, which was proven by Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016) as well. In fact, the authors grouped the same 55 countries analysed in this paper depending on their level of Masculinity by using Hofstede's classification (feminine, moderately feminine, moderately masculine, masculine) and for each group, they compared the MAS index with the level of gender gap. They observed that there existed inconsistencies inside the same groups and among groups. For example, in the group of feminine countries (i.e., with very low MAS), Norway, which is the second-most feminine country of all (MAS = 8), has the highest level of gender gap in entrepreneurship (0.59). Conversely, certain moderately female countries (i.e., with a higher level of masculinity) such as Brazil (MAS = 49) showed lower levels of gender gap (-0.01). However, Iran, which is a moderately feminine country like Brazil (MAS = 43), showed a higher gender gap (0.64), and so on. In addition, the authors took into consideration the countries' level of economic development taken by GEM's classification (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2013), which they deemed irrelevant in affecting gender gap as well. However, they were only taking into account the combination of it with the MAS index and did not use linear regression to analyse interactions between the variables.

Moreover, according to data collected by GEM (2019a), only six countries of the 48 surveyed show equal TEA rates between men and women, i.e., Indonesia, Thailand, Panama, Qatar, Madagascar and Angola. These countries span all three income levels (low income, middle income, high income) following a classification made by the World Economic Forum (Schwab, 2018). Indonesia, Madagascar and Angola are *low-income*, Panama and Qatar are *high-income* and Thailand is *middle-income*. Of the above-mentioned countries, Indonesia, Thailand and Panama were also present in the sample of countries used for this paper. In fact, the three countries are the ones with the lowest gender gap in the list, after Vietnam, Philippines and Ecuador. However, data for the latter three countries are from 2015 and 2017, while data for Indonesia, Thailand and Panama are from 2018. For this reason, it can be worthwhile to further analyze data for Indonesia, Thailand and Panama according to the results obtained in this paper in terms of socio-cultural and development conditions determining a low gender gap. For what concerns United Nations's HDI (2018a), Indonesia has a *medium human development* (0.69), while Thailand and Panama have a *high human development* (0.75 and 0.78). In terms of UAI, LTO and IDV, they all show low rates of Individualism (20, 14, 11), while they have high rates of Uncertainty Avoidance (64, 48, 86) and relatively high rates of Long-Term Orientation (32, 62, 45). Therefore, they do not exactly correspond to Models 23 and 26 and they do not have the highest level of HDI either (i.e., *very high*).

On the other hand, by filtering countries according to Models 23 and 26 and to results obtained for HDI (i.e., with intermediate/high levels of UAI, LTO and IDV, very high HDI and low level of gender gap), *Spain* and *France* seem to have the best attributes among all 55. In the case of Spain, IDV and UAI are high while LTO is intermediate (51, 86, 48), HDI is very high (0.891) and gender gap is low (0.11). As for

France, IDV, UAI and LTO are all high (71, 86, 63), HDI is very high (0.901) and gender gap is low (0.25)⁶.

As for Spain's LTO, as explained by (Hofstede, n.d.-c), it means that Spain is a rather normative culture (vs. the pragmatic kind), where people prefer clear structures and well-defined rules to deal with society, therefore seeing societal change with suspicion. However, according to recent studies (Chislett, 2018) and socio-political observations (The difference between Italy and Spain, 2019), Spain is a kind of society that has demonstrated openness to and great capability of social change. In fact, as observed by Chislett (2018), in comparison with 1978, Spain is "a new world" socially speaking. For instance, the condition of women has improved considerably, so much so that today there are more Spanish women than men at universities (and their academic results are better). Additionally, the female labour force participation rose from 20% to 53% since 1978, and 11 of the 17 Ministers in the current government (2019) are women, which is the largest number in Spain's history and the highest proportion in the world. Furthermore, while Euroscepticism, xenophobia and far-right movements and parties are taking over many European countries (e.g., Italy, UK, France and Germany) mainly due to the big influx of immigrants, Spain represents an exception. In fact, 68% of Spaniards still think the European membership is a good thing (European Parliament, 2018). Moreover, Spain is also the only country in Europe that has no Eurosceptic parties' representation in the European Parliament (Special report on Spain, 2018). Finally, there are no French-style banlieues or US-style ghettos in Spain; in fact, Spaniards are first in the ranking of social openness towards immigrants (Chislett, 2018; Special report on Spain, 2018). For these reasons, Spain might be a normative country, but it also shows social openness, which is in line with the results obtained in terms of attributes decreasing gender gap, and also with the rate of LTO, which is, in fact, intermediate.

Limitations

The aim of this paper was to compare results with the ones from Rubio-Bañón and Esteban-Lloret (2016). However, in terms of countries' development, the mentioned authors referred to the classification used by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2013), which identifies three main phases of economic development based on GDP per capita and the share of exports comprising primary goods (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2013)⁷. On the other hand, for this paper the Human Development Index was used, as it does not only measure a country's development from an economic perspective but also from a human one, which can have an impact on the issue of gender gap in entrepreneurship as well. In fact, the HDI

⁶ The cut-off levels were >45 for IDV, UAI and LTO as that level is considered intermediate, while from 50 upward it is high (Hofstede, n.d.-b). >80 for HDI, which means very high (United Nations, 2018a). ≤0.25 for gender gap in entrepreneurship, which can be considered low as France is 18th among 48 countries based on the level of gender gap, while Spain is 8th (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a).

⁷ Depending on their development phase, GEM classifies economies as "factor-driven" or in stage 1; "efficiency-driven" or in stage 2; "innovation-driven" or in stage 3 (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2013; Porter, Sachs & McArthur, 2002; Schwab, 2018).

includes measures of life expectancy, education of the population and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (United Nations, 2018a).

In addition, while the sample of countries used by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2013 includes all income levels (i.e., the sample used by the above-mentioned authors), the countries analysed in this paper includes the *medium*, *high* and *very high level* of HDI, excluding the *low level*. For this reason, the results about HDI cannot be considered completely accurate. Nevertheless, the identified countries showing the best attributes decreasing gender gap have a *very high* HDI, confirming the results showing that the higher the HDI, the lower the gender gap.

Finally, since data related to such variables as LTO, IVR and HDI were missing for six countries in the first two cases and for two countries in the second, they had to be calculated by using the correlation coefficient with a cut-off level of 0.70. As for the gender gap variable, data were collected from reports of various years down to 2013, as not every country included in the analysis was taken into consideration in the last GEM's report available (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a). Nevertheless, only 18 countries' data (i.e., of Belgium, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Jamaica, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Vietnam) had to be retrieved from previous years and the majority of them date back to 2015.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the Introduction, there are several kinds of factors determining the phenomenon of gender gap in entrepreneurship. This study highlights certain drivers of social, cultural and economic kind, which seem to decrease the gender gap, therefore it can be used as a cue for further and more extended research. In particular, it can be interesting to monitor the two countries identified, i.e., Spain and France, in order to see whether their gender entrepreneurial breach decreases in the next years.

Moreover, future research could focus on specific geographical regions, e.g., Europe and North America or Latin America and the Caribbean. The analysis could also be narrowed down to such variables as education and GNI, which are part of the Human Development Index that was used for this study. In addition, this research work only analysed early-stage entrepreneurship, thus future research could focus on the next stages by evaluating the performance and success of businesses run by women in comparison with those run by men.

Finally, as discussed in the Introduction, according to GEM's study (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a), gender gap in entrepreneurship seems to be more prominent in developed countries than in developing ones as in developing economies women tend to turn to entrepreneurship as a way out of unemployment or poverty (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). In fact, this kind of entrepreneurship is defined as "necessity entrepreneurship". However, data obtained for this study show that the more developed a country is, the lower the gender gap. For this reason, future research could further investigate necessity entrepreneurship at the international level, analyse

what factors determine it, and when such factors actually affect gender gap. In the case of Italy, for instance, despite the current bad economic conditions and the high rate of unemployment, the share of necessity entrepreneurship is very low thanks to its generous welfare system (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019a). Therefore, the distinction between female entrepreneurship and female necessity entrepreneurship related to a country's economic conditions should be stressed when comparing gender gap across countries.

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ARTICLE

Intergenerational Cooperation and Stereotypes in Relation to Age in the Working Environment

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ABSTRACT

The problem of intergenerational cooperation in the workplace is becoming increasingly important, especially because of the ageing workforce. The article presents the issue of companies facing the challenge of changing a work environment that has to be tailored to the characteristics of each individual generation in the workplace. Generational differences and similarities are explained in more detail, especially in relation to work, followed by a consideration of stereotypes and age discrimination in the work environment. The article illustrates the problem of stereotypes related to age at a selected company. In focus groups we found several positive as well as negative stereotypes regarding age in the workplace, which we use in a research questionnaire especially designed for this study. The questionnaire was completed by 394 employees, and the results used to provide answers to the following research questions: Are there stereotypes within the company about the characteristics of different generations? And do different generations have different foundations regarding the company's expected attitudes towards their work? The results show that in the focal company there are mostly positive stereotypes regarding age. We also found out that there are no significant differences between the different generations regarding the company's expected attitudes towards their work. The respondents of all ages expected these attitudes to be based on similar foundations.

KEYWORDS

generations at workplace, characteristics of generations, older workers, age management, age-related stereotypes and discrimination, work attitude of different generations

Introduction

In 2010, one in nine people in the world was older than 60, but in 2017 this was already one to eight. In 2050, one in five people in the world is expected to be over 60, and in more developed parts of the world this figure will be one in three (Tros & Keune, 2016, p. 5). Rapid changes, especially in the developed world, are the result of three tendencies that occurred after World War II. First, the appearance of so-called Baby-boom generation, also known as the prosperity generation, which currently accounts for the largest number of people approaching retirement age. Second, on average women now have fewer children, especially in more developed regions of the world. And third, life expectancy is increasing as people are healthier due to greater access to health and social care. One consequence of these tendencies is an increase in the share of the elderly population in relation to the younger population (Tros & Keune, 2016).

In anticipation of the economic and social changes associated with an aging population, it is essential to ensure development and progress, including the achievement of the goals set out by the United Nations (UN). In particular, at the Second World Assembly on Aging, held from 8 to 12 April 2002 in Madrid, Spain, the UN adopted the International Plan of Action on Aging Madrid – MIPAA (United Nations, 2002), which emphasizes the importance of taking into account older people in development planning. Later, it was decided that countries must provide an environment in which older people share the results of development in order to improve their health and well-being (United Nations, 2015).

As people age, they often go through various changes, in areas such as personality, needs, impulses, intelligence, physical abilities, (working) memory, work experience, emotional regulation and social perceptions (Bal, Kooij, & Rousseau, 2015). In theory and practice, it is not possible to find an unambiguous answer as to the chronological age of an individual that should be considered an “older employee”. However, it is possible to recognize the consensus that employees in the age group of 50 or 55 fall into this category (Ibid.).

However, this article does not focus only on older employees, as it is a topic that also concerns younger individuals who face low job security, with no improvement in this condition expected in the near future (International Labour Organization, 2013), and thus have to prepare for a significantly longer working life than their parents had. It is thus estimated that people currently in employment will work until the age of 75 (Bal et al., 2015).

Defining Generation

Each individual has their own characteristics, but certain things are the same based on age. Moreover, differences between groups of individuals are not only related to their chronological age, but also differences between individual generations. Generations are groups of individuals born in a particular historical period, in a particular area, and who share important life and historical events with major social dimensions that most representatives of the generation were directly confronted with during personal

development. The emergence of generations throughout human history is one of the fundamental sources for the dynamics of historical development. Living in comparable conditions (economic, historical and so on), exposure to the same events (cultural, environmental), and exposure to similar technologies can affect individuals so much that they think, decide, and behave in similar ways.

Generations in society change approximately every twenty years or so, where some deviations from the years of birth emerge from the literature (Dolot, 2018; Speer, 2011). Each generation is divided into three to seven annual subgroups, based on the first wave, core, and last wave (Tolbize, 2008). Due to the importance of the issue – the impact on the economy, the labour market, corporate strategies – intergenerational differences and the emergence of new generations have become the subject of research throughout the developed world. Age management and intergenerational differences are and will increasingly be issues in all companies (Maj, 2015).

The following recent generations have been identified (Tolbize, 2008):

- Traditionalists (silent generation, veterans), born between 1922 and 1945, who unconditionally value authority and a hierarchical managerial approach;
- Baby-boom generation (children of prosperity), born 1946 to 1964, defined as the workaholic generation;
- Generation X, born 1965 to 1980, who respect authority and believe that a work-life balance is needed;
- Generation Y (millennials), born from 1981 to 1995, who grew up in prosperity and rapid technological development,
- Generation Z, which also has many other names, such as iGeneration, Gen Tech, Online Generation, Facebook Generation, and Generation C (Dolot, 2018), born approximately 1995 to 2010, which naturally communicates and works in both real and virtual worlds and loves change;
- Generation Alpha, a new generation that already follows Generation Z and was born after 2010 as children of millennials, lives in the world of digital technology, and has not yet entered the labour market (McCrindle, n.d.).

Generational Differences and Similarities in the Workplace

In theory, there are at least two views on generational differences in the workplace. The first assumes that events influence and shape each generation, and although individuals in different generations are diverse, they nonetheless share a particular mindset, values, and behaviours because of the same events they have lived through. These thoughts, values, and behaviours vary between generations. The second view argues that although there are variations throughout a work cycle, life cycle, or career stage, ultimately all employees are equal in terms of what they want the job to offer them (Tolbize, 2008).

Most companies today have a rich mix of generations among their employees. With each generation entering the labour market comes different attitudes, work ethics, life experiences, and goals. Managing the work environment with generational diversity, as we are witnessing today, presents both an opportunity and a challenge: the

opportunity to involve a group of people who bring unique experience and knowledge to the company, and the challenge of reconciling the generational differences that define them. There is also a risk that skills and knowledge will be lost through early retirement in this context, which will have a negative impact on the economy, businesses and the younger generations.

Attitude to Work

A factor that contributes to intergenerational conflicts in the workplace is the level of work commitment that representatives of each generation show. For example, Generation X is recognized as a work-avoiding generation, employers complain that in general this generation is uncommitted to work, and work only as long as required to work or even less (Tolbize, 2008). In contrast, the Baby-boom generation is recognized as workaholic, with the trend of workaholism having emerged among them – although of all the generations mentioned in this study that of the Traditionalists is the one recognized as the most industrious.

Perceiving how hard someone works can be related to how individuals approach their work tasks. The Baby-boom generation is recognized as process-oriented, while the younger generations are seen as result-oriented, no matter when and where the work is done, which may create the impression of a lower level of activity. However, past surveys showed that 44% of employees aged 18 to 24 were willing to work more time in the workplace, while this percentage was only 23% among older employees (Tolbize, 2008).

Affiliation to an Employer

Another claim that often arises in connection with intergenerational differences is the different level of affiliation to the employer. The Traditionalist and Baby-boom generations are known for their very high loyalty to employers, unlike the following generations. The younger generations are more interested in having good workplace relationships with co-workers than with their employers. The younger generations value changing jobs as a form of career advancement, while the older generations – in the light of their greater affiliation to an employer – value gradual advancement within the same company. However, younger generations have come to realize that loyalty to an employer does not guarantee job security, as they often witnessed at their parents losing their jobs. Employer affiliation has declined over time, with 70% of Traditionalists, 65% of Baby-boomers, 40% of Generation X and 20% of Generation Y stating they would remain with the same employer (Tolbize, 2008). Employer affiliation among Millennials and Generation Z is falling rapidly, with 61% of the latter stating that they would leave an existing employer within two years if had the chance to do so (Pontefract, 2018).

Affiliation to the employer must also be considered from other angles. Compared to the older generations, the representatives of the younger generations (from Generation X onwards) do not in fact change jobs more often than representatives of the older generations did at the same age. The frequency of job changes is due in part to the state of the economy, as employees change jobs in times of economic

prosperity when opportunities are good. Typically, younger employees change jobs more often, and then tend to stay with the same employer as they get older. Employer affiliation is therefore more a question of employee age and other factors, and not so much a question of intergenerational differences. Representatives of all generations point out the same reasons why they would stay with the same employer: the opportunity to advance and develop, the opportunity to acquire new skills, work tasks that are stimulating, and higher payment. Employees, regardless of age or belonging to different generations, also show a higher degree of employer affiliation if the company has the same values as the employee, such as a focus on quality of life, good communication, autonomy at work, respect for both older, experienced employees and young, talented employees (Tolbize, 2008).

Attitude to Respect and Authority

Authority is defined as one of the most important values in the workplace by 13% of the Traditionalist generation, while this figure falls by at least half in all subsequent generations (Tolbize, 2008). This suggests that the attitude towards authority is the same for all generations who are now actively involved in the workplace, although a hierarchical approach to leadership is slightly more desirable for the Baby-boom generation than others. Representatives of Generation X and younger are relaxed towards their superiors and are not intimidated by job titles. Representatives of Generations Y and Z believe that respect should be earned, and thus do not feel unconditional respect for authority.

Both younger and older employees want to be respected in the workplace by co-workers and superiors, although the understanding of the concept of respect varies between different ages. Older employees want their opinions to have weight based on their experience, while younger employees want to be listened to when presenting their views. Older employees do not want the level of respect for all employees to be the same, but believe that those who are higher in the hierarchy or have more experience deserve a greater level of respect (Tolbize, 2008).

Stereotypes about the Characteristics of Generations

The results of some past research (Bal et al., 2015) show some typical stereotypes about older employees, which can be classified into six main categories: poorer performance of work tasks, resistance to change, poorer ability to learn, shorter period to retirement (and thus not worth investing in), a higher cost but also greater reliability. The stereotypes about older employees, as held by other staff, are 60% positive according to descriptions given by younger employees, and 85% positive for those given by middle-aged employees. The most commonly named characteristic of older employees was experience. Among the most common negative beliefs were the characteristics of resistance to change and inability or unwillingness to learn.

On the other hand, stereotypes are also attributed to younger generations, ambition and a focus on personal success, a quick change of job when a better opportunity arises, and financial prudence regarding borrowing (Stahl, 2018). Formal

education is no longer the main source of knowledge for younger employees. They strive to work in a positive work environment, with a well-established company brand. The key to their satisfaction at work is a diverse work environment where they can adopt multiple roles and do multiple jobs.

However, there is also research, which finds that generational differences, in terms of what preferences and values a certain generation pursues in the workplace, are very small or negligible. In fact, within each generation there is a very wide range of these preferences and values. For example, an analysis of 20 different studies conducted on nearly 20,000 people (Costanza et al., 2012) showed small and inconsistent differences in attitudes toward work, regardless of which generation the individuals involved in the research belonged to. The analysis concluded that although an individual employee goes through changes in their needs, interests, and preferences over their career, these changes are not related to which generation the individual belongs to.

In a company context, negative beliefs about stereotypes associated with employees of different generations affect the discriminatory decisions of the employer regarding the management of such employees, and the discriminatory behaviour of employees regarding cooperation with such individuals. However, age discrimination is not only recognized in the key decisions of employers regarding employees of different generations, such as who to hire, educate or promote, as discrimination may also occur in the everyday work environment and behaviour: how the employer and other employees talk to such an employee, how they include or exclude them at individual events, pursue or ignore their ideas for work, and so on (Bal et al., 2015).

Beliefs about the characteristics of different generations, which may turn out to be correct or false, stem from two different but interrelated factors. The first is the content and influence of the beliefs of other generations on a particular generation. The second, and newer concept, is that of meta-stereotypes, which are how a member of a certain generation believes other generations think of them as an individual (for example: older employees will worry that others think they are unwilling to learn, even if others co-workers do not actually have such an opinion of them). It is thus very likely that employees will have certain beliefs about the characteristics of other generations of employees (stereotypes), while assuming that other employees also make assumptions about them as individuals (meta-stereotypes). Based on this assumption, research was conducted (King et al., 2019) that confirmed that a multitude of stereotypes and meta-stereotypes occur in the workplace, and that these beliefs are not always accurate or the same. The responses of employees who completed the survey, and belonged to different generations, were very different. Stereotypes about older employees were mostly positive and included the words “responsible”, “working”, and “mature”, while older employees were concerned of being seen by others as “boring”, “stubborn”, and “weak-willed”. The stereotype of middle-aged employees was that they were “fair” and “ethical”, and the meta-stereotype was that they were “energetic”. Stereotypes about younger employees ranged from the positive “enthusiastic” to the negative “inexperienced”, while younger employees were convinced that others saw them in a much more negative way (“unmotivated”

and “irresponsible”). The study concluded that older and younger employees feel that other generations see them in a much more negative light than they actually do, which means that no stereotype and meta-stereotype holds up completely.

The potential consequences of these findings can be alarming, as erroneous stereotypes and meta-stereotypes can cause less cooperative relationships in the workplace and less knowledge transfer and learning, and this can negatively affect the work efficiency of an individual employee. Meta-stereotypes, that is, an individual’s erroneous beliefs about what other generations think of him or her, can also affect that individual’s work efficiency.

Method

We undertook critical assessments of intergenerational cooperation and age management in a company with over 2,000 employees from four generations, and with a large share of older employees. The selected company, called Company X in this study, was founded in Slovenia. According to its size, is classified as a large company. It is engaged in a gainful activity, being a Slovenian provider of technological solutions. The technological industry, in which the company operates, is changing, developing and adapting to new technologies and the growing demands of users (Company X, 2018).

At the end of 2018, the focal company had over 2,000 employees, and the average age of these was 44.8 years.

In studying intergenerational collaboration and age management in Company X, we used an observation method (focus groups) that we performed with 150 employees.

Moderated focus group meetings were held in the company from 10 to 25 September 2019, primarily for preparation of the company’s strategy. In total, we have formed six focus groups, each with 25 participants. The sample included approximately the same number of employees from all departments. The moderators quantitatively checked the perceptions of the participants in the following areas: older employees and attitudes towards them, stereotypes about the elderly, problems faced by the elderly, the value of elderly employees for the company, motivation and commitment of the elderly, working conditions and health protection, attitudes towards the elderly and career development opportunities. Moderators checked the perceptions of the participants with 10 pre-designed questions:

- How old are the elderly, who are the “older” employees anyway?
- What is the attitude in the company to old age and the elderly?
- Are there stereotypes about the elderly? How are they expressed? How do you feel about them?
- What opportunities for training and career development do elderly employees have?
- What is intergenerational cooperation like?
- What is the attitude of the company towards the employment of the elderly? What are your experiences?

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- Where do we have the biggest problems with working conditions for the elderly? What are some specific problems?
 - What is the value, or potential, of elderly employees for the company?
 - How do you see yourself, if you are older? What is your value?
 - How do you assess the commitment and motivation of the elderly, and why do you think this?

Each question was written separately on a poster and the participants spontaneously wrote down their answers. Focus groups were moderated according to the principle of the open space method, which means that each participant in the focus group wrote down the answer to those questions to which they wanted or felt they could contribute an answer. For example, for the questions “Are there stereotypes about the elderly? How are they expressed? How do you feel about them?” we obtained a total of 57 spontaneous responses. Those that were very similar in content were combined into one answer, with 10 answers in total. We then classified the stereotypes about the elderly employees into two groups, those that related to cooperation and knowledge transfer in the company, which we termed positive stereotypes, and those that discouraged participation, termed negative stereotypes.

We then used a quantitative research method, which was completed by a random sample of the employees, where the desired sample was ten percent of all the staff at Company X. Individual variables (nominal, ordinal and interval measurement scales) were analysed. In the following sections we will present the variables used in the analysis and their basic statistics, with the aim of providing appropriate and substantive answers to the research questions. The questionnaire was hosted using the services for online surveys 1KA¹. The survey was conducted from November 24, 2019 to December 16, 2019. In the analysis of the questionnaires, we used the statistical software package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The research was performed using the snowball method. We sent the questionnaire to 21 people employed in the selected company (in leading positions) and asked them to pass the questionnaire to their subordinates, taking into account the generational diversity of the workplace. The persons to whom we sent a hyperlink to the questionnaire were selected from our directory (105 persons) with a random 20% sample (random selection, as all units had the same probability of selection). A total of 394 people responded to the survey, and we received 334 questionnaires with at least one question completed, giving a positive response rate of 85%. A total of 255 surveys were completed in full (i.e., 76% of all questionnaires with at least answer).

Research Questions

With this research, we wanted to examine the following questions:

- Are there stereotypes about the characteristics of different generations of employees in Company X?
- Do different generations use the same foundations in terms of the company's expected attitudes towards their work?

¹ <https://www.1ka.si/>

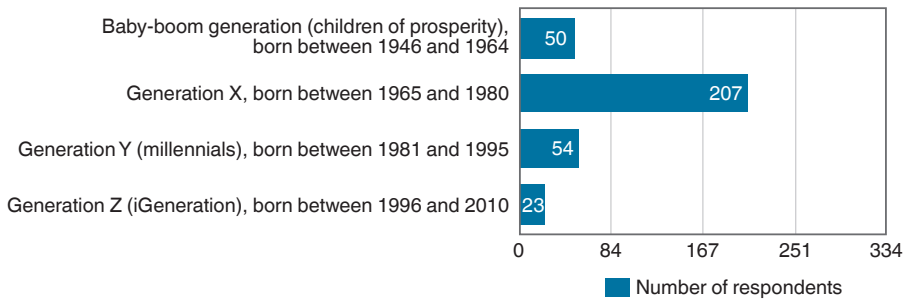
Sample and Variables

In the statistical analysis of the survey, we took into account the relatively large sample, with more than three hundred individuals, born between 1946 and 2010, who completed the questionnaire. The studied variables can be divided into two groups: main and additional. As an additional variable we can only use the first variable (which generation you belong to according to the year of birth), as it specifies the age groups of the respondents. In the statistical analysis this was treated as a nominal variable, although age is basically of ordinal in nature (as it can be classified in order from lower to higher).

Some of the main variables were assessed on an interval scale measuring the strength of agreement with certain statements (1... strongly disagree, 5... strongly agree), the validity of a statement (1... not true at all, 5... absolutely true), or the strength of significance of certain items (1... most important, 9... least important).

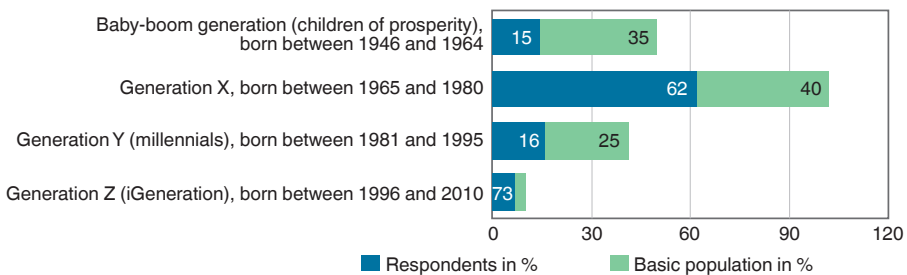
Figure 1 shows the distribution of the answers with regard to “Which generation do you belong to according to the year of birth?”, which shows that 207 (62%) respondents are representatives of Generation X, 54 (16%) of Generation Y, 50 (15%) of the Baby-boom generation, and 23 (7%) of Generation Z. Figure 2 shows the rate of respondents in correlation with the basic population.

Figure 1
Distribution of the Variable “Which Generation Do You Belong to According to the Year of Birth?”



Source: Own data

Figure 2
The Rate of Respondents in Correlation with the Basic Population



Source: Own data

The number of respondents by generation is satisfactory in terms of the number or share of representatives of each generation in the basic population. Most respondents are from Generation X (the average age of this generation, born between 1965 and 1980, is 46.5 years), which also roughly coincides with the average age in the company, which is 44.8 years. We therefore estimated that the structure of respondents coincides with the age structure of employees in the company.

Results

Are there Stereotypes about the Characteristics of Different Generations of Employees?

To answer the research question “Are there stereotypes about the characteristics of different generations of employees in Company X?”, we wanted to find out whether the expression of individual characteristics in each generation is stereotypical, and if the beliefs of different generations are particularly characteristic of each generation. For this reason, we examined beliefs about the same traits, and whether these are expressed as stereotypical in all four generations, either as stereotypical in a positive direction (that a certain trait almost entirely belongs to a certain generation) or in a negative direction (or a certain trait does not in any way describe a particular generation).

Given the research question of whether there are stereotypes about individual generations in the selected company, and based on a number of characteristics highlighted by focus group participants, we made a simple analysis of stereotypes, as presented in Table 1. We classified these stereotypes into those whose linguistic significance has a positive connotation (those stereotypes that are aimed at cooperation, knowledge transfer, progress in the company) and those with a negative connotation (those that discourage cooperation, knowledge transfer and progress).

The results of the focus groups conducted in the selected company show a very diverse range of beliefs or stereotypes about the older generations. The strategy adopted by Company X for older employees defines these as those aged 51 and above. For employees at this age, the focus group participants listed stereotypes that were overwhelmingly negative (36), with only 11 being positive. This could lead to the conclusion that in Company X the beliefs about older employees discourage cooperative relationships with this generation, and do not encourage the transfer of knowledge between the younger and older employees. This is worrying, as such stereotypes cause the deterioration of cooperative relations in the workplace and reduce the transfer of knowledge and learning, which can negatively affect the work efficiency of individual employees and consequently the efficiency of the whole company. For this reason, we concluded that it is very important for Company X to carry out more detailed research on the stereotypes about different generations of employees in order to combat the negative views that currently exist. For this purpose, in the research we deliberately focused on only a few of those characteristics that we considered to be more important for cooperation and knowledge transfer in the workplace, as follows:

- motivation to work;

- desire to acquire the new skills needed to do the job;
- adaptability to changes in the work process;
- good physical readiness for work;
- desire to have personal contact with other colleagues;
- loyalty to the employer;
- greater commitment to maintaining a work-life balance than to devoting oneself to work.

Table 1
Stereotypes About the Older Employees in Company X

Positive stereotypes	Negative stereotypes
Experienced	“know-it-all”
Loving	troublesome
Accurate	without will
full of wisdom	listless
Practical	boring
Flexible	selfish
they need to be useful	excessively inquiring
Understanding	looking back
Social	they moan
Calm	less vital
eager for attention	interrupting
	do not accept feedback
	insensitive to change
	inflexible
	impatient
	awkward
	nervous
	impatient
	disinterested
	sensitive
	clumsy
	honourable
	patronizing
	forget thinks easily
	self-interested
	overly concerned
	they see and hear poorly
	conservative
	difficult
	heavy
	stubborn
	imperious
	they think they are always right
	resentful
	uptight

Source: Own data

Table 2
Basic Statistics for the Baby-boom, X, Y and Z Generations

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The Baby-boom generation is motivated to work	234	3.50	.999	.065
The Baby-boom generation is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	234	2.94	.983	.064
The Baby-boom generation is adaptable to changes in the work process	234	2.65	1.005	.066
The Baby-boom generation is physically well-prepared for work	233	3.27	1.012	.066
The Baby-boom generation is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	234	3.73	.976	.064
The Baby-boom generation is loyal to the employer	234	4.32	.821	.054
The Baby-boom generation feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	232	3.69	.902	.059
Generation X is motivated to work	101	3.77	.773	.077
Generation X is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	101	3.69	.821	.082
Generation X is adaptable to changes in the work process	101	3.53	.912	.091
Generation X is physically well-prepared for work	101	3.75	.713	.071
Generation X is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	101	3.87	.757	.075
Generation X is loyal to the employer	101	3.69	.718	.071
Generation X feels maintaining a work-life balance means more than dedication to work	101	3.74	.757	.075
Generation Y is motivated to work	232	3.41	.858	.056
Generation Y is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	232	3.92	.813	.053
Generation Y is adaptable to changes in the work process	230	3.96	.819	.054
Generation Y is physically well-prepared for work	232	3.52	1.040	.068
Generation Y is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	232	3.23	.942	.062
Generation Y is loyal to the employer	232	2.66	.868	.057
Generation Y feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	231	3.20	.950	.062
Generation Z is motivated to work	253	2.91	1.008	.063
Generation Z is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job	253	3.47	1.056	.066
Generation Z is adaptable to changes in the work process	253	3.66	1.092	.069
Generation Z is physically well-prepared for work	251	3.15	1.132	.071
Generation Z is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	253	2.83	1.031	.065
Generation Z is loyal to the employer	253	2.13	.862	.054
Generation Z feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	251	2.82	1.116	.070

For the stereotype analysis presented in Table 2, we excluded results that analyse meta-stereotypes by excluding respondents to whom a particular question referred. The stereotype was confirmed if the average values of the variables (responses) were greater than 3.67 (stereotype in the positive direction) or less than 2.32 (stereotype in the negative direction). If the average values were in between, i.e., they represented

a medium measure, we concluded that an individual trait is not stereotypical for a particular generation or that is neutral. The values of 2.32 and 3.67 were determined by dividing the scale of possible responses (1–5) roughly into thirds, with the lower third (mean values of variables 1–2.32) representing a stereotype in a negative direction (i.e., that a certain property is not or almost not expressed), and the upper third (average values of variables 3.67) represented a stereotype in a positive direction (i.e., that a certain characteristic is fully or almost completely expressed). We thus proceeded from the fact that a stereotype can only represent a more pronounced characteristic, but not every trait that is expressed only neutrally in an individual or an individual generation is a stereotypical characteristic. To determine what can be claimed at a 5% risk level, whether the mean values in the population are greater than 3.67 or less than 2.32, we tested the null hypothesis with a single-sample *t*-test (one sample *t*-test).

Based on the point average values of variables, we came to the conclusion that there are the following stereotypes in a positive direction at Company X.

- Baby-boom generation: is eager for personal contact with other colleagues; is loyal to the employer; believes that maintaining a work-life balance means more than devoting oneself to work.
- Generation X: is motivated to work; is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job; is physically fit for work; is eager for personal contact with other colleagues; is loyal to the employer; believes that maintaining a work-life balance means more than devoting oneself to work.
- Generation Y: is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job; is adaptable to changes in the work process. In contrast, there is only one stereotype in the negative direction.
- Generation Z: is not loyal to the employer.

Table 3
Verification of the Assumption of Arithmetic Means for the Baby-boom, X, Y, and Z Generations

	Test Value = 3.67					
	T	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
The Baby-boom generation is motivated to work	-2.538	233	.012	-.166	-.29	-.04
The Baby-boom generation is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	-11.357	233	.000	-.730	-.86	-.60
The Baby-boom generation is adaptable to changes in the work process	-15.534	233	.000	-1.020	-1.15	-.89
The Baby-boom generation is physically well-prepared for work	-6.094	232	.000	-.404	-.53	-.27
The Baby-boom generation is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	.952	233	.342	.061	-.06	.19
The Baby-boom generation is loyal to the employer	12.124	233	.000	.651	.54	.76

Table 3 Continued

	Test Value = 3.67					
	T	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
The Baby-boom generation feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	.259	231	.796	.015	-.10	.13
Generation X is motivated to work	1.330	100	.187	.102	-.05	.25
Generation X is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	.282	100	.778	.023	-.14	.19
Generation X is adaptable to changes in the work process	-1.492	100	.139	-.135	-.32	.04
Generation X is physically well-prepared for work	1.163	100	.248	.082	-.06	.22
Generation X is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	2.672	100	.009	.201	.05	.35
Generation X is loyal to the employer	.323	100	.747	.023	-.12	.16
Generation X feels maintaining a work-life balance means more than dedication to work	.963	100	.338	.073	-.08	.22
Generation Y is motivated to work	-4.624	231	.000	-.261	-.37	-.15
Generation Y is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	4.730	231	.000	.252	.15	.36
Generation Y is adaptable to changes in the work process	5.306	229	.000	.287	.18	.39
Generation Y is physically well-prepared for work	-2.237	231	.026	-.153	-.29	-.02
Generation Y is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	-7.141	231	.000	-.442	-.56	-.32
Generation Y is loyal to the employer	-17.729	231	.000	-1.011	-1.12	-.90
Generation Y feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	-7.466	230	.000	-.467	-.59	-.34
Generation Z is motivated to work	-11.944	252	.000	-.757	-.88	-.63
Generation Z is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job	-3.007	252	.003	-.200	-.33	-.07
Generation Z is adaptable to changes in the work process	-.144	252	.885	-.010	-.15	.13
Generation Z is physically well-prepared for work	-7.259	250	.000	-.519	-.66	-.38
Generation Z is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	-12.963	252	.000	-.840	-.97	-.71
Generation Z is loyal to the employer	-28.322	252	.000	-1.536	-1.64	-1.43
Generation Z feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	-12.109	250	.000	-.853	-.99	-.71

Table 3 Continued

	Test Value = 2.32					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
The Baby-boom generation is motivated to work	18.136	233	.000	1.184	1.06	1.31
The Baby-boom generation is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	9.650	233	.000	.620	.49	.75
The Baby-boom generation is adaptable to changes in the work process	5.017	233	.000	.330	.20	.46
The Baby-boom generation is physically well-prepared for work	14.273	232	.000	.946	.82	1.08
The Baby-boom generation is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	22.107	233	.000	1.411	1.29	1.54
The Baby-boom generation is loyal to the employer	37.285	233	.000	2.001	1.89	2.11
The Baby-boom generation feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	23.050	231	.000	1.365	1.25	1.48
Generation X is motivated to work	18.880	100	.000	1.452	1.30	1.60
Generation X is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	16.798	100	.000	1.373	1.21	1.54
Generation X is adaptable to changes in the work process	13.389	100	.000	1.215	1.03	1.39
Generation X is physically well-prepared for work	20.196	100	.000	1.432	1.29	1.57
Generation X is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	20.591	100	.000	1.551	1.40	1.70
Generation X is loyal to the employer	19.231	100	.000	1.373	1.23	1.51
Generation X feels maintaining a work-life balance means more than dedication to work	18.886	100	.000	1.423	1.27	1.57
Generation Y is motivated to work	19.338	231	.000	1.089	.98	1.20
Generation Y is eager to gain the new skills needed to do the job	30.029	231	.000	1.602	1.50	1.71
Generation Y is adaptable to changes in the work process	30.308	229	.000	1.637	1.53	1.74
Generation Y is physically well-prepared for work	17.532	231	.000	1.197	1.06	1.33
Generation Y is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	14.692	231	.000	.908	.79	1.03
Generation Y is loyal to the employer	5.956	231	.000	.339	.23	.45
Generation Y feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	14.139	230	.000	.883	.76	1.01
Generation Z is motivated to work	9.357	252	.000	.593	.47	.72
Generation Z is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job	17.327	252	.000	1.150	1.02	1.28

Table 3 Continued

	Test Value = 2.32					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Generation Z is adaptable to changes in the work process	19.511	252	.000	1.340	1.20	1.48
Generation Z is physically well-prepared for work	11.638	250	.000	.831	.69	.97
Generation Z is eager for personal contact with other co-workers	7.871	252	.000	.510	.38	.64
<u>Generation Z is loyal to the employer</u>	-3.423	252	.001	-1.186	-.29	-.08
Generation Z feels maintaining a balance between work and private life means more than dedication to work	7.049	250	.000	.497	.36	.64

Source: Own data

In Table 3, these variables are shown in bold. However, when we performed the *t*-test and found variables for which we reject the null assumption and accept the alternative assumption, and at the risk level of 5% we claim that the average values in the population are greater than 3.67 or less than 2.32, then we obtained variables with statistically significant differences. These are underlined in Table 3.

One surprising finding from the analysis of the conducted survey refers to stereotypes about older employees. The focus group participants expressed many negative beliefs about older employees (in the focus groups those older than 51 were defined as older employees). In contrast, the results of a survey of older employees (which include members of the Baby-boom generation and part of Generation X) do not show characteristics that would discourage participation, knowledge transfer and progress at work. The Baby-boom generation is eager for personal contact with other co-workers and is loyal to the employer. The only stereotype that is not geared towards employee collaboration, knowledge transfer, and progress in the company would be that maintaining a work-life balance means more to the Baby-boomers than devoting oneself to work, it means that Baby-boomers prefer to maintain work-life balance over commitment to work.

We were also surprised by the difference between the stereotypes of different generations found in the other research and those found in our work. Prior to our research, we expected a lot of negative stereotypes about both older and younger generations, but this was not found in the responses. There may be several reasons for this, including inappropriate sampling, misunderstanding of questions and assessments by the respondents, and so on. It may be because the questions in the focus groups were asked very narrowly, in the sense of "highlight one stereotype about the elderly", while the survey allowed the assessment of the expression of individual traits on a 5-point scale, and this thus showed a more realistic picture of stereotypes in Company X.

Inaccurate stereotypes and meta-stereotypes can pose a threat to collaborative intergenerational relationships within a company. The analysis of the survey conducted

in Company X shows different stereotypes from those found by the related research presented in the introduction to this article, and thus we believe that is crucial that each company in its own internal environment makes the most accurate analysis of existing stereotypes.

Do Different Generations of Employees Come from the Same Foundations in Terms of the Company’s Expected Attitude towards their Work?

For this research question, we analysed the answers with regard to which generation the respondents belong to and the classification of values by importance and their interaction. We expected the analysis to show that all generations come from the same foundations with regard to how they expect the company to view their work. That is, that there would no differences in values for all four generations. We used the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test, which is a version of the Mann-Whitney multigroup test, in order to determine differences between groups when the dependent variable is measured on an ordinal scale. This test is equivalent to the parametric t-test or ANOVA, where the values of the variables are converted into ranges. The test was used to check whether the average ranks are the same by groups, and at the same time we also compared the variability in the ranks within the groups with that between the groups. Since rank 1 gets the smallest value of the variable, we further transformed the variables of the answers by mapping the range over the median of the answers. We changed the original maximum ranges to the smallest ranges, and vice versa. We thus obtained a new distribution that took into account ranges from minimum to maximum importance.

The average values are quite similar, with the two extremes being those for “I am satisfied with the work I do” (on average respondents give it the greatest importance) and “I work in an environment where honesty and impartiality are valued” (on average respondents give it the least importance).

Table 4

The Variables, Including the Significance of Values in the Workplace

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
I am satisfied with the work I do	265	6.70	2.482	1	9
I am respected in the company as a person	260	4.98	2.397	1	9
The work I do is valued and respected in the company	260	4.55	2.416	1	9
I have guaranteed good pay for the work done	262	5.25	2.367	1	9
I feel fulfilled, my work serves a specific purpose	260	5.30	2.609	1	9
I am making personal and career progress with my work	262	4.48	2.535	1	9
I work in a work environment where there are collegial relationships	261	5.31	2.354	1	9
My job is safe and stable, in the company and in my workplace	260	4.61	2.788	1	9
I work in an environment where honesty and impartiality are valued	259	3.85	2.338	1	9

Source: Own data

Table 5
Kruskal-Wallis Rank Test 1

	Which generation do you belong to according to your year of birth	N	Mean Rank
I am satisfied with the work I do	Baby boom	39	142.72
	Generation X	165	136.30
	Generation Y	43	106.87
	Generation Z	18	144.14
	<i>Total</i>	265	
I am respected in the company as a person	Baby boom	38	129.75
	Generation X	161	129.46
	Generation Y	43	133.09
	Generation Z	18	135.22
	<i>Total</i>	260	
The work I do is valued and respected in the company	Baby boom	38	145.57
	Generation X	161	131.38
	Generation Y	43	120.10
	Generation Z	18	115.69
	<i>Total</i>	260	
I have guaranteed good pay for the work done	Baby boom	38	118.42
	Generation X	163	128.94
	Generation Y	43	153.26
	Generation Z	18	130.33
	<i>Total</i>	262	
I feel fulfilled, my work serves a specific purpose	Baby boom	38	128.39
	Generation X	161	144.33
	Generation Y	43	101.88
	Generation Z	18	79.58
	<i>Total</i>	260	
I am making personal and career progress with my work	Baby boom	38	104.72
	Generation X	163	126.55
	Generation Y	43	162.06
	Generation Z	18	159.89
	<i>Total</i>	262	
I work in a work environment where there are collegial relationships	Baby boom	38	131.62
	Generation X	162	124.99
	Generation Y	43	135.43
	Generation Z	18	173.22
	<i>Total</i>	261	
My job is safe and stable, in the company and in my workplace	Baby boom	39	119.15
	Generation X	160	132.43
	Generation Y	43	129.47
	Generation Z	18	140.36
	<i>Total</i>	260	
I work in an environment where honesty and impartiality are valued	Baby boom	38	159.89
	Generation X	160	124.13
	Generation Y	43	127.31
	Generation Z	18	125.44
	<i>Total</i>	259	

Source: Own data

Table 6
Kruskal-Wallis Rank Test 2

	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
I am satisfied with the work I do	6.622	3	.085
I am respected in the company as a person	.159	3	.984
The work I do is valued and respected in the company	3.116	3	.374
I have guaranteed good pay for the work done	4.941	3	.176
I feel fulfilled, my work serves a specific purpose	20.256	3	.000
I am making personal and career progress with my work	15.190	3	.002
I work in a work environment where there are collegial relationships	6.914	3	.075
My job is safe and stable, in the company and in my workplace	1.333	3	.721
I work in an environment where honesty and impartiality are valued	7.320	3	.062

Source: Own data

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of the Kruskal-Wallis rank test. Based on these, at the risk level of 5% we conclude that the average ranks of all four generations are the same (or not different), except those for the variables “I feel fulfilled and my work serves a specific purpose” and “I am making personal and career progress with my work”. In other words, for all variables except these two we cannot claim that there are differences in the ranking of the importance of items, so in this part the results support our expectations.

In terms of the variable “I feel fulfilled, my work serves a specific purpose”, where we detected statistically significant differences, it is clear that Generation Z has the lowest average rank (and therefore rated it as less important value), followed by Generation Y, the Baby-boom generation and Generation X – younger generations therefore assess this variable as less important compared to the older generations.

The results for *personal and career advancement* are almost the opposite – the Baby-boom generation evaluates it as the least important variable, followed by Generation X, and then Generations Y and Z. Here, too, it seems that the younger generations evaluate personal and career advancement as more important than the two older generations. It is thus true that the younger generations are, on average, more driven with regard to personal and career advancement than the older generations.

The least differences in ranking between generations (based on the highest values of Asymp. Sig.) were found for “I am respected in the company as a person”, “The work I do is valued and respected in the company” and “My job is safe and stable in the company and in my workplace”.

The results here did not surprise us, but instead confirm that, regardless of the age or generational affiliation of an individual employee, members of all generations draw on similar values when doing their work, which means that they are driven by similar motives at work, as follows:

-
- to be satisfied with the work they do,
 - to be respected in the company as a person,
 - that the work they perform is valued and respected in the company,
 - that they are guaranteed good pay for the work done,
 - that they feel fulfilled at work and that the work serves a specific purpose,
 - that they can make personal and career progress,
 - to work in an environment where there are collegial relationships,
 - that their employment is secure and stable,
 - to work in an environment where honesty and impartiality are valued.

A slightly less important value for the younger generations is that they feel fulfilled at work and that the work serves a specific purpose. With regard to personal and career advancement, however, almost the opposite is found. However, we estimate that the younger generations see many opportunities for advancement ahead of them, while the older two generations have already completed their career advancement and are now settled in certain positions. Personal fulfilment at work and the purpose of performing work are also not so important for younger generations, because they may be looking for their personal fulfilment in private spheres, e.g., in starting a family or building a home, and therefore they do not worry about personal fulfilment in the workplace. The older generations have already established their homes, their children are becoming independent or have already done so, and thus they begin to look for their fulfilment in the professional sphere. However, reasons that are more precise could be found in further research.

Conclusion

The article focuses on the field of intergenerational cooperation in the workplace. Generational differences and similarities are seen in relation to work, such as attitude towards work, sense of loyalty to the employer, and attitude towards respect and authority. These generational differences and similarities relate in particular to certain stereotypes attributed to generations by theory. However, addressing such stereotypes is important from the point of view of preventing discrimination at work due to certain personal circumstances of individual generations of employees.

The article highlights the results of some past research showing typical stereotypes about older employees, such as poorer performance of work tasks, resistance to change, poorer learning ability, not worth investing in their development, and a higher cost, as well as being more reliable. Stereotypes are also attributed to the younger generations, such as ambition and attitude towards personal success, quickly changing jobs when there is a better opportunity, financial prudence regarding borrowing, formal education is not the main source of knowledge, and a desire for a diverse work environment. In a workplace context, negative beliefs about stereotypes associated with employees of different generations affect the employer's discriminatory decisions regarding the management of staff, as well as the discriminatory behaviour of employees regarding cooperation with each other. Some research confirms the link between stereotypes and actual employer

behaviour. Beliefs about the characteristics of different generations, which may turn out to be correct or false, arise from two different but interrelated factors: the first is the content and influence of other generations' beliefs on a particular generation (i.e., stereotypes), while the second is how an individual member of a certain generation perceives what members of other generations think of them (meta-stereotypes).

We conducted a survey on intergenerational cooperation in a chosen company with more than 2,000 employees. Based on the method of observation (focus groups) which we performed with 150 employees we obtained basic stereotypes, both positive and negative. We then used a quantitative research method, completed by a random sample of four generations of employees. We wanted to examine the following research questions: whether there are stereotypes about the characteristics of different generations of employees, and whether different generations come from the same foundations regarding the company's expected attitude to their work.

We came to the conclusion that there are the following stereotypes in Company X:

- The Baby-boom generation is eager to have personal contact with other employees, is loyal to the employer, and a work-life balance means more than dedication to work.
- Generation X is motivated to work, is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job, is physically well prepared for work, is eager for personal contact with other co-workers, is loyal to the employer, and maintaining a work-life balance means more than dedication to work.
- Generation Y is eager to acquire the new skills needed to do the job and is adaptable to changes in the work process.
- Generation Z is not loyal to the employer.

Participants in the focus groups expressed many negative beliefs about older employees, while the results of the survey do not show indicate that older employees would in fact discourage participation, knowledge transfer and progress at work.

The results of the survey also confirmed that, regardless of the age or generational affiliation of an individual employee, members of all generations work based on similar values, which means that they are driven by similar motives: that they are satisfied with the work they do, that they are respected in the company as a person, that the work they perform is valued and respected in the company, that they have guaranteed good pay for the work done, that they feel fulfilled at work and that the work serves a specific purpose, they progress personally and in their work careers, that the work environment has collegial relationships, their employment is safe and stable, and honesty and impartiality are valued. A slightly less important value for the younger generation is that they feel fulfilled at work and that the work serves a specific purpose. On average, it is most important for all employees of all ages to work in a company where they are satisfied with the work they do, where they feel fulfilled and that their work serves a specific purpose, and it is least important for them to work in an environment where honesty and impartiality are valued, and where their employment is secure and stable.

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ARTICLE

Influence of Self-Perception and Importance of Body Image on the Methods Implemented to Enhance the Physical Appearance

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ABSTRACT

Physical appearance refers to the traits and features in our body and to how we look. The importance given to the looks and complexion is a major factor contributing the perception of one's physical appearance. In the current scenario, there are many ways to enhance the overall physical appearance. This study aims to find whether the satisfaction gained on behalf of the physical appearance has any impact on the value given to body image and the steps taken to enhance it. In this regard, the research also proves whether the noteworthiness on the looks affects the methods that are used to improve the body image. Data was collected by the methods of purposive and convenience sampling from 462 people who live in Tamilnadu, which is one of the southern states of India. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used to analyse the data using Smart PLS version 3.0 software. The results showed that the techniques implemented to enhance the physical appearance is influenced by the perception of individuals on their look and the level of importance given by them to it. Also, it was ascertained that the self-satisfaction of persons with regard to appearance has a negative impact on the importance given by them to their body image.

KEYWORDS

physical appearance, self-satisfaction, importance, implementation, perception, body image

Introduction

Right from our birth, until the very last moment, body is the prime asset for any individual. It is essential to take care of our physical appearance in order to lead a healthy life. In this era where people are obsessed with the way they portray themselves whether on social media or in real life, so much of importance is given to the various features and shape of the body. Complexion also plays a crucial part in deciding the attractiveness of a body. People also take immense care to enhance their appearance in all possible ways. Consequently, beauty becomes a valuable parameter in deciding the satisfaction of their physical appearance.

In this 21st century, we live in a society that considers physical appearance as one of the most important parameters to judge others' personality and richness. Surrounded by the extreme influence of media, we are constantly compelled to see people with perfect looks around us – be it in magazines, on the news, in the movies and all over the internet. Flawless body shape and an exemplary appearance is extremely valued since it automatically makes everyone to love and admire you. Since the past few decades, a high focus on the self-perceived satisfaction due to their body image has been noticed in both men and women (Tiggemann, 2004). Body image at present is comprehended as a perplexing and multidimensional construct, which includes psychological, emotional and behavioural aspects of experiencing one's body (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002). Hence, the look of our body has been given such an important value.

The increase in awareness and consciousness in terms of health and aesthetics of the body led to immense body enhancement techniques and their modifications (Jackson & Scott, 2014). Due to these advancements in sociology, the public discussion is inclined to talk about the shape and form of body and its impact in the mind of common people. We get that a lot of stress is made on the physical appearance these days. But the sole purpose of this research is to truly understand if in anyway it impacts the self-satisfaction of an individual. People do try a lot of costly and cost-effective techniques to enhance the body image. The study also aims to find out if it is because of the significant importance that is given to the looks and features. This research would give us a fair bit of understanding on how the gravity on achieving an ideal body image impacts the self-satisfaction and plays a vital role in the techniques used to enhance it.

Literature Review

The Oxford English Dictionary quotes the body as the “structure of bones, flesh, etc., of a human being or animal, living or dead”, which presents that body was treated as a sole materialistic entity before 1980s (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). But over the years, the perception of the body has changed to be the medium to portray the persons, their identification and mannerisms influenced by social and cultural factors. The body not only denotes an organism that has trunk and limbs, but also the metaphor of an individual (Ozawa-De Silva, 2002). Appearance of the body is equal to the physical presentation of one's highest owned property to this entire world.

Since body is presumed to be an uncertain one, it is more pliable and we are regularly trying to refine, improve and alter it. Shilling (1993) explains that the body could be best actualized as an unfinished social and biological phenomenon, which is in a continual process of becoming “a project which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an individual’s self-identity”. Turner (1984) expresses the idea that the bodies are controlled by the society with pre-occupied regulations of ideal appearance-based rules. These capture attention to the methods in which bodies are assessed, corrected and monitored in modern societies.

Body image is characterized as the mental portrayal of one’s own body and sentiments one has in regards to this portrayal (Slade, 1994). It is a wide idea, yet, at its most essential is the way we see, understand, and assess our bodies. Grogan (2006) specifies it as “a person’s perceptions, feelings or thoughts about his or her body”. Unlike other senses as touch and taste, people gain early impressions of others depending on their visual appearance, voice or smell, without engaging the person’s will or awareness (Groyecka et al., 2017). This in turn shows how significant the appearance of a person could turn out to be.

Contemporary society provides incredible obsession towards physical attractiveness and youthful looks, as shown by media, stressing whatever is beautiful is also good (Dion et al., 1972). Earlier studies believe that the socio-historical contexts have from multiple points of view influenced and moulded our impression of beauty and that our comprehension about what is beautiful is contextually negotiated and shifts relying on gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other socially constructed factors (Barriga et al., 2009).

Self-Satisfaction

Wilson et al. (2013) discovered a solid connection between body image satisfaction and health-related quality of life, which is physical and mental. The satisfaction caused because of the looks always brings in a happy feel. The main reason for it would be the compliments that are received from the outside world for your appearance. On account of physical health, the point that body satisfaction held a more grounded prescient incentive than body mass index, which is a calculated ratio of a person’s height to weight is to be noted. This rightly indicates that the satisfaction levels have a lot to with the mental health. The fact that women’s self-perception issues and socio-cultural pressures on them have intensified of late (Pope et al., 2000) indicates that women record higher rates of body dissatisfaction and face greater pressure from print and electronic media to have an ideal body than men. It is believed that body dissatisfaction, which is a negative attitude towards one’s body image, arises from a sensed disparity linking the real physical appearance and the ideal perfect body state (Heider, Spruyt, & De Houwer, 2018).

The colour of one’s skin is predominantly segregated, since whiteness is believed to be the representative of beauty and grace in most Western cultures; as, in comparison, blackness reflects hatefulness and ugliness (Hunter, 2002). The words fair and pretty are interchangeable across India, where white skin is considered a symbol of caste and status, with turmeric powder being applied almost diligently

in attempt to achieve a lighter skin tone (Li et al., 2008). Due to such constructive differences over the skin tone, it is regarded as one of the main parameters to gauge the satisfaction of an individual on behalf of her/his appearance.

Importance

Studies have demonstrated a constructive connection linking body dissatisfaction and acknowledgment of plastic or cosmetic surgery among ladies, proposing that individuals may consider it as a way of acquiring greater confidence and social rewards from showing up increasingly appealing to other people (Lunde, 2013). Nonetheless, some experiments in the past have indicated that body image quality and self-confidence may not improve, although their body dissatisfaction decreases because of undergoing particular cosmetic surgery procedures.

The ongoing rivalry in the mass media of ultra-thin models is believed to be a crucial factor in creation of a distorted body image (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999). Recent results suggest that the physical appearance primarily evaluates the worth and position of women, and that the grading of their body appearance is an integral part of their confidence (Davison & McCabe, 2006; Vartanian et al., 2012). One trait that has been extensively observed in comparison to confidence and that has strong consequences for romantic desirability quotient is physical beauty viewed by itself (Bale & Archer, 2013).

Even limited exposure to photographs of the idealized male figure has been found to increase body dissatisfaction in men (Baird & Grieve, 2006). For both genders, this relation of exposure-dissatisfaction is predicted, as the theory of social comparison would assert (Festinger, 1954). Growing body dissatisfaction is likely to cause a more pessimistic appearance lens in association with self-assessments, leading ultimately to increased vulnerability to beauty-based rejection (Webb et al., 2013).

Implementation

Body esteem refers to the contentment of a person with an appearance of his or her body (Amos & McCabe, 2016). Emotions regarding personal appearance are crucial for the self-perception of sexual desire, because the physical appearance is a strong predictor of reproductive success (Ellis, 1992; Frederick & Haselton, 2007; Gallup & Frederick, 2010; van Hoof et al., 2000). The authors (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006) were led by the results about the effect of physical activity on body image and they concluded that physical exercise was correlated with enhanced and increasingly positive self-perception in individuals who are indulged in exercise when compared with the physically inactive ones.

Exercisers have a more positive perception on their body looks than non-exercisers and those who exercise regularly showed a more optimistic post-intervention body image in relation to the non-exercising people. Hence, the study concluded that exercise is related to improved perception of the body looks. (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006). The dissatisfaction due to the looks is more easily influenced by external factors such as the intake foods with high calorific value and not indulging in any form of physical exercise (Vocks et al., 2009).

Research Gap

Besides quite a few questionnaire-based researches on physical appearance, multiple experimental studies have investigated that various parameters affect the perception of physical appearance and gives us measures to find the level of satisfaction and importance given to it. Certain papers referred talk about the several ways to enhance the appearance that are tried by common human. The factors already studied under the importance given to looks are all mutually exclusive and hence they are all taken in consideration together as one construct in this study. In this economical world, usage of homemade remedies and frequency of visiting a stylist is taken as worthy variables to find the intensity of attention and care given to the physical appearance.

There is also a brief amount of pressure on every individual to portray their body in the best way possible to the outer world. That sense of stress is taken into consideration and it signifies the importance each person gives to physical appearance. Comparison among individuals on behalf of their appearances has become more common when we live amidst a judgemental society. Such parameters are considered in this study along with a few indicators that are already mentioned in the past researches.

Model and Hypothesis Development

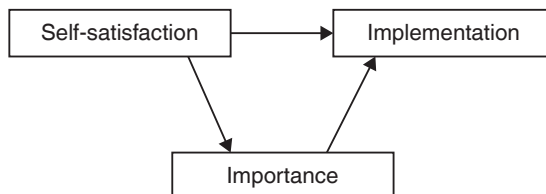
Based on the previous theories and literatures, three research questions are proposed.

- Research question 1: Does the level of satisfaction attained through physical appearance impact the importance given to it?
- Research question 2: Does the contentment on the personal body image significantly affect the usage of various methods to enhance the physical appearance?
- Research question 3: Does the importance given to physical appearance of an individual have an effect on the various techniques implemented to improve the body image?

We have developed a theoretical model that contains one independent variable, which is the Self-satisfaction, and two dependent variables which are Importance and Implementation. Figure 1 depicts the research model.

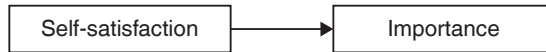
Figure 1

Research Model



As a part of data analysis, this paper aims to test the following hypothesis.

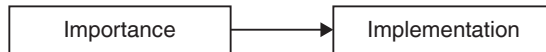
H1: The level of self-satisfaction due to physical appearance has significant impact on the importance given to it.



H2: The level of self-satisfaction has significant impact on the ways of implementation of several methods to enhance the physical appearance.



H3: The importance put forth on an ideal physical appearance has significant influence on the implementation of different methods to enhance the physical appearance of an individual.



Research Methodology

This section outlines the details of the method of research that comprises of the information on participants, data collection, model development as well as the testing of hypotheses.

Participants

The population of the study is considered to be the people of Tamilnadu, which is one of the popular southern Indian states. So, the participants included were people who live in Tamilnadu, among which most of them were from Coimbatore. A Google¹ form consisting the questionnaire was shared across and 462 responses were obtained. There were 264 females and 198 males distributed among diversified age groups. The education qualifications and employment/affiliation status of the participants were also collected. The sample was deemed fit for the analysis as (Hair et al., 2010) suggests that number of samples should be at least 10 times the number of items in the research instrument.

Data Collection

The data was collected through the convenience sampling method. The questionnaire-based survey was shared in known WhatsApp² groups across the friends and family members who were living in Tamilnadu. It was shared to approximately 650 people and 462 responses were obtained. As there were no restrictions imposed on the background of the respondent, except the fact that they currently live in Tamilnadu,

¹ Google™ and the Google Logo are trademarks of Google Inc. in the U.S. and other countries.

² WhatsApp™ is a trademark of WhatsApp Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

the data was collected in a span of 4 days. Table 1 shows the background of the participants in detail.

Table 1
Demographic Details

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	198	42.9	42.9
	Female	264	57.1	100
Age	15 & Below	6	1.3	1.3
	16 – 25	242	52.4	53.7
	26 – 35	54	11.7	65.4
	36 – 45	50	10.8	76.2
	46 – 55	70	15.1	91.3
	56 – 65	28	6.1	97.4
	66 & Above	12	2.6	100
Education	Junior/Elementary School	5	1.1	1.1
	High School	33	7.1	8.2
	Bachelor's Degree/Diploma	272	58.9	67.1
	Master's Degree/Doctorate	145	31.4	98.5
	Others	7	1.5	100
Employment	Salaried	85	18.4	18.4
	Self-employed	84	18.2	36.6
	Retired	17	3.7	40.3
	Student	201	43.5	83.8
	Housewife	62	13.4	97.2
	Others	13	2.8	100

Research Measurement and Questionnaire Design

The purpose of the research is to study the relationship between the satisfaction of individuals towards their physical appearance, importance given to one's physical appearance and the methods that are implemented to enhance the physical appearance. Modifications to indicators and constructs were done to make sure the constructs suffice the need of the research context. Each construct is measured using a Likert scale with several indicators. It is a scale developed with five levels of ratings, starting from 1 which denotes 'strongly disagree' to 5 that denotes 'strongly agree' on each of the pointers. Table 2 shows the indicators involved in the study.

Data Analysis

Smart PLS 3.0 software, which assess the structural model (Henseler et al., 2009) is used to develop the data analysis part. Structural Equation Modelling technique was inculcated because it could test a causal relationship between the constructs that contain a number of indicators (Hair et al., 2011). There are two major steps undertaken in analysing the data. The assessment of the measurement model is first conducted to ensure that each construct and indicators on the research instrument have met

the criteria (Boudreau et al., 2001). The next activity is to conduct an evaluation of structural models in which the hypothesis will also be tested along with the model fit assessment.

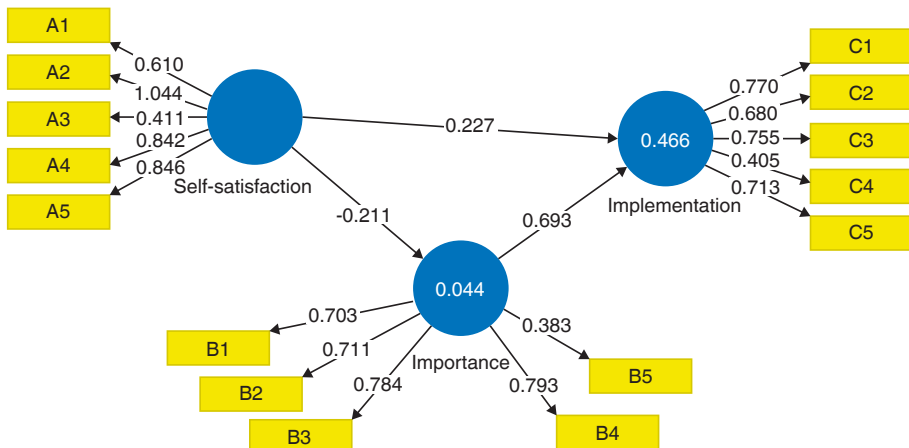
Table 2
Indicators

Construct	Indicators
Self-satisfaction	Height
	Weight
	Skin Complexion
	Features
	Body Shape
Importance	Comparison with others
	Pressurized to look good
	Partner's appearance
	Cosmetic/Plastic surgery
	Confidence & Self Esteem
Implementation	Visiting beauty parlour/saloon
	Diet
	Exercise
	Use of homemade remedies
	Money spent on beauty products

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The levels of significance were tested and path analysis was carried over in assessing the hypotheses associated with study. The parameters and the latent variables are shown along with the structural model in Figure 2.

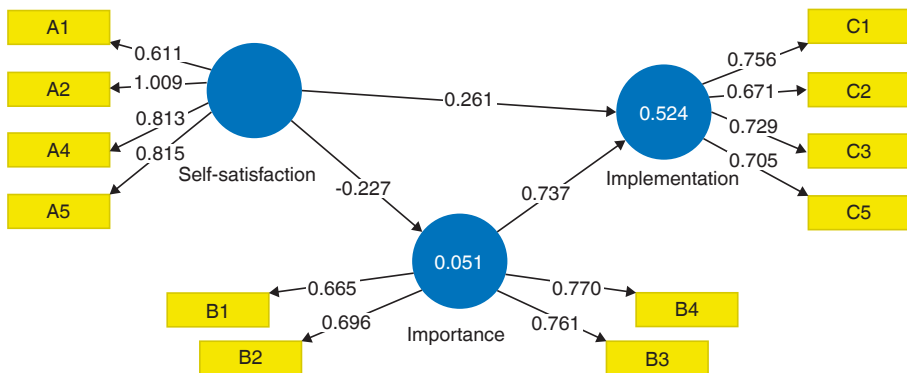
Figure 2
Initial Structural Model



Since A3 (Skin Complexion), B5 (Confidence & Self Esteem) and C4 (Homemade Remedies) have very low factor loadings (less than 0.6), it shows that these parameters do not contribute enough to their respective constructs. The perceived reason for skin complexion not contributing to self-satisfaction as much as the other constructs might be because people are satisfied with their skin tone and since average Indian skin complexion is not too dark, people are ready to accept the complexion. When it comes to confidence, people not only rely on their looks, but also there are other paramount factors that would increase or decrease their esteem even if they are not satisfied so much with their external image. Homemade remedies might have been a valuable indicator about 10 to 20 years ago, but now due to advancements in technology and the increased awareness as well as buying power in people, they choose to move towards a scientifically proven source to enhance their body image. Hence, we remove the three variables from the model. The structural model that is considered in the further analysis is depicted in Figure 3. In this model, the factor loadings of all the parameters are above the mark of 0.6, so we can go ahead with the analysis part.

Figure 3

Final Structural Model



Multicollinearity

The score of variance inflating factor (VIF) helps us to assess the multicollinearity in between the independent variables. Construct should be considered to have an acceptable level of multi-collinearity if the VIF score is lesser than 10 (Hair et al., 1995). The VIF score of the study variables ranges from 1.432 (diet) to 6.002 (features), hence meet the acceptable criteria. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Multicollinearity

	VIF		VIF		VIF
A1	1.794	B1	1.725	C1	1.830
A2	2.032	B2	1.759	C2	1.432
A4	6.002	B3	1.469	C3	1.603
A5	5.991	B4	2.330	C5	2.183

Reliability Assessment

The reliability of the study was measured using two important variates i.e., Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (CR). The Cronbach's alpha (α) and the Composite Reliability (CR) values has to be greater than 0.80 for all constructs, only then it would indicate adequate internal consistency of the constructs (Hair et al. 2010). The values for Cronbach alpha ranged from 0.807 to 0.892 while that of the CR values ranged from 0.808 to 0.894 in the current study, indicating a high internal consistency as shown in Table 4.

Convergent Validity

To what extent the various parameters measuring the same construct are in agreement with each other is checked by Convergent Validity (CV). Babin & Zikmund (2016) suggested that CV depends on internal consistency, essentially, how much the two measures are related to each other in a construct. Hair et al. (2010) observed that the loadings for all items should be higher than 0.50 for convergent validity to be evident in a study. The CR and the Average Value Extracted (AVE) values in the current study both surpassed the prescribed value. Thus, the study's overall measurement model indicated satisfactory convergent validity as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Convergent Reliability and Validity

Research Constructs	Factor Loadings	Cronbach alpha	Rho	CR	AVE	
Self-satisfaction	A1	0.611	0.892	0.918	0.892	0.679
	A2	1.009				
	A4	0.813				
	A5	0.815				
Importance	B1	0.665	0.814	0.818	0.815	0.525
	B2	0.696				
	B3	0.761				
	B4	0.770				
Implementation	C1	0.756	0.807	0.809	0.808	0.513
	C2	0.671				
	C3	0.729				
	C5	0.705				

Discriminant validity

The uniqueness and distinctiveness of a measure is signified by Discriminant Validity. It is a scale showing whether a measure of a construct is too strongly correlated with a measure of another construct (Babin & Zikmund, 2016). Discriminant validity is assessed by analysing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the squared differences between the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 5, both constructs met the discriminant validity, because the AVE for each construct was higher than its squared correlation with the other constructs.

Table 5
Discriminant Validity

	Self-satisfaction	Importance	Implementation
Implementation	0.716		
Importance	0.678	0.724	
Self-satisfaction	0.094	-0.227	0.824

Evaluation of Structural Model

Model fit is a measurement that describes how well a model represents the observations. It assesses the discrepancy between the observed values and the expected results produced by the model (Bollen & Long, 1992). The Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) is an absolute measure of fit, naturally, a value of 0 means a perfect fit and it ranges up to 1. A value of 0.08 or less is generally considered to indicate good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Maydeu-Olivares, Shi & Rosseel, 2017). The SRMR value for our study is 0.061, which is well, less than the limit. Hence, this proves that the model is fit enough.

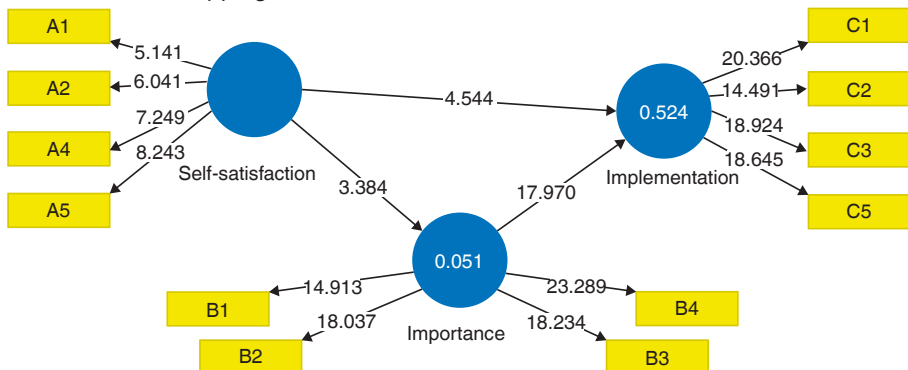
Bootstrapping

To test the structural model, Hair et al. (2017) proposed using a bootstrapping technique with 5,000 bootstrap samples to look at the R², beta (β) and corresponding *t*-values. They also proposed that researchers would disclose the predictive significance (Q²) as well as the effect sizes (*f*²), in addition to these basic steps. So, a bootstrapping of the sample data was done and the results are shown in the Figure 4.

Hypothesis Testing

The *p*-value would notify that there is an effect, but the extent of the effect cannot be perceived through the *p*-value (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). The substantive value (effect size) and the statistical significance (*p*-value) are important findings in reporting and interpreting the studies. Hahn and Ang (2017) outlined the rigor in presenting findings

Figure 4
Results of Bootstrapping



in quantitative research that include the use of observational studies, measures of effect size and confidence intervals. It is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Hypothesis Testing

Study Hypothesis	Hypothesis	t-value	Decision	R2	f ²	p-value
Self-satisfaction -> Importance	H1	3.384	Supported	0.051	0.054	0.001
Self-satisfaction -> Implementation	H2	4.544	Supported	0.524	0.136	0.000
Importance -> Implementation	H3	17.970	Supported		1.082	0.000

Self-satisfaction ($\beta = -0.227, t = 3.384, p < 0.01, f^2 = 0.054$) is a significant predictor of Importance, but it influences negatively with explaining just 5.1% of the variance in Importance. Self-satisfaction ($\beta = 0.261, t = 4.544, p < 0.01, f^2 = 0.136$) and Importance ($\beta = 0.737, t = 17.870, p < 0.01, f^2 = 1.082$) are both significant predictors of Implementation explaining 52.4% variance of it. The f^2 values of range 0.02 is assessed as small effect, 0.15 is assessed as medium effect and 0.35 is assessed as large effects of exogenous latent variables. Self-satisfaction has a positive influence on Implementation, while the effect size is small, i.e., 0.136. Importance has a very large positive effect on Implementation with effect size of 1.082.

Results and Discussion

From the analysis made so far, it can be concluded that the self-satisfaction on behalf of the physical appearance does not have positive impact on the importance given to it. Hence the hypothesis H1 cannot be accepted. It means that people who have a satisfactory body image don't really stress too much and give a great importance to it. The implementation of various techniques to enhance physical appearance is highly impacted by the satisfaction levels of the body image of an individual. So, the hypothesis H2 is accepted. This proves that trying out various methods to improve the appearance essentially is influenced by satisfaction levels. The stress on the physical appearance has a very significant and a large impact on the various methods inculcated to improve it, which therefore proves the hypothesis H3 right, and it is accepted. This explains that importance given to the aesthetics of the body impacts directly the various ways that are inculcated to enhance it. Finally, this research provides a new insight covering the self-satisfaction due to the physical appearance and how it impacts the importance given to it and paves way to use modern methods to enhance the body image.

Among the various methods taken over to preserve and improve the aesthetics of the body, the study showed that people mostly rely on visiting external sources like as parlours/saloons and exercising regularly, which is in correlation with the pointers of the previous researchers (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006). Diet has become an everyday phenomenon and it a common aspiration for all to follow a healthy diet and a good body appearance. The use of homemade remedies were popular in ancient times, but now with the fast paced world, people aim for instant, proven, risk-free, sophisticated and ready to use products which eliminates the need of self-made items.

The research proves that the importance given to body image doesn't seem greatly dependent on the confidence and self-esteem that one has. Self-esteem and confidence is one latent factor that is least affected by poor body appearance. The self-perception about the beauty of oneself seems to rely highly on the weight of individuals as it also showcases the health and well-being. Skin complexion is of least priority when it comes to impacting one's perception on their appearance. This is in contrast with a lot of studies and researches undergone previously that stresses the racial differences due to darker skin tone (Hunter, 2002). Various features and shape of the body is denoted as significant factors when it comes to self-perception.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to have an understanding on whether the perception of one's own physical appearance has an impact on the importance given to physical appearance along with the different methods implemented to enhance it. The results derived through the analysis was only partially consistent with the hypothesis made. It showed that self-satisfaction does not have a great influence on Importance. Self-satisfaction negatively impacts the importance given to physical appearance. To sum this up, it can be said that the effect of self-satisfaction on importance is small and negative. When persons feel very good about their physical appearance and is comfortable in their skin, they does not stress much on the body image. Rather when they do not feel satisfied about their looks is when they start giving importance to the physical appearance. The perception of one's body image affects the methods that are followed to enhance it. Persons who are high in perception regarding their appearance would implement several techniques to keep up their looks. Importance given to the looks plays a huge role in deciding whether persons are inclined towards the methods used to enhance the physical appearance. The ones who give more importance to the looks seems to put it more efforts to follow various techniques that would improve their body image. When persons give least consideration to their appearance, there is very low chances that they would try out various methods that enhances their body image.

The research could be done as a differential analysis of self-perception among various age groups or between the genders, so a more detailed information of the classes can be obtained. Other factors that impact the three elements taken into consideration can be studied in-depth to come up with the list of crucial reasons affecting the self-perception, importance and implementation. Overall, this research can be considered as a start to delve deeper into the causes of motivating and demotivating factors with regard the body appearance.

Limitations

The research used only three latent variables, which are self-satisfaction, importance and implementation. Each of the latent variables had been accessed by only four indicators each, however there could be other indicators too that would

better define the latent variables. Involving cross-sectional analysis by gender and age would have been more helpful to understand the current scenario with respect to the study.

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BOOK REVIEW

Deborah H. Gruenfeld (2020). *Acting with Power*. New York: Currency/Penguin Random House

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Deborah Gruenfeld is an American social psychologist from Stanford Graduate School of Business. In her latest book, *Acting with Power* (Gruenfeld, 2020), she shares insightful lessons, gathered from many years of research and teaching about power. The book attempts to hit a two-fold objective: (1) to free the readers from the misconceptions of power, and (2) to help them realize that they already possess power, through the various roles they play in life.

In the introduction, Gruenfeld recounts her early professional experiences. After she earned her PhD, she felt nothing had changed. She was immersed in the same routine of teaching, research, and experiments. However, to everyone else, she was different – someone who was supposed to be an expert. She felt an impostor. Things changed when she joined a faculty development program related to acting. In the book, Gruenfeld credits the program to understanding that “power comes from the role we play”. Successful actors do not let their insecurities hinder them from doing what they need. She emphasizes that actors “step away from their own drama and learn how to play a part in the story”. For Gruenfeld, acting as “the professor”, or any character, does not mean faking it. It has more to do with embracing the shared social reality and being committed to her part in the performance. Moreover, her research and experiences boil down to the conclusion that success and happiness are not a result of much power one can garner – they are the results of what one is able to do for other people with the power one has.

Gruenfeld offers a caveat that when an individual thinks much of the power they possess, they think of power as a resource and the end in itself. This makes people do whatever it takes to get a coveted position of power, regardless of the means. While many writers on power discuss winning battles with others, Gruenfeld claims that *Acting with Power* is about “winning battles with ourselves”. This eye-opening and captivating book has 10 chapters and is divided into four parts.

Part I “When the Curtain Goes Up” discusses the concept of power – meaning, myths, and truths. Power based on the prevalent definition refers to the capacity to control other individuals and the results of their actions. Power, thus, is distinct from status or authority – one can have power without them. Power and influence also differ from one another since influence is the outcome of power. Power is not a personal characteristic, too. In this book, power means playing a part in someone else’s story.

Power, as the author emphasizes, is based on relationships – what makes an individual powerful depends on how a person is needed. Power also is dependent on the context and is not permanent since one cannot retain power from one situation to another. In addition, Gruenfeld argues that power is a social contract. When a powerful person violates an implicit agreement, their power deteriorates. For example, an entrepreneur who exploits their workers unjustly will see themselves later as having no power because no one wants to work with them anymore.

Gruenfeld further explains that power comes from the people’s need to gain rewards and to avoid punishments, which are at the disposal of a certain individual. But power is not immediately observable; it has properties that are hidden. Knowledge is almost always a source of power, because what people know or do not know cannot be seen explicitly.

Part II “The Two Faces of Power” talks about the two typologies of power: (1) power up, and (2) power down, seasoned with various examples from history. Gruenfeld discusses power up by referring to Keith Johnstone, a British actor and theater director who pioneered improvisational theater (see Johnstone, 1987). In his terms, power up refers to playing high. It means raising oneself in comparison to others – by name-dropping, claiming expertise, or pulling rank; and by looking down at others such as through insulting someone, disagreeing with them, or brushing them off.

According to Johnstone (1987), power up gives off the message, “Don’t come near me, I bite”. In theater, as in life, playing power up takes up space, both in literal and figurative sense. A person who exemplifies power up does not have a hint of self-doubt, maximizes their comfort, speaks slowly and deliberately, and uses complete sentences. Such person does not offer an apology; they hold their head high and straight. Furthermore, manifesting power up can convey arrogance or pride, or it can communicate responsibility and compassion. It just depends on the timing, action, and situation.

On the other hand, playing power down invites connection and cooperation. A person intends to appear less threatening and less ruthless. Playing power down, both in acting and in life, involves avoidance of provoking others, speaking quickly but haltingly – uncertainty is also evident. A person builds trust and makes others feel comfortable. Playing power down does not imply surrendering power. It just shows respect. While playing power down can feel risky because others might think of it as a weakness, it actually can become an insignia of strength.

Part III “Taking the Stage” discloses how to manage insecurities, otherwise known as performance anxiety among actors; and how not to lose the plot when acting in life and in theater. Being oneself is a performance, according to Goffman (1956). Gruenfeld contends that acting is not faking – we are just wearing our roles. The author

suggests that we try to accept the reality of the stage we are on and to show a version of self that makes sense in this situation. We should stick to the storyline, though, which means that we should remain linked to the common realities. If we lose the plot, because we are too immersed in ourselves and our insecurities, we lose the track of our roles and responsibilities. This, in turn, can lead us to serious consequences like damaged relationships, lost reputation, or even criminal charges.

Gruenfeld proposes, therefore, that when we take on a role, we need to set aside our personal frustrations and craving for power. First, we need to ground ourselves with the context and understand who we are to the people in that certain situation and comprehend the impact that we can make we need to concentrate more on the work we do than on how we look or feel as we do it. The author summarizes that acting enables us to step beyond traditional self-views and open up to new forms of thinking and being.

Part IV “Understanding Abuses of Power, and How to Stop Them” describes various types of abusive characters and advises on how to deal with abusive situations. People seek power for a variety of reasons. Based on research, strong power motive predicts effective leadership according to many studies (e.g., Magee & Langner, 2008; Winter & Barenbaum, 1985). However, Gruenfeld warns that when people see power as the end in itself, it leads to abuses and corruption because they want to be perceived as powerful but do not commit to a task they are in charge of. Moreover, according to the author, the effects of power include: (1) disinhibition, people act more readily on almost all kinds of impulses; (2) objectification, treating humans as objects to attain personal aims; and (3) entitlement, thinking that they deserve the things they want just because they want them. Gruenfeld further elaborates on the types of abusive characters and the ways of dealing with them.

Overall, I find the book powerful, compelling but accessible to wide audience due to lively examples, narratives and historical scenarios which illustrate the ideas. In addition, the author has the strong message, and I would recommend this book to those who want not only to understand power but to empower themselves.

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Act	<i>Mental Health Systems Act</i> , 41 U.S.C. § 9403 (1988).
Audio and visual media	Taupin, B. (1975). Someone saved my life tonight [Recorded by Elton John]. On Captain fantastic and the brown dirt cowboy [CD]. London: Big Pig Music Limited. Author, A. (Producer). (2009, December 2). <i>Title of Podcast</i> [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <i>Name website</i> : https://www.w3.org Producer, P. P. (Producer), & Director, D. D. (Director). (Date of publication). <i>Title of Motion Picture</i> [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio or distributor. Smith, A. (Writer), & Miller, R. (Director). (1989). Title of episode [Television series episode]. In A. Green (Executive Producer), Series. New York, NY: WNET.

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