Comparisons, contrasts, and a case study: Innovation implications of New Zealand’s scores in values and personality

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Background

• Two drivers behind this study
  • Assumption
    • High levels of innovation provide an international edge in the global market
  • Availability
    • Recent marked increase in publicly accessible, multinational data sets
      • allows cross-national comparisons and theory development via data set “mash-ups”
Two theoretical areas of interest

• A brief review of recent research...
Innovation and personality (from the Big 5 factors)

• Significant relationship found between innovation and national levels of
  • higher levels of Openness to Experience
    • more tolerant and open to new ideas
    • seeks stimulation
  • higher levels of Agreeableness
    • trustworthy
    • more likely to help
Innovation and values

• Cultural Values
  • Higher innovation levels linked to
    • lower scores on Power Distance and Uncertainty
      Avoidance
    • lower scores on Conservation
    • higher scores on Individualism
    • stronger endorsement of Secular/Rational and Self-
      expressive values.
Overall, it looks as though New Zealand is in pretty good shape for innovation. Where might we best improve?
Comparing Profiles

- Innovation
- Openness to Exp.
- Agreeableness
- Secular/Rational
- Self-expression
- Individualism
- Power Distance
- Uncertainty Avoid.
- Conservation

Percentile

New Zealand
Australia
Norway

Cultural similarity
Size similarity

Comparing Profiles
(look to similarity)
Comparing profiles

• Given the similarities in innovation levels, one thing remains a puzzle...
Comparing Profiles

GDP per capita (US$1000)

- New Zealand: (US$32,145)
- Australia: (US$55,590)
- Norway: (US$84,444)
Conclusion

• New Zealand is a highly innovative country.
• *If* these factors \( \Rightarrow \) innovation, then we need to
  • *maintain* key factors; keep policies that
    • support activities and education that maintains our high levels of openness and sense of trust
    • endorse individualism and self-expression
  • guard against
    • elitism and power hierarchies
    • over-reliance upon accepted ways of doing things
Conclusion

• New Zealand is a highly innovative country
• *If* these factors $\Rightarrow$ innovation, then we need to
  • *develop* policies that
    • encourage the growth of scientific reasoning (secular rationality)
      • critical thinking skills, especially
Conclusion

• Wealth is a complex phenomenon, but...
  • if innovation is a factor in GDP, then we may not be making it pay as well as others have
  • or it may be necessary but not sufficient
  • it could also be that we have it backwards...

• Further research needed here...