

## **The Relationship Between Career Planning And Culture: A Research On French And Turkish Business Administration Students**

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### **Abstract**

Career is a concept that explain the preferences of individuals throughout their life span. It is considering from a professional angle, career is the set of attitudes and behaviors in relation to work experiences and activities which are perceived by person during his or her life. Career planning is the personal process of planning one's life work. Career planning is not a one-time event, but rather is a process that depends on one's values, beliefs and skills. It is a very important step in career planning assessing skills, knowledge, values, constraints and interests. Values and beliefs terms suggest that "culture". Culture is explained that shared values and beliefs in a group. It is a way of life of a group of people including the patterns of thought, behaviors, customs, language, traditions. In this respect a question comes to the mind: Is culture affect the one's career planning and how valuable his/her work in his life?

In this study; cultural dimensions is used (power distance, masculinity/effeminacy, uncertainty avoidance, long term/short term orientation) that served to distinguish one culture from another with access to people working for the same organization in over 40 countries of the world by Hofstede collecting data and analyzed his findings. Hofstede cultural dimensions questionnaire asked French and Turkish Business Administration students in universities. To determine personal career planning and importance of work in one's total life Career Saliency questionnaire (Greenhaus, 1971) that is composed three dimensions- Relative Importance of Work and Career Component, Planning and Thinking about Career Component, General Attitudes toward Work Component- is asked same students also.

The study aims to determine whether a difference between cultures about making career plans and positioning work in total life.

**Keywords:** Career, Career planning, Career Salience, Culture, Cultural dimensions

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture, firstly in an extensive way introduced by an English anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor in a book named “Primitive Culture” in 1871 as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871: 1).

Culture, although it is defined as a set of values and norms which creates society, since it also shapes and manages the habits, behavior patterns, attitudes of its members, it is discussed extensively.

From this perspective culture may tell to each member who they are how they should behave and they would feel when interacting with each other. (Schein, 2010: 29).

Culture, even separates a group from other groups in terms of their characteristics, it also fits its members into living conditions of the society. (Hofstede vd., 2002: xviii )

The culture which is learned, shared and passed down over generations, establishes a close link between the needs of society with the individual's preferences. ( Haviland vd., 2008: 25). The cultural environment plays a key role in shaping its members' personalities (Robbins, 1997: 91).

Geert Hofstede made the most comprehensive study of cultural differences. In his study which is completed in 40 countries, and carried out among 116000 employees in international companies, he addressed culture in five different dimensions (Reiser, 2010: 12-13):

**Individualism vs. Collectivism:** In individualistic cultures people are expected to portray themselves as individuals, who seek to accomplish individual goals and needs. In collectivistic cultures, people have greater emphasis on the welfare of the entire group to which the individual belongs, where individual wants, needs and dreams are often set aside for the common good.

**Power distance:** Power distance dimension focuses on the relationship between the powerful and the weak in a society. In cultures with lower power distance, weak people expects more democratic relations, in high power distance the weak accepts the authority.

**Masculinity vs. femininity:** In Masculine societies, values related to men like competition, ambition; in feminine societies values, equality and life quality given to relationships stand out. (Hofstede, 1998: 6-7).

**Uncertainty Avoidance:** The majority of people living in cultures with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance, are likely to feel uncomfortable in uncertain and ambiguous situations. People living in cultures with a low degree of uncertainty avoidance, are likely to thrive in more uncertain and ambiguous situations and environments.

(Hofstede, vd., 2002: 62).

**Long vs. Short Term Orientation:** In Long-term-oriented societies, people value behaviors and attitudes related to future, in short-term oriented societies, commitment to traditional values, and dignity is important.

Schein explains that the culture of a group can be addressed in three levels: “the levels of artifacts, the level of its espoused beliefs and values and the level of its basic underlying

assumptions. The origin of a culture lies in the pattern of basic underlying assumptions, and after you understand those, you can easily understand the other levels (Schein, 2010: 32).

Career is one of the basic topics of human resources management. One of the widely used definitions of career is briefly; work experiences that a human gains throughout his life span. (Audrey, 1998: 412). According to a more extensive definition career is a concept which expresses the works, progress and improvements that people did throughout their working life (Tüz, 2003: 170). According to Hall (quoted by Adekola, 2011: 101) whose definition about the concept of career is the most accepted, career is defined as the course(duration) directly related with personal and corporate objectives, work experience and activities which a human will live and partially keep under control throughout his life.

When the concept of career is handled as individual's job career positions used consecutively throughout his personal life span shows the presence of three basic dimensions in the career phenomenon. They are: individual, work and position. Since the presence of work and position requires organization, individual and the organization will come face to face during career process. In other words, the concept of career has two significant dimensions as individual and organization. (Şimşek ve Öge, 2007: 260). Given as career planning and career management in literature career management from organization point of view and career management from individual point of view is being separated. Career management from organization point of view, is determining official career paths in any organization and establishing quantitative and qualitative measurements of activity in this career path. However individual career management is related with human's own plans made in accordance with his personality, knowledge, interests, skills and aims.

Hall (quoted by Adekola, 2011: 102) defines individual career planning, which is related with human's personal future, as becoming conscious about opportunities of life, choices and results, identifying career goals, and as programming process of activities intended for work, education and other improvements which provides determination of direction and time in achieving goals concerning career.

From organization point of view career management comprises activities like, determination of employee including career planning, identifying career path within organization, determination of career advisors. Career management from individual point of view comprises topics like, individual's search and finding out his career, finding his job, mid-career. Issues such as career planning and selection is affected by factors directing the individual. These factors can be divided into internal and external. Internal factors are psychological forces like individuals feelings, thoughts. And external factors are elements like social background, family, surroundings(Kaynak et al., 1998: 239-246) which are directly related with culture.

Career can express different meanings to different individuals. When career is a way of earning money for some people, for others it is the way not to waste time or achieve social status. Consequently, for the employees in a job or those who wish to work there can be several reasons in accordance with their personality traits and environmental conditions(İbicioğlu, 2010: 161). When choosing a professional field related to his career as well as intensifying career progress, an individual willing to make plans about his career, is likely to be influenced by cultural features like long-term or short term thinking, avoiding or taking the risk of the society.

## **2.RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND CAREER PLANNING**

According to Schein (1990: 109) who made important studies in organizational culture, one of the main reasons of the presence of different viewpoints about the definition of culture is that it is the common subject of different branches of social science. Each branch of social science, especially, anthropology, sociology, social psychology and organizational behaviour approaches to culture from its' own viewpoint. Sometimes these branches of science have biased approaches to culture.

Culture is a concept associated with social values. There is a strong relationship between career and culture which have integrated aims, plans, intentions and applications(Young et al., 2002: 224). According to Holland's Theory of Personalities in Work Environments level of consciousness and other features of a personality related with culture, gender roles, personal competences have the power to affect future trends of a human's career(Spokane et al., 2002: 410).

### **3.RESEARCH**

#### **3.1. Purpose of the study and samples**

The main objective of this study is to identify whether individual career planning is affected by social cultural features or not. According to Hofstede's research results, a similar research over two nations with similar cultural values, French and the Turks, was carried out. The data used in this study; are the data of the research named "The Effect of Cultural Differences on Individual Career Plans" belonging to France and Turkey, whose survey is still going on in France, Turkey, Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. It has cultural value scores similar to Hofstede. For this reason, the title of the study "Cultural Relationships Between Individual Career Plans" was deemed appropriate. We have reached the students of Toulouse School of Economics in France, In Turkey the students of The Faculty of Economics and Administrative sciences at Süleyman Demirel University.

#### **3.2.Survey Form And Measurements**

Questionnaire technique was used to collect experimental data. 2 measurements were used in the questionnaire. Culture measurement is the most known measurement which has been used by Hofstede for years approximately over 40 countries. This measurement has been used in lots of studies and tested in Turkey. Out of five of Hofstede(Hofstede, geert-hofstede.com/national-culture) measurements, (Power Distance (PDI); Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV); Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS); Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI); Long Term Orientation (LTO)<sup>70</sup>) only two dimensions have been included into this survey. They are Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI); and Long Term Orientation (LTO) measurements which consist of only 20 expressions. When the first five expressions are long expressions, 6-10 are short, 11-15 expressions are related with avoiding risk and 16-20 expressions are related with taking risk.

And the second measurement used in the questionnaire, that is, individual career planning measurement, measures the importance of work in human's life and personal career

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<sup>70</sup> LTO is a measurement fundamentally developed by Michael Bond which later was used and approved by Hofstede.

plan which is Southgate's(2005) measurement. Career Salience questionnaire (Southgate, 2005: 66-69) that is composed three dimensions- Relative Importance of Work and Career Component (1 -6 questions); Planning and Thinking about Career Component (7 – 12 questions); General Attitudes toward Work Component (13 – 18 questions). Factor Analysis was applied to the data obtained from the result of research conducted using this measurement. 3 dimensions obtained from Factor Analysis were renamed and given below in the table named “Results of Factor Analysis of Individual Career Planning measurement”.

A five spaced Likert type metric expression was applied to the responses of phrases which took place in this measurements. For instance, for the response of the expression “I always make long term plans” there are five options like “1-Strongly Disagree”, “2- Disagree”, “3- I’m not sure”, “4- Agree”, “5- Strongly Agree”. In addition, 8 questions were asked to analyze students’ demographic structure. Responses of the questionnaires received were coded and analyzed using SPSS for Windows 15.0 version.

### **3.3. Data Preparation**

Data received from the survey results was entered to SPSS 15.0 package program, to prepare the data file missing data, extreme value, normality, homogeneity were tested

Missing Data: the ratio of empty left articles over all articles was analyzed in each questionnaire whether or not it makes 15% and more. Since we don’t have such a questionnaire missing data operation was not made, skipped.

Extreme Value: 10 Questionnaires which have + 3 and – 3 “Z” and “T” scores were excluded from analysis. Totally the data of 79 questionnaires were analyzed.

Normality: N-Par Test results were examined, measurement of trust in administrators (sig. (2 tailed) = 0,000); according to administrator commitment measurement (sig. (2 tailed) = 0,009) normal distribution hasn’t been obtained. Therefore logarithm of data was taken to normalize.

Homogeneity : Since the sig. value exceeded 0.05 As a result of “homogeneity test” the data was decided to be homogeneous.

### **3.4. Demographic Results**

%50,6 of students participating the survey are from France, %49,4 are from Turkey. %58,2 of them are female, %40,5 are male. %78,5 of the students belong to 17-25 age group, %17,7 of them belong to 26-35 age group % 3,8 of them didn’t mark.

While %84,4 of the students participating the survey have indicated that after graduating they would like to choose profession related with their field; %13,7 of them have indicated that they would like to choose other professions. %44,3 of the students have stated that they want to work in public organizations; %24,1 of them indicated business sectors, % 21,5 of the students pointed out that they want to build their own business and %10,1 didn’t make any marks in this area.

The responses to the question “Who is being affective in making your career plans?” that was asked to the attendants of the survey are as follows:; %38 say family; %7,6 say friends; %5,3 say relatives; %5,1 say teachers. While 3 people didn’t answer this question, approximately %32,9 of majority have chosen others option.

According to the averages of input of a research based on the results received from Hofstede Scale, four dimensions are constituted. (Long period inclination, short period inclination,

avoiding risk and not avoiding risk). A factor analysis is carried out on the results received from the questions based on Southgate Scale. The first dimension that has been formed as a result of factor analysis is called: planned career inclination, the second called: Ambitious career inclination, the third is called: emotional career inclination. The test structure validity of individual career planning scale that was used in the research, factor analysis has been fulfilled. In the basic component analysis, that was applied Kaiser=Meyer=Olkin (KMO) test, has showed that sample size is adequate for factor analysis.

The result of Barlett test, which is done to see if the data that is belonging to variables shows normal distribution, is meaningful. (431,043;  $p < 0.01$ ) As a result of factor analysis and varimax rotation of individual career planning variables, three factors are found which is bigger than 1.00.

Those factors are defining 62.149% of total variance. As a result of reliability analysis that is belonging to three scale, the internal consistency (Cronbach alpha values) are respectively; .761, .687 and .730. It shows that the scales have got the reliability level on the social sciences field. It can be said that the data which is the result of varimax rotation factor analysis measure the structure is appropriate for the theory and has a structural reliability.

Table 1: the results of individual career planning scale factor analysis

	sizes		
	1	2	3
I think making career planning will be so useful	.789		
I will be glad to make a career planning for the future	.758		
I did many plan and thought about my career so far	.624		
I know the way to realize the plan that I did about my career	.609		
I did career planning by being aware of the fields that I am interested in	.567		
I cannot sacrifice my career for wishes and forcing of people who has an important place in my life		.667	
I look at a work like it is a way to express myself in the life		.560	
I am ready to sacrifice many things to be the top at my work		.544	
Work and rising is one of the most important issues in my life		.533	
I cannot be really happy without being successful at my job			.785
I want to graduate and go into business as soon as possible			.592

*Culture*

*long term inclinaiton*

*short term inclinaiton*

*avoiding risk*

*Not avoiding risk*

*Individual career planning*

*Planned career inclinaiton*

*Ambitious career inclinaiton*

*Emotional career inclinaiton*

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It is almost impossible for me to be happy as long as I am not working  
at a work that I want

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.479

According to the result of factor analysis, our research model is as following;



Research model is appropriate for the model called descriptive or determining the status. At such models, we can describe variables and the correlation among those variables then make some forecasts based on those descriptions (Kurtulus, 1989: 310). Our hypothesis based on this model is as below;

H1: there is a positive correlation between being long term *inclinaiton* and planned career *inclinaiton*

H2: there is a positive correlation between being short term *inclinaiton* and ambitious career *inclinaiton*

H3: there is a positive correlation between being avoid of risk and planned career *inclinaiton*

H4: there is a positive correlation between being avoid of risk and emotional career *inclinaiton*

H5: there is a positive correlation between not being avoid of risk and ambitious career *inclinaiton*

### Correlation Analysis Findings

Expected results have been obtained as a result of correlation analysis. Findings are below;

Table 2: summary table of correlation analysis

Culture sizes	Individual career planning sizes	Planned career <i>inclinaiton</i>	Ambitious career <i>inclinaiton</i>	Emotional career <i>inclinaiton</i>
Long term <i>inclinaiton</i>	Pearson significance	.344(**) .002	-.128 .118	.417(**) .000
Short term <i>inclinaiton</i>	Pearson significance	-.196 .183	.356(**) .003	-.132 .245
Being avoid of risk	Pearson significance	.412(**) .000	-.111 .331	.519(**) .000
Not being avoid of risk	Pearson significance	-.196 .083	.390(**) .000	-.132 .245

We can see that long term *inclinaiton* has positive correlation with emotional career planning (r=.417, P<0.000) and planned career *inclinaiton*.

We can see that short term *inclinaiton* has positive correlation with ambitious career *inclinaiton* (r=.356, P<0.00).

We can see that being avoid of risk has positive correlation with emotional career planning (r=.519, P<0.00) and planned career *inclinaiton* (r=.412, P<0.00).



We can see that not being avoid of risk has positive correlation with ambitious career  
*inclination*( $r=390$ ,  $P<0.00$ )

After these results, all hypotheses are accepted.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This work is about a research which is still going on in different countries but we have taken only part which is done in Turkey and France. According to the data we got, we have seen that when people are planning their career, they are affected by the culture of society they are living in. Because in line with our expectations students who are thinking for long run, planning their career thinking carefully and planned but on the other hand, students who are thinking short run, are so ambitious. However, the students, who are avoiding of risk, are planned and emotional. On the other hand, who are not avoiding of risk, are much more ambitious.

Comparative analysis also could be done using data which is belonging to Turkey and France but we would like to make it using the data belonging to various countries.

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