Cultural Limits to Innovation in New Zealand

By Tiffany Rinne & John Fairweather
Introduction

• Four models will be presented
  • Culture
  • National Identity
  • Innovation Identity
  • Cultural limits to Innovation

• The research goal was to identify the wider social context in which New Zealand innovation is situated. In this way some of NZ’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to innovation can be identified.

• NZ is a mid-tier performer with respect to innovation
  • Global Innovation Index ranking-27
  • International Innovation Index ranking-26
Methods

• Utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to create a model of culture, national identity and innovation identity
  • Discourse analysis
  • Cultural consensus analysis

• Convenience sample of New Zealanders
  • Parents of high school students in Christchurch and Auckland
  • Schools were from the mid-tier income bracket (NZ decile 4-7)
  • 20 Parents each school

• Discourse obtained via face-to-face interviews or computer-assisted self interviews

• 50 Open-ended questions
  • Analyzed using NVIVO

• Likert Scales
  • Analyzed using Anthropac 4.0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Christchurch</th>
<th>Auckland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td>20-29</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>&lt;High school</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
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Results
Uneasy Multicultural Blend of Maori and New Zealand European Life Worlds

Historical injustices

Outdoor

Appreciation for the land

Pioneer Values

Innovative

Practical

Make Do Attitude

#8 Wire Mentality

Hardy/Strong

Down to Earth/Egalitarian

Can Do Attitude

Laidback

Outdoor/Adventure Sports

Active

Community Builders

Relaxed

Treaty of Waitangi

Sporting

Achievers

Adoption of Maori symbols by Pakeha

Lincoln University

Te Whare Wānanga o Aorere

CHRISTCHURCH-NEW ZEALAND
Participants said:

• “There’s a #8 wire mentality. People had to cope a long way from home. They lacked resources and infrastructure and had to find a way to do what they had to do. I’m sure that mentality is still hanging around.” (Male, 51 years of age)

• “So there are all those things that have come out because of necessity and there not being equipment and that’s created innovation and that all comes back from being so far removed from the rest of the world.” (Female, 76 years of age)
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED SOME NO. 8 WIRE...

THE NZ ECONOMY

INTEREST RATES

RESERVE BANK
Jetpack flight offered on Trademe...

LINEOUT PROBLEMS SOLVED!
The Inventive Kiwi

Man in Shed

Recognize a Need

Pioneer

Can Do Attitude

Not in it for the $

Thinks Outside the Square

#8 Wire Mentality
Participants said:

• “I think the main factor driving someone to innovate is seeing a need. Either a personal need or a business need. To see the possibility of it being innovative.” (Female, 51 years of age)

• “For me to invent something would be for the benefit of others and sometimes, in some people, that is more satisfying than the money.” (Male, 68 years of age)
Conclusions

- User innovation is a very strong part of New Zealand culture going all the way back to its pioneer history. User innovation is New Zealand’s innovation identity. This differs from other countries where large companies tend to be part of a nation’s innovation identity.

- Pioneer values (the same values that make NZ good at user innovation) may be limiting New Zealand’s international performance with respect to innovation.

- New Zealanders do not consider innovation to be something that sets them apart on the world stage.

- Cultural deficits to innovation can be overcome via public policy.