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Risk-Taking and Proactiveness in US Entrepreneurship: Cultural and Economic Influences

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of the U.S. economy, yet the factors driving its success remain complex and multifaceted. This study examines the cultural and economic influences on risk-taking and proactiveness among U.S. entrepreneurs. The purpose of this research is to explore how individualism, tolerance for failure, financial accessibility, and regulatory frameworks shape entrepreneurial behaviors. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative surveys were conducted with 500 entrepreneurs across diverse U.S. regions, complemented by qualitative interviews with 20 experienced entrepreneurs. Key findings highlight a strong correlation between cultural support for innovation and entrepreneurial risk-taking, as well as a significant influence of economic infrastructure on proactiveness. Quantitative analysis revealed a strong correlation between cultural support for resilience and innovation and the willingness to take risks, highlighting the pivotal role of cultural factors in driving entrepreneurial behavior. Additionally, access to capital and supportive regulatory frameworks emerged as essential enablers of proactive entrepreneurship. Complementing these findings, qualitative insights emphasized the importance of mentorship, professional networks, and economic accessibility in nurturing entrepreneurial success and sustaining long-term growth. The research concludes that fostering a culture of resilience and innovation alongside robust economic support systems is critical to sustaining U.S. entrepreneurial growth. These findings provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to enhance entrepreneurial dynamics in the United States. Future research should explore industry-specific dynamics and longitudinal changes to deepen understanding of these relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of the United States economy, driving innovation, creating employment opportunities, and ensuring global competitiveness (Bal & Erkan, 2019). Among the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, risk-taking, and proactiveness are particularly significant due to their influence on entrepreneurial success and long-term business sustainability. Risk-taking reflects an entrepreneur's willingness to embrace uncertain opportunities, while proactiveness denotes the ability to anticipate and act on emerging market trends. Despite their importance, the dynamics that shape these traits, particularly within the U.S. context, remain inadequately explored in existing literature.

This research addresses a critical gap by examining the intricate interplay between cultural dimensions and economic factors in shaping entrepreneurial behaviors in the United States. Cultural dimensions, such as the high value placed on individualism and societal attitudes toward failure, profoundly affect an entrepreneur's propensity to take risks and proactively seek opportunities. For instance, a cultural environment that views failure as a learning opportunity (Lattacher & Wdowiak, 2020) fosters bold, innovative actions, whereas one that stigmatizes failure may inhibit entrepreneurial risk-taking.

Economic factors, such as access to capital and the regulatory environment, also play a pivotal role in either enabling or constraining entrepreneurial activities. A supportive economic infrastructure—characterized by

accessible funding, investor confidence, and streamlined regulations—empowers entrepreneurs to seize opportunities and act decisively. Conversely, restrictive policies, limited access to financing, or burdensome bureaucratic processes can hinder innovation and stifle entrepreneurial growth.

Understanding the intersection of cultural and economic factors is crucial for developing evidence-based policies and targeted interventions that enhance entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic growth (Longva & Foss, 2018). By cultivating an ecosystem that prioritizes innovation, encourages proactiveness, and supports sustainable business development, policymakers can create a more robust entrepreneurial landscape. Such strategic efforts not only strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem but also contribute to long-term economic resilience and competitiveness in the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interplay of Cultural and Economic Influences on Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is profoundly influenced by the interplay of cultural and economic factors, particularly in fostering risk-taking and proactiveness (Al-Mamary & Alshallaqi, 2022). Cultural ecosystems that foster innovation and resilience play a pivotal role in shaping entrepreneurial behaviors, while economic infrastructures that provide access to resources, venture capital, and regulatory support are crucial for entrepreneurial success

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(Stam, 2015). The dynamic relationship between these cultural and economic factors underscores the importance of integrated strategies that promote innovation, proactiveness, and sustainable business development. Together, these elements form the foundation for advancing entrepreneurship and ensuring sustained economic growth.

Cultural Foundations of Risk-Taking

Cultural attributes are pivotal in shaping entrepreneurial behaviors, especially in relation to risk-taking. The cultural landscape of the United States, characterized by its emphasis on individualism and resilience (Fisher *et al.*, 2016), provides fertile ground for calculated risk-taking, a cornerstone of entrepreneurial success. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Zemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023) provides a compelling framework for understanding this phenomenon, highlighting low uncertainty avoidance and high individualism as key traits. Low uncertainty avoidance reflects a societal comfort with ambiguity and an openness to uncertainty, while high individualism emphasizes autonomy, self-reliance, and the pursuit of personal goals—qualities that are indispensable for entrepreneurship.

Empirical research reinforces these theoretical insights. (Hayton *et al.*, 2014) demonstrated that societies valuing individual achievement and tolerating failure exhibit higher levels of entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, Vuorio *et al.* (2017) found that societal attitudes toward innovation and risk play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, Hofstede underscored the direct impact of cultural dimensions such as uncertainty avoidance on entrepreneurial decision-making (Dubina & Ramos, 2013). These studies collectively establish that cultural attributes, particularly individualism and tolerance for uncertainty, are foundational to entrepreneurial risk-taking.

Economic Systems and Proactiveness

Economic systems are equally crucial in fostering entrepreneurial proactiveness, defined as the ability to identify and capitalize on emerging opportunities. The United States, with its well-developed financial systems and flexible regulatory frameworks, creates an environment that supports proactive entrepreneurial ventures. Access to venture capital, government incentives, and dynamic markets are instrumental in enabling entrepreneurs to scale their ideas and seize opportunities.

(Lerner & Tag, 2012) highlighted the indispensable role of venture capital in empowering entrepreneurs to scale innovative business models. (Acs *et al.*, 2016) emphasized how supportive government policies, such as tax incentives and grant programs, lower entry barriers and provide essential resources for innovation. (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003) argued that dynamic markets present opportunities for entrepreneurs to exploit unserved niches, further stimulating proactive behaviors. These findings underscore the significance of economic factors, such as financial accessibility, regulatory flexibility,

and market dynamism, in shaping entrepreneurial proactiveness.

Interconnection of Cultural and Economic Factors

Entrepreneurial orientation, encompassing risk-taking and proactiveness, emerges from the dynamic interaction between cultural and economic factors. A culture that values innovation and resilience, when coupled with a resource-rich and stable economic system, creates a synergistic effect that amplifies entrepreneurial outcomes. (Uhlaner, 2010) explored the interaction between cultural and institutional frameworks, demonstrating that nations with strong cultural support for innovation experience enhanced entrepreneurial ecosystems when supported by favorable economic policies. Similarly, (Wale, 2023) emphasized that aligning cultural attributes with economic infrastructure significantly enhances entrepreneurial orientation. These insights highlight the necessity of understanding the combined impact of cultural and economic variables on entrepreneurship, particularly within the U.S. context, where the interplay of these factors has been a significant driver of entrepreneurial success.

Hypothesis Development

Drawing on insights from existing literature, this study hypothesizes that cultural dimensions, particularly high individualism and low uncertainty avoidance, positively influence entrepreneurial risk-taking. Additionally, economic factors such as access to capital, regulatory flexibility, and market dynamism are posited to have a positive effect on entrepreneurial proactiveness. Finally, the research hypothesizes that the interplay between cultural and economic factors creates a synergistic effect, fostering entrepreneurial orientation by integrating risk-taking and proactiveness into a cohesive framework.

By synthesizing prior research and addressing the interplay of cultural and economic influences, this study aims to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial orientation. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for both academic discourse and practical applications, contributing to the development of more effective strategies to foster entrepreneurship and economic vitality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the influence of cultural and economic factors on entrepreneurial risk-taking and proactiveness. By integrating these methodologies, the research provided a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted interactions shaping entrepreneurial behaviors. Quantitative methods enabled the identification of statistical relationships and patterns across a large sample, while qualitative methods offered contextual depth and nuanced insights to enhance the interpretation of the findings.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to 500 U.S.-based entrepreneurs from diverse industries and geographic regions. The survey instrument was meticulously designed to collect data on various key variables, including risk-taking propensities, proactive behaviors, and perceptions of cultural and economic influences. Variables measured in the study included risk-taking propensity, which assessed the extent to which entrepreneurs were willing to engage in ventures involving uncertainty and potential losses, and proactive behaviors, which evaluated their ability to anticipate and seize emerging market opportunities. The survey also examined cultural dimensions, such as perceptions of individualism, societal attitudes toward failure, and tolerance for ambiguity, grounded in Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework. Economic factors, such as access to financial resources, regulatory environment, and local market dynamism, were integral to the analysis.

Each variable was measured on a 1-to-10 Likert scale (Joshi *et al.*, 2015). Low scores, ranging from 1 to 4, indicated challenges or constraints, such as limited cultural support for entrepreneurship, restricted access to financial resources, or a regulatory environment with bureaucratic barriers. High scores, ranging from 7 to 10, signified favorable conditions, such as a cultural foundation that encouraged entrepreneurial behaviors, robust access to financial resources, or streamlined and business-friendly regulations. For instance, a high cultural support score reflected societal characteristics such as high individualism and positive attitudes toward risk-taking and failure, whereas a low regulatory support score signaled obstacles such as cumbersome bureaucratic processes and restrictive policies.

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 experienced entrepreneurs, purposively selected to ensure diversity in terms of industry, geographic location, and entrepreneurial success. The interviews delved into participants' personal experiences with risk-taking and proactiveness, explored how cultural values influenced their entrepreneurial orientation, and examined the enabling or constraining effects of economic factors. Participants also reflected on the interplay between cultural and economic factors in shaping their entrepreneurial behaviors. Interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Anonymity was guaranteed, and transcripts were prepared to ensure accuracy and facilitate thematic analysis (Nowell *et al.*, 2017).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis employed advanced statistical techniques to investigate the relationships between cultural and economic factors as independent variables and entrepreneurial orientation dimensions, such as risk-taking and proactiveness, as dependent variables. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength

and direction of these relationships, while multiple regression analysis assessed the predictive impact of cultural and economic factors on entrepreneurial orientation. To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, diagnostic tests were conducted to check for multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and overall model fit. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software, ensuring precision and rigor throughout the process.

Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data. Thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) involved an iterative process of reading and re-reading transcripts, coding segments of text, and grouping codes into broader themes. Key themes included individualism and entrepreneurial resilience, societal attitudes toward failure, and economic enablers of proactiveness. These findings were integrated with quantitative results to triangulate insights and provide a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study.

Artificial intelligence tools were also employed to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. The AI-driven analysis confirmed the consistency of findings with SPSS outputs and provided supplementary insights into thematic patterns observed in the qualitative data. This multi-layered approach ensured methodological rigor and enhanced the reliability of the study's conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to rigorous ethical standards throughout its design and implementation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, ensuring they fully understood the study's purpose, scope, and their rights, including the assurance of confidentiality. Participants were informed that their identities would remain anonymous, and any information collected would be used solely for research purposes. Additionally, participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

This comprehensive mixed-methods approach, combining the breadth of quantitative data with the depth of qualitative insights, provides a robust foundation for analyzing the intricate interplay between cultural and economic factors and their influence on entrepreneurial orientation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Findings

The study findings reveal several significant relationships between cultural, economic, and regulatory factors and entrepreneurial behaviors. A strong positive correlation was observed between cultural support for risk-taking and entrepreneurial behavior ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that as cultural support for risk-taking increases, entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in dynamic and innovative business activities. Societies that foster individualism, tolerate failure, and encourage bold decision-making create an environment conducive to entrepreneurial ventures.

Additionally, the analysis highlights a significant association between access to capital and proactive entrepreneurship ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$). Entrepreneurs with greater access to financial resources are better positioned to anticipate and seize emerging market opportunities. Easy access to

loans, venture capital, and other financial instruments provides the necessary foundation for proactive business strategies, enabling entrepreneurs to pursue opportunities with confidence and agility.

Table 1: Statistical Insights into Entrepreneurial Influences

Variable Relationship	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Statistical Significance (p)	Interpretation
Cultural support for risk-taking ↔ Entrepreneurial behavior	0.74	< 0.01	Strong positive correlation. Higher cultural support for risk-taking fosters greater entrepreneurial activity.
Access to capital ↔ Proactive entrepreneurship	0.68	< 0.01	Significant positive correlation. Better access to capital encourages proactive entrepreneurial behavior.

The study reveals that entrepreneurs in the United States operating within supportive regulatory frameworks (Baburoglu, 2025) demonstrate higher levels of both risk-taking and proactiveness. A favorable regulatory environment—marked by streamlined processes, reduced bureaucratic hurdles, tax incentives, and business-friendly policies—fosters conditions that actively encourage entrepreneurial activity. In such regions, entrepreneurs are more inclined to take calculated risks and adopt forward-thinking strategies to capitalize on emerging market opportunities.

These findings underscore the importance of cultural, economic, and regulatory factors in shaping entrepreneurial orientation. They demonstrate that supportive societal attitudes, financial access, and enabling regulatory frameworks play pivotal roles in fostering entrepreneurial behaviors, including risk-taking and proactiveness. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between cultural and economic drivers in promoting entrepreneurial success.

Qualitative Insights

The interviews underscored several key themes relevant to entrepreneurial behavior. Participants highlighted the cultural emphasis on resilience and innovation as significant motivators driving entrepreneurial endeavors. However, economic challenges, particularly funding gaps and bureaucratic obstacles, emerged as substantial barriers to pursuing proactive ventures. Furthermore, entrepreneurs consistently emphasized the critical role of mentorship programs and networking opportunities in fostering entrepreneurial growth, enabling knowledge exchange, resource access, and the development of strategic partnerships. These insights provide valuable contextual depth to the quantitative findings, illustrating the interplay between cultural, economic, and social factors in shaping entrepreneurial orientation.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between cultural

and economic factors in shaping entrepreneurial orientation, particularly in the context of risk-taking and proactiveness. The results underscore the importance of cultural support and economic conditions in fostering entrepreneurial behavior, offering both theoretical and practical implications.

A strong positive correlation was observed between cultural support for risk-taking and entrepreneurial behavior ($r = 0.74, p < 0.01$). This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that cultural dimensions, such as individualism and societal attitudes toward failure, play a critical role in encouraging entrepreneurs (Wang, 2024) to embrace uncertainty and pursue innovative ventures. Entrepreneurs who operate in cultures that valorize resilience, creativity, and risk-taking are more likely to engage in bold and proactive activities, as cultural norms provide psychological safety and social validation for such behaviors. The thematic analysis of interviews corroborates this, with participants emphasizing the significance of societal attitudes that celebrate resilience and innovation as key motivators in their entrepreneurial journeys.

The study also identified a significant association between access to capital and proactive entrepreneurship ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$). Entrepreneurs with greater access to financial resources reported higher levels of proactiveness, reflecting their ability to anticipate and seize emerging market opportunities. Financial capital serves as a critical enabler, reducing constraints and providing the flexibility necessary to pursue strategic initiatives. However, qualitative findings revealed that funding gaps remain a significant barrier (Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2017) for many entrepreneurs, particularly those in early-stage ventures. This highlights the need for policy interventions and private-sector initiatives aimed at bridging these financial gaps to facilitate entrepreneurial growth.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs operating in states with supportive regulatory frameworks demonstrated higher levels of both risk-taking and proactiveness. These findings suggest that business-friendly regulations, such as streamlined administrative processes, tax incentives, and reduced compliance burdens, create an enabling

environment for entrepreneurship. Such regulatory support not only lowers entry barriers but also encourages entrepreneurs to take calculated risks and adopt forward-thinking strategies. Participants in the qualitative interviews highlighted the importance of mentorship programs and networking opportunities as additional factors that amplify entrepreneurial growth by fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and resource access. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on entrepreneurial orientation by integrating cultural and economic perspectives. The strong correlation between cultural support and entrepreneurial behavior suggests that policymakers should prioritize cultivating a cultural environment that encourages resilience, innovation, and a positive outlook toward failure. Simultaneously, addressing economic challenges, such as access to capital and bureaucratic hurdles, remains critical for fostering entrepreneurial proactiveness.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provides a holistic perspective, highlighting not only the statistical relationships between variables but also the lived experiences of entrepreneurs. This triangulated approach strengthens the reliability of the findings and underscores the complex, multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial behavior. By identifying the synergies between cultural and economic factors, this study offers actionable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and entrepreneurial support organizations aiming to create a conducive ecosystem for entrepreneurial success.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in driving innovation, employment, and economic growth in the United States. This study sheds light on the interplay between cultural and economic factors in shaping entrepreneurial orientation, particularly in fostering risk-taking and proactiveness. Cultural traits such as individualism, tolerance for failure, and societal support for resilience and innovation emerge as critical enablers of entrepreneurial behaviors, empowering individuals to embrace risks and pursue innovative ventures. Simultaneously, economic systems provide essential resources—such as access to funding, venture capital, and supportive regulatory frameworks—that enhance the ability of entrepreneurs to anticipate and capitalize on opportunities. A synergistic relationship between cultural and economic factors highlights the importance of a cohesive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

However, the study is not without limitations. The reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may have over- or underestimated their behaviors and perceptions. Furthermore, while the sample of 500 entrepreneurs offers diversity, the findings may not fully account for industry-specific or region-specific variations, thereby limiting generalizability. The cross-sectional design further restricts the ability to examine causal relationships or longitudinal trends, which are crucial for understanding the evolving nature of entrepreneurial orientation. Addressing these limitations

in future research by employing longitudinal methods and focusing on specific industries and regions would enrich the understanding of how cultural and economic factors influence entrepreneurship.

To sustain and enhance entrepreneurial growth, the United States must prioritize creating an integrated ecosystem that combines cultural support for innovation with a robust economic infrastructure. Policymakers, financial institutions, and entrepreneurial organizations should collaborate to address barriers, promote resilience, and ensure equitable access to resources. By fostering a culture of innovation and providing economic enablers, the U.S. can maintain a thriving entrepreneurial landscape that drives economic progress and strengthens its position in the global economy.

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