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Field Lab on Higher Education Management

**“Analysis of Factors and Drivers in Graduates Success
among Portugal, India and Italy:
Family Background”**

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Abstract

Success is a controversial concept and the aim of this field lab is to understand the factors and drivers in graduates' success among Portugal, India and Italy. The following research presents a deep focus on the family background as a key factor. The topic was analyzed following a specific scheme, starting from a literature review in order to support the notion of our research topic, followed by a qualitative analysis through the focus groups method that generated data based on the synergy of the group interaction. The first two steps produced the guidelines to create a questionnaire for the quantitative analysis. Finally the output showed the crucial role of the family background and parental style that contribute always more in all the analyzed cultures.

Keywords: Family Background, Parental Style, Education System, Success.

Introduction

“Success occurs when opportunity meets preparation”

Zig Ziglar

The achievement of success is a challenge that stimulates every human being but, due to its subjectivity, it is a variable concept. The definition of success is characterized by thousands of interpretations based on the values and the culture that the person has assimilated and developed from the surrounding environment.

Trying to narrow down this wide concept, the goal of our research is to circumscribe and define the factors and drivers of success in business graduates, analyzing the current differences between three different countries: Portugal, India and Italy.

After having divided the argument in different main topics, the group will develop in-depth researches on every single one. The objective of the following is to understand if a good family background remains a big key to success.

The importance of a good family background can seem clear and obvious but depending on cultures, it could assume different positions and consequences. Analyzing three different countries with the respective cultures, the aim of the research is to understand how different family environments and parental styles can drive people to excel and reach the success. During the last decades, society has been subject to various radical and fast changes that have affected the family environment and relative values. It has to be said that, focusing on the factors and drivers of success in business graduates, our study is obviously influenced by all the aspects that characterized the family background. Trying to narrow this topic it is necessary to take into account that the family background includes mainly its relation with the education system, the parents' involvement, the educational and income level along with the family's activities, cultural and leisure ones. This topic is always more important because

now, more than ever, the citizens of the modern democratic societies hold strongly meritocratic values. In this contest the fair possibilities for educational and occupational improvement should guarantee equal chances of economic success to every kind of child.

Meanwhile, the family has the duty to prepare the children as best as possible.

Finally, understanding the consequences on the children from different family lifestyles and parenting style is crucial to determine the common traits that drive to success the previous and next generations.

Our research proceeds with a literature review on this topic.

Literature review

To clarify the research questions and design an appropriate questionnaire, we reviewed the literature regarding the factors and drivers of success in business graduates, this document focusing particularly on the importance of the family background.

There are multiple factors affecting the achievement of success and correlated to the family background but the correlation between educational success and minority students or lower income students deserves particular attention. These are the most delicate cases where the impact of the families' conditions is bigger and consequently is more difficult for the children to perform better, while on the other hand, the other situations where the parental occupation, education and income are on average or higher, are considered less problematic.

According to Chen, Douglas, Salvador, Solter and Teng (1998), for many minority and lower-income students, family backgrounds could considerably impact a student's scientific and mathematical attainments, a consequence that successively can have an effect also on morale and persistence within the field. The cause is not solely associated to the income's level and different influential factors concern also the parent's profession. It's common for the children to pursue careers following the same fields of their parents, since they are seen as positive

role models that provide counseling. The situation is different for those children who cannot directly look up to a positive role model, where the path can result more difficult. The situation is exactly the same regarding the level of education attained by the parents, the children whose parents attended college or graduates school are more likely to follow the same educational path and have high educational ambitions along with future higher income. For example Schomburg (2007) found out that French graduates with parents, at least one, that completed the university report an average income that is 18% higher than the one of those whose parents had a lower education level while in Spain the percentage is 17%. Unfortunately, minority and lower class students are more likely to have parents with a lower academic background, as showed by the US reality where the 32% of Hispanic, 15% of black, and 12% of American Indian at the final year before high school had parents who did not completed high school while only 6 percent of white children had parents who did not (Chen et al.,1998).

The children coming from minority and lower-income families have fewer possibilities to access to positive role models that can play an important part in stimulating the interest to perform better, both academically and professionally. Furthermore, another problematic factor is that these children will have less access to learning than other children will, and that they will eventually face more difficulties in college enrollment because family incomes cannot support tuition fees. Engle & O'Brien (2007) found out that the percentage of low-income high school students that attended a postsecondary institution has increased from 26% in 1972 to 54% in 2007 while the rate for higher-income students reached 81% in 2007. In sum, *“children from families of racial minorities and lower-income classes will aspire less, succeed less, and achieve less”* (Chen, Douglas, Salvador, Solter and Teng: 1998).

Another element of the family background that need to be deeply analyzed is the parental involvement, always more important especially during the childhood, and its correlation with

the attainment of success. According to Usher and Kober (2012), this factor, along with the environment in which the children are raised, plays a crucial role in stimulating academic attitude and motivation. The parent involvement could be supported by appropriate programs aim to facilitate the creation of a stimulating home environment and motivate children to succeed as, for example, reading and talking to the children, celebrating their learning with them and providing opportunities to encourage their creativity. Moreover, parents should start to stimulate the children's motivation as early as possible setting realistic but high standards and expectations. Garg et al. (2002) showed that the students' educational aspirations are affected significantly by the parent involvement, effecting mostly extracurricular reading, attitudes towards school and homework and students' perceptions of their parents' educational objectives.

The family environments are the principal drivers of young children's cognitive and socio-emotional skills, but these results are not predetermined. However, these factors can represent a disadvantage for families who don't have the resources to develop those children skills before they enter school. Usher and Kober (2012) suggest the need of a social change to reduce the differences in the families' background that can drive to a lack of motivation and achievement. The suggested initiatives include a range of public information campaigns to foster children's motivation, culturally sensitive programs to promote parenting involvement and, moreover, other efforts to recognize poverty and other variable as causes of achievement gaps.

Another factor that affect the achievement of success is the family structure and its correlation with parental involvement and educational outcomes. It is well known that, nowadays, the number of intact families is always decreasing and it could have significant consequences on children's welfare. The following data showed this drop, "In 1960, nearly 90 percent of children lived in two-parent families, compared to below 70 percent in 2007. Similarly,

unwed childbearing has increased from 5 percent in 1960 to nearly 40 percent in 2006” (Kim: 2008). This trend can entail significant consequences on the children’s welfare and according to McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) the children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families have lower educational achievements than those who grow up with both biological parents. There are significant differences even between the genders of the single parents, Biblarz and Raftery (1999) found out that children living with both biological parents or a single-mother have more prestigious jobs and educational attainments than children living with a stepparent or children living with a single father.

The family structure affects the educational outcomes until the young adulthood when the children face the results of different educational paths due to this factor and find disparities regards the college entrance process. Kim (2008) found out that the tendency to fail for students from non-intact families is way higher compared to their colleagues from intact families and the gap rises when the college admission’s process is selective.

Furthermore, the parental involvement is a factor that is strictly linked to the characteristics of the family context and the consequent educational outcomes. According to Kim (2008) the high school students from single or stepparent families reported a more limited parental involvement in their supervision, schoolwork and parental educational expectations that, in turn, are reflected in lower overall outcomes. In sum, the research mentioned above support the theory that the children who are willing to attend more years of school and achieve higher educational goals are the ones that presents intact family structure and a strong parental involvement.

The concept of parental involvement is identified as a big key to the attainment of success because it represents a way to reduce the inequalities of school outcomes but, more important, it is a variable that can be modified and shaped easier than other sources of disparity that are difficult to manage as ethnicity or family income. Analyzing the relation between these

factors, Desimone (1999) showed that several studies have reported that low-income minority parents are often less involved in school activities than their opposite, other studies showed that the level of parent involvement analyzed by ethnicity just differs for few and distinct types of participation's areas. According to the author, the efficacy of certain parent involvement practices varies according to the ethnicity and family income, but the scarcity of data suggests the need of more information to narrow more effectively what kinds of parental involvement are recommended to promote student achievement in different environments. However, this finding could represent a way to use concretely the parental involvement as a resource to help the children to achieve the academic and life success. The importance of the parental involvement above other factors is supported also by other researches, Garg et al (1999) showed that the parental involvement factor was found to be of more effective than socio-economic status as a predictor of adolescent educational achievements.

Finally, this literature review has been useful to obtain the secondary data in order to support the notion of our research topic. The findings showed the disadvantages of minority and lower-income students in terms of aspirations, achievements and the tendency to follow the same educational and professional path of the parents, and additionally, the crucial role of a strong parental involvement and an intact family structure to enhance the potentialities of the children and as a way to reduce the inequalities of the school outcomes. Analyzing the importance of the multiple characteristics of the family background from different point of views, the research appears more detailed and exhaustive.

Methodology

Focus groups: Qualitative research

After having collected the secondary data, the next qualitative research technique used in this study is the focus group.

A focus group is a discussion, lead and developed by a moderator, with a small group of respondents (Malhotra, Naresh K., and David F. Birks, 2007). It aims to gain insights by creating a forum where respondents feel sufficiently relaxed to reflect and to portray their ideas about certain issues, using their language and logic. However, the most unique characteristic of this technique is its ability to generate data based on the synergy of the group interaction, often revealing new issues that before were not even considered by the researchers.

The respondents should be carefully screened to meet certain criteria, with a group size between 5 and 12 people. Following these guidelines, two focus groups for each nationality, composed by 5 people each one, were conducted, in order to avoid large and crowded groups and the consequent creation of sub-groups. The participants have been previously screened, selecting only Italian and Portuguese business graduates (Master in Management, Finance or Economics) that had already worked for no more than two years, which usually correspond to entry-level position, to avoid bias originated by eventual promotions. Unlike the participants from the western countries, for the Indian sample were selected only MBA students with longer work experience due to the difficulties found to contact people with characteristics of our original sample target. The physical setting for the focus group is also important, they were conducted in meeting rooms where the relaxed and informal atmosphere helped group members to forget they were being questioned and observed. These kinds of room were optimal also to take audio and video recording and to make the participants feel comfortable for all the duration of the focus groups, approximately two hours each.

However, the most relevant part consists in developing a topic guide that has to be tackled during the focus groups. This guide may be a series of specific questions but is more likely to be a set of broad issues that can be developed into questions or probes as the focus group actually takes place. The topics discussed were: socio-demographic characteristics, family

background and childhood activities, bachelor and master experiences, success definition and a projective technique about factors that might influence the future success of a child.

This qualitative research technique was preceded by a preliminary secondary data analysis on the subject, in order to develop a list of topics to be examined and support the forthcoming findings adding transparency, trustworthiness and credibility. Subsequently, in the interest of understanding completely how to conduct a focus group, a pilot one was conducted. This pilot focus group was conducted by the thesis advisor, Professor Cardoso and was held on September 30th at Nova SBE. It was composed of 5 participants on this session. The age of the interviewees was between 23 and 32 years old and, furthermore, all of them were currently attending a Masters program at the university. The demographic traits were homogeneous considering that 3 of the participants were Italian, one Chinese (grew up in Italy) and one Syrian.

This pilot focus group was helpful not only to learn the guidelines to conduct this research but also to get an initial overarching idea of the subject. Furthermore, it helped to test preliminary hypothesis raised by the analyzed secondary data and also to structure more appropriately the following steps of the research.

Quantitative Research

The secondary data analysis and the focus groups' findings provided us the topics and the guidelines to create the questionnaire. An online survey was the method chosen in order to obtain information from large samples of the population and to enhance, in this way, the robustness and the validity of the research. According to Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993) a survey is a means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions or opinions of a large group of people. The advantages of online questionnaires regard the ability of Internet to get access to unique population that would be difficult to contact in other ways, the second

one regards the saved time, providing the possibility to reach large samples, even geographically distant, in a short amount of time. Another advantage consists in saving costs being totally electronic.

First, two pre-filter questions were chosen to make sure that the target of the quantitative research was congruent with the one selected for the focus group. This precaution permitted to continue the questionnaire only to business alumni that graduated from a master in 2013 or 2014.

The questionnaire had six blocks of questions with the aim of covering all the topics presented during the qualitative analysis. The questions' blocks were scheduled as following: pre-filter questions, background and activities before college, parental background and cultural activities performed with the family, influences and activities during the university, socio-demographical characteristics and definition of success. This scheme was characterized by five different types of questions: open questions and drill down list, used to assess the socio-demographic characteristics; pick & group, in order to evaluate the impact of activities performed during the university on the development of skills and personality traits; multiple choice and scale (1-10) questions were used in all the different blocks of questions. Regarding the analysis, the two methods chosen to analyze the questionnaire's results were descriptive statistics and statistical inference. Through descriptive statistics frequencies, for categorical variable, and mean, range and standard deviation were evaluated, while statistical inference was utilized to infer properties about the population. Regression, for metrical variables, ANOVA, for metric variables dependent on categorical ones, and contingency table, for categorical variables, were the methods used for the analysis (Hair, J. F.; Black, W.C.; Babin, B.J. & Anderson R.E., 2010). In order to be able to infer the properties about the population, and assume that the sample collected was normally distributed, according to the central limit theorem, it was necessary to collect at least thirty answers per nationality. The channel chosen

to spread the questionnaire was Internet, recognized as most effective way to interact with our target, the young graduates. Specifically, all the responses were collected through the most common social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn) and then emails. The total amount of collected answers was 160; composed by 40 Indian, 46 Italian and 74 Portuguese responses. It must be taken into account that, even if the number of responses satisfied the minimum requisites to apply the central limit theorem, the small size of the sample represents a limitation for the research and it must be considered in case of future studies.

Findings: Qualitative Data – Focus Groups

Analyzing carefully the output of the focus groups, we had a complete scenario of the socio-cultural differences that characterize each country taken into account. The answers revealed a complicated set of aspects that affect the improvements during the growth of the children, like the fundamental importance of the family background as a driver of success in business graduates. A particular aspect that deserves to be deeply understood is that this factor doesn't influence always in the same ways the potential careers of the children in question, it has to be contextualized in each country's socio-economic characteristics.

The analysis in the following paragraph will consist in highlighting the current opinions regarding the role and incidence of the family background in the three different countries targeted by this study: Portugal, Italy and India.

Portugal

Based on the 2000 edition of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey which contains information on test scores in reading, Math and Science for 15 year olds, the author concludes that, in Portugal, the family background of children is the major observable factor driving variation in test scores while school resources have a very limited role (Carneiro, 2008). The major findings from the analysis of the family lifestyle and

parenting style of Portuguese's interviewees are mostly about experiencing life and being open-minded. Most of the participants had travelled a lot before the bachelor, with the respective families, mainly around Europe visiting between 2 and 7 countries. Pursuing this path, they said, increased their openness to knowledge, culture and opinions. Traveling gave them the opportunity to become familiar with foreign languages but it is not only a question of languages since visiting other countries permits you, according to the interviewees, to enhance adaptation skills and learning abilities. Being internationally exposed consists in adding, step by step, a tile to your mind aims to finally compose a mosaic portraying an open-minded and respectful human being.

Interviewees described their parents as moderately liberal but mostly highly supportive people, encouraging their ideas and providing guidance. The image of the family environment described during the focus groups shows the parents as people who, in most cases, were persistent and encouraging of their children's experimentations.

Analyzing the results, we deduce that the parents have been the first source of inspiration for the children and they had the most remarkable influence on their ambition.

Regarding the parents education level, the results were various and diverse but the great majority had a higher education. However, independently from the education level, all the parents encouraged their children to pursue their studies and recognizing the importance of attending the university. The trend of the parents' attitude showed also a particular focus on being demanding about the higher education achievements, putting pressure on the children but at the same time giving them freedom regarding the extra-curricular activities.

One particularly relevant subtopic was the parents' reading habits, where all of the interviewees affirmed that the parents were regular readers that stimulated their children to read since the early age. The genres were various but with common features regarding the habits of reading magazines and newspapers. The interviewees described themselves as

standard readers, but with a propensity to read online articles due to the lack of time, some business magazines related with their jobs and during holiday they devote more time to read books. According to the characteristic and the culture of the analyzed country, these activities have been perceived from the interviewees as drivers of success, because they grow up in a stimulating environment where they felt the parents' daily support as balanced and significant.

Italy

Focusing on the Italian situation, the international survey PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) promoted and conducted by OCSE (Organization for economic Co-operation and Development / OECD, 2010) revealed that the children of graduate parents have the 50% more probability to complete a degree while the children of those parents who present a lower educational background have the 45% more probability to not successfully complete the high school diploma. Furthermore, the children of graduate parents collect incomes that are 50% higher than the ones from other family environments, while the 40% of the economic advantage is handed down from father to son.

The main findings from the focus groups about the family lifestyle and parenting style of Italian's interviewees indicates that the family background is a crucial feature to achieve the best opportunities offered by the educational and work system. All the interviewees said that their parents completely supported them along their entire educational path but without being intrusive. Even the not highly educated parents recognized the importance of attending a good university and were as mentor from an indirect position, without having a direct higher education experience. This kind of parental involvement permitted them to be sufficiently independent and, at the same time, to commit some mistakes so that they can comprehend what was really important in terms of values and success' drivers.

The family environment has been described as positive and constructive. The overall outcome indicates that the features of the Italian parental style can be generalized as liberal, open-minded and stimulating. The parents are seen as examples to follow, sort of mentors that permit to the children to do their experiences and giving them, at the same time, the right values to develop their own culture. Each interviewee revealed that being motivated by the family is one of the most important and common traits of the family background in Italy; the parents are portrayed as people that perfectly understand the influence that they have on the children especially during the critical steps of childhood and adolescence. Independently on the socio-economic status of the family, they know the importance of growing up the children in a stimulating environment, as it is evident from the results regarding the reading and traveling habits.

Considering the first subtopic, parental reading habits, the findings show a tendency of the parents to be classified as big readers inclined to hand down this tendency to their children. The period when the interviewees read most was during secondary and high school, with a propensity for comics and newspapers, it has been perceived as a way to enhance their culture by their parents.

The findings showed relevance about the subtopic “travelling experience before university”, where all the interviewees have travelled before their Bachelor’s degree. Most of them travelled around Europe, between 3 and 6 countries, while a small part did some international journeys. The participants revealed that those trips were useful to shape their own mind experiencing the other cultures, creating an always wider cultural awareness.

India

An article that is strictly connected to the findings from the Indian focus groups underlined the role of the families as key success factor says “Families matter to children all over the world, of course, but in India their role is fundamental and lasting, because in an

impoverished country where the government is inept, much depends on the family. And a successful family is one that recognizes that it has the means to triumph over the average national fate. In India, nourishment and education have the same effects as material inheritance, a form of capital whose returns are much higher than the national economic growth.” (Manu: 2014)

The major findings, analyzing the family lifestyle and parenting style of Indian’s interviewees, showed significant differences compared to the ones relative to the two western cultures described above.

The answers present different kind of backgrounds, different kind of families that have to be contextualized in the Indian culture. The socio-economic diversities between families that belong to different casts are so evident that they imply a consequent and considerable gap between the parenting styles. Due to the huge number of poor families, their focus is more on covering the basic needs than preparing the children for an international exposure. When the children come from a poor family the only way to change their life is to excel in the studies, they grew up with the popular myth of becoming an engineer and most of them are focused on scientific subjects since the childhood. The parents tend put a lot of pressure on their children, motivating and teaching them how to face the crazy level of internal competition due to the size of the population. Most of the interviewees revealed that they were, more or less directly, forced by the parents to interrupt their extra-curricular activities, with the prospective of restarting them once at the university, in order to focus on the studies.

“When I was growing up I had the opportunity to try a lot of extracurricular activities (cricket, volleyball, flute), but then I had to quit them all because I had to focus on school.”
(Subhajit Dutta, 30, Indian)

The general feeling about the parental style in poor/average situations is that the parents know that the competition is really hard and they try to let the children focus on something that they

can realistically achieve with their potentialities and efforts, without counting on rare spontaneous talents applicable in sports or other extracurricular activities in a country of 1.2 billions of people. On the other hand, if the children come from a more privileged background and it is a rarity, they have more freedom to experience what they are interested in and the family environment is more open-minded and western-oriented regarding the habits, activities and costumes.

A particular characteristic that stands out for its link with the typical Indian culture is the travelling habits, almost all the participants said that it is common to travel exclusively across India, at least before the bachelor. It is related to the size of the country, but majorly it is a question of culture and religion. The latter occupies a central role in India, considering that innumerable cultures and religions are coexisting there, composed by thousands of gods and relative temples. The year is packed with religious festivities and the Indians are supposed to undertake long journeys to celebrate the gods, it is a matter of priorities compared to travelling abroad. Finally the findings summarize the common concept that the Indians are not used to travel outside the country (just two participants out of ten did it) and money is spent, in most cases, on first need services and goods.

Another relevant feature that significantly characterize the Indian family background is the reading habit. The findings from the focus groups present the Indians as people surrounded by books or big readers, from the older generation to the current ones. It was the cheapest way to increase the personal culture, especially for the lowest casts, and regarding that has been crucial the role of the libraries, as mentioned by the interviewees. This habit has been handed down to the newest generation but, of course, now the situation is different due to the dissemination of the various new technologies. The interviewees perceived this parents' habit as a tool to stimulate their creativity and enhance their culture in an affordable way, pushing them to detach themselves from the masses and being successful. The participants read

mostly religious books and comics during the childhood, then they were used to read fiction and no-fiction books till newspapers and business magazines during the late adolescence.

Findings: Quantitative data - Questionnaire

The questionnaire permitted us to collect the quantitative data aim to support the secondary and qualitative ones already at our disposal, furthermore, through this practical method it was possible to analyze more scientifically and objectively the large amount of information provided by a significant sample. The questionnaire has been crucial to understand if there was a potential correlation between the kind of answers and the nationality, parents' education level and gender of the respondents.

Demographics data

The questionnaire was closed on the 24th of December when the number of collected answers reached 160. According to the answers at the pre-filter questions, the 43,8% of them (70) got a Master's degree from a business school in 2013 while the remaining 56,3% (90) in 2014.

The nationalities' results indicated that, between the 160 responses, there were 46 Italians, 40 Indians and 74 Portuguese. The gender traits of the respondents were generally balanced counting 84 males and 76 females, specifically 32 males and 14 females for the Italian answers, 20 and 20 for the Indian ones and finally 32 and 42 for the Portuguese ones. Furthermore, the age of the respondents ranged between 22 and 33 years old with a mode value of 25 years old (60 answers out of 160).

The data about the Master's subject and the work experience length showed a majority of answers (112) from people who attended a Master in Management and that have between 1 year and 18 months of work experience, mostly in Consulting & Auditing and Consumer Goods areas, respectively with 34 and 26 answers.

Information particularly relevant and linked to the family background analysis is that the level of education of the highest-income parent showed a high preponderance of answers (122) of parents that completed a Master or a PhD.

Quantitative results: Cultural activities with parents

The sixth question of the questionnaire (refer to Appendix 2) was the first regarding the perceived and effective importance of having done cultural activities with the parents that helped, successively, the respondents to perform better and was asked as following “How much do you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activities helped you to perform better?” The list of chosen activities was based on the findings from the qualitative findings and included “Theatre”, “Cinema”, “Museums and Art Galleries”, “Opera”, “Ballets”, “Reading by Yourself”, “Music Concerts”, “Historic Monuments and Heritage”, “Poetry, Recitations/Club” and “Sports Events”. The ones listed above could be voted on a scale from 1 to 10 with an added N/A option for the respondents that didn’t do that particular activity.

The descriptive statistics showed that the most selected activity was “Reading by Yourself” chosen by all the respondents (160 answers), followed by “Cinema” with 158 answers and “Music Concerts”, “Historic Monuments and Heritage” and “Museums and Art Galleries” each one with 154 answers. Analyzing the average voting of the answers, to understand effectively which were the activities that contributed most to perform better, the results didn’t differ significantly from the ones showed above. The activities that resulted to be more effective, on average voting, were “Reading by Yourself” with 8.21 scale points (standard dev. 2,004) followed by “Historic Monuments and Heritage” with 7.21(standard dev. 2,277) and “Museums and art Galleries” with 6.70 (standard dev. 2,170).

The method selected to check if there were the requirements to proceed with the ANOVA model or the Robust Test of Equality of Means was the Test of Homogeneity of Variances.

The analysis was conducted according to the independent variables “Nationalities”, “Gender” and “Education” to understand if these three, independently, affected the way people considers the cultural activities with parents.

The first study analyzed the relation between “cultural activities with parents” and the independent variable “Nationalities”. Starting from an analysis of the graphs which showed the average voting received by each activity according to each nationality we can assume that the most effective for the Italians are Theatre (6,71), Cinema (6,57), Museums and Art Galleries (7,43), Opera (5,70) and Music Concerts (6,35) while for the Indians are Reading by Yourself (8,85), Poetry Recitations/Clubs (7,20) and Sport Events (7,06) whereas for the Portuguese are Ballets (4,80), Historic Monuments and Heritage (7,50). (Refer to appendix 1)

The variables that, according to the Test of Homogeneity of Variances, resulted not significant and homogeneous with a significance level of 10% were Cinema, Ballets, Historic Monuments and Heritage, Poetry Recitations/Clubs and Sport Events and they entail an ANOVA analysis. The remaining ones as Theatre, Museums and Art Galleries, Opera, Reading by Yourself and Music Concerts resulted, according to the same standards, significantly heterogeneous (it is significant the difference between the variances) and entail the Welch-Forsythe test. (Refer to appendix 2)

The ANOVA analysis determined that the two variables Cinema and Historic Monuments and Heritage, with a significance level of 39,3% and 12,7%, resulted not significant and so, more specifically, the difference between the average values of the different nationalities’ answers is not significant and both the variables appear not to be influenced by the independent variable “Nationalities” but from other factors that we can’t calculate. While the other variables Ballets, Poetry Recitations/Clubs and Sport Events with, respectively, a significance

level of 1,2% and 0% for both the last ones, resulted significant and appeared to be influenced by the variable “Nationalities”. (Refer to appendix 3)

The Robust Test of Equality of Means or Welch-Forsythe test determined that the variables “Theatre”, ”Museums and Art Galleries”, “Opera” and Reading By Yourself”, all with a significance level lower than 10%, presented a significant difference and appeared to be influenced by the variable “Nationalities”. While, “Music Concerts” presented a significance level higher than 10% and appeared not to be influenced by the variable mentioned above. (Refer to appendix 4)

The method used to test the correlation between the same variables and our second independent one “Gender” was exactly the same, including the same significance level. The first step consisted in an analysis of the graphs that show the average voting received by each activity according to each gender and it is clear that the most effective for the Males are Theatre (5,66), Cinema (6,36), Opera (4,59), Historic Monuments and Heritage (7,28), Poetry Recitations/Clubs (5,50) and Sports Events (6,08) while the remaining ones as Museums and Art Galleries (6,78), Ballets (4,60), Reading by Yourself (8,50) and Music Concerts (5,95) are considered more important by the Females.

This time the results of the Test of Homogeneity of Variances were different, showing an absolute predominance of variables that resulted not significant and homogeneous that entailed an ANOVA analysis. Just two variables (Museums and Art Galleries, Opera) resulted, according to the same standards, significantly heterogeneous and entail the Welch/Brown-Forsythe test.

The Robust Test of Equality of Means showed that the 2 variables indicated above, both with a significance level higher than 10%, respectively 67,8% and 20,8%, appeared not to be influenced by the variable “Gender”.

The ANOVA analysis showed that all the variables that required to be tested with this method presented a significance level higher than 10% (not significant) except for one, Reading by Yourself that with a significance level of 8,4% resulted significant and appeared to be the only one influenced by the variable “Gender”.

Finally, to test the correlation between the same activities and the independent variable “level of education of the highest-income parent” the last one was divided in 3 sub-groups, those who did not attend /finished University, the ones who finished the Bachelor and who finished a Master or a PhD. The analysis of the average voting’s graphs shows that the most effective activities for those who did not attend or finished the University were “Historic Monuments and Heritage” (7,83) and “Sports Events” (6,83), while was “Poetry” (5,25) for those who completed a Master or PhD and finally all the other activities mentioned above for those who got a Bachelor’s degree.

The output of the Test of Homogeneity of Variances showed just 3 activities that resulted significant and rejected the homogeneity hypothesis and those were Theatre (significance 0%), Music (1,6%) and Historic Monuments and Heritage (1,2%), entailing the Robust Test of Equality of Means. Meanwhile, all the others activities resulted homogeneous with 10% significant level and entailed the ANOVA analysis.

The Robust Test of Equality of Means showed that the 2 activities “Theatre” and “Music Concerts” with a significance, respectively, of 13,3% and 11,1% appeared not to be influenced by the variable “Level of Education of the Highest-Income Parent” while “Historic Monuments and Heritage” resulted significant and so appeared to be influenced by the independent variable according to the Welch test (significance 6,5%) but not for the Brown-Forsythe’s one (significance 36,5%).

The ANOVA analysis showed that only one activity resulted significant and so appeared to be influenced by the chosen independent variable and it was “Opera” with a 5,6% significance

level, while all the others resulted not significant and appeared to be influenced by other untested factors.

Quantitative results: Projective technique

The question number 17th of the questionnaire was a projective technique (select 5-type of question) to get the information about the potential relation between the chosen nationalities (independent variable) and the importance that the respondents gave to a list of different activities that would be suggested to a parent of a 5 years old child in order to help him to become successful. The method used for the analysis of these categorical variables was the contingency table.

The activities were listed as following: Sports, Religious Activities (Trips, Scouts, Catechism), Music, Foreign Languages, Volunteering, Exchange Program, Summer School, Summer Jobs, Art Classes, Clubs, Student Unions and Boards and Technological Activities. The most selected answers were Sports (126), followed by Foreign Languages (124) and Exchange Program (94). The Indians' most selected one was Sports with 36 answers while the Portuguese and Italians' one was, for both, Foreign Languages respectively with 62 and 44 answers. (Refer to appendix 5)

To analyze the output, a significance's main indicator was selected, the Pearson's Chi-Squared test, and if this was below the 10% significance level it meant that the answers were significantly different from the expected ones, which may mean a correlation between the nationality in question and the respective activity.

The activities that presented a Pearson's significance below 10% were: Religious Activities (significance 2,1%, considered more important by the Italians), Music (sign. 6,4%, more important for Italians and Indians), Art Classes (sign. 0%, more important for Indians) Foreign Languages, Exchange Programs, Clubs and Summer Jobs (first three with sign. 0% and the fourth 4,5%, more important for Portuguese and Italians) and, finally, Student

Unions/Boards (sig. 0%, more important for Portuguese). These data permit us to assume that there is a correlation between the nationalities and the relative activities mentioned above, at a significant level of 10%. (Refer to appendix 6)

The remaining activities (Sport, Summer School and Technological Activities) presented all a Pearson's significance higher than 10% and so are considered not significant. It means that the Portuguese, Indian and Italian groups behave in a similar way according to those topics, and so the data are still valid but we cannot make inferences on them.

Conclusions

Analyzing the features of the three countries involved in the research, they show that the parental style and family lifestyle present various common traits both in Italy and in Portugal compared to a completely different socio-cultural-economic environment as the Indian one. The family environment in the western countries results liberal, modern and tolerant thanks to a developed background situation that permits these characteristics. The parents know which is the best stimulating environment for the children and try to support them through a gradual exposure to the world, underlining the guidelines regarding culture, values and education. The aim of their strengths is to show to their children the correct way to reach the success permitting them to have a balanced life from the childhood till the university. The similarity between these two nationalities and cultures is supported also by the analogous findings from the projective technique about the same importance that the respondents gave to some activities (Clubs, Sports, Summer Jobs and Exchange Programs) which would be suggested to a parent of a 5 years old child in order to help the latter to become successful. These activities indicate the desire to expose the child to a variety of different potential experiences to model his attitude in an open-minded way balancing fun, work and international exposure.

In India the situation is different due to the culture and the characteristics of the country, the population is 120 times the one of Portugal and 20 times the one of Italy. This implies socio-economic difficulties in which there is no guarantee of a minimum standard of life quality, and that the competition to achieve a respectable job position within the Indian educational system is very high and well-established, setting considerable barriers to the fulfilment of students' dreams. The culture and the minor average of education level along with the competition entail some restrictions even to the modern generations that reflect a lower international exposure with the respective consequences. In this case, indeed, the findings from the projective technique (where the respondent's target was younger than the focus group's one) showed that the Indian respondents gave more importance to activities like Music, Sport and Art Classes that suggested a small symbol of change, trying to replace the atmosphere of strict discipline typical of the older generations with one more appropriate to stimulate a creative and carefree childhood.

Furthermore, the quantitative analysis regarding the cultural activities with the parents showed that a lot of them appeared to be influenced by nationalities, but a general overview indicated that a parental style that stimulate the reading activities and the visits to museums, art galleries and historic monuments helped the respondents to perform better.

Recommendations

Regarding the parental background and parental style it is impossible to recommend fixed guidelines to help the children's achievement of success because most of the sources of disparity are difficult or impossible to be managed as ethnicity, family income, bilingual parents or level of the parents' education. The characteristic that can be shaped easier is "parent involvement" where the recommendations to the parents consist in supporting constantly the children and creating around them a stimulating environment, independently

from the resources at their disposal. Nowadays the opportunities to become successful are always more based on meritocracy and the society is working, more or less slowly, in order to avoid the pre-existing barriers that have complicated the entry in the job market of the lower-income students in every kind of culture. The family environment is too crucial to be restricted by some external factors, that is why another recommendation is to give to the children the right values accordingly to the culture and teach them the capacity of listening along with the importance of having a balanced life, being humble and respectful.

Limitations

During the development of this study the group faced several limitations that has to be taken into account for the success next researches. Firstly, the limited size of the sample represented a problem in terms of realistic overall analysis because even if it respected the minimum standard to assume that it was normally distributed, the number of respondents was low anyway. The second limitation is about the limited number of universities where the respondents came from. All the Indians came from the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, the Portuguese from NOVA School of Business and Economics and Catholic University of Portugal and the Italians from Bocconi and LUISS. These are all private universities, except for NOVA SBE, and so the analysis showed just a point of view that maybe doesn't reflect the general feelings, background or experiences of the majority of the business graduates from the respective nationalities. Furthermore this limitation of the private universities probably affected even the variable "level of education of the highest-income parent" where most of the respondents (76%) indicated that the parent finished a Master or a PhD.

The future researches should aim at wider and more diverse samples, having at their disposal more business graduates with less homogeneous profiles and backgrounds. Analysing data

from profiles that have various family environments from different geographical areas and cultural context it could be possible to notice and study more aspects and consequently have more detailed overview. Furthermore, enlarging the target to other countries, the research could result more interesting and completed. Studying different aspects of more than three different cultures could give the spark to focus on drivers and factors that in this case resulted not significant.

The output from the normality tests, that includes Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, revealed that most of the residuals resulted not normally distributed and the fact that normality couldn't be confirmed for most of the variables has been a big limitation to our study because, moreover, the ANOVA outputs resulted less stable and reliable.

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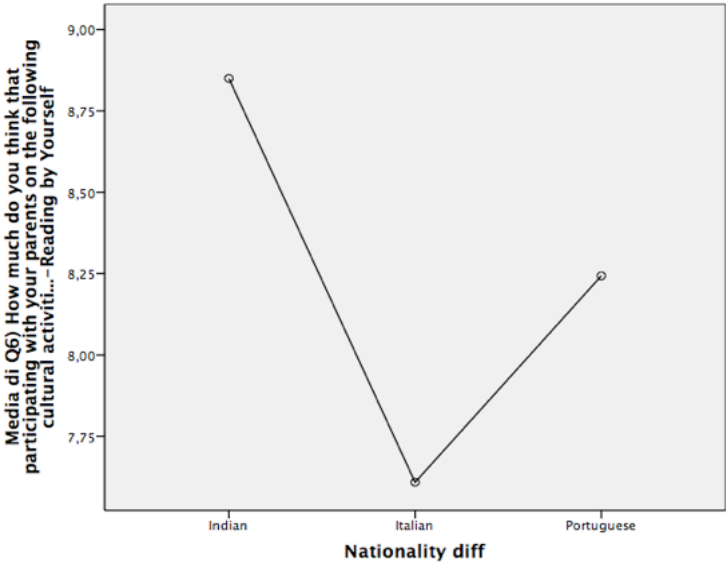
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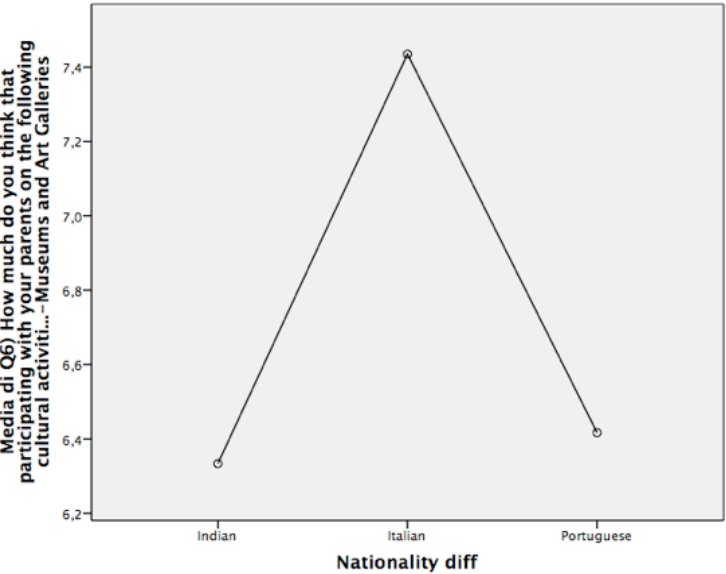
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Appendix

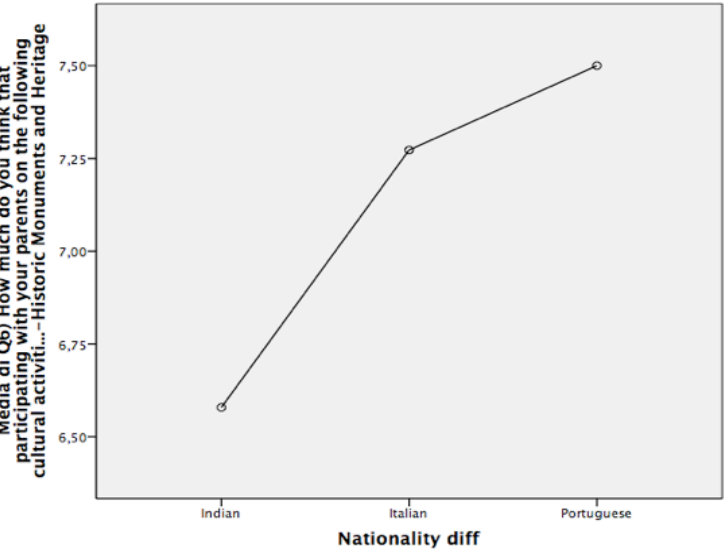
Appendix 1 – Highest average voting / Nationalities



Indian – Reading by Yourself



Italian – Museums and Art Galleries



Portuguese – Historic Monuments and Heritage

Appendix 2 – Question 6 “How much did you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activities helped you to perform better?”

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test di omogeneità delle varianze				
	Statistica di Levene	gl1	gl2	Sign.
Q6) How much do you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activiti...-Theatre	16,280	2	119	,000
Q6) How much do you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activiti...-Cinema	,683	2	155	,506

Theatre - Sign. 0% - The Robust Test of Equality of Means

Cinema - Sign. 50,6% - ANOVA

Appendix 3

ANOVA

ANOVA						
		Somma dei quadrati	gl	Media quadratica	F	Sign.
Q6) How much do you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activiti...- Theatre	Tra gruppi	144,307	2	72,154	17,519	,000
	Entro i gruppi	490,119	119	4,119		
	Totale	634,426	121			
Q6) How much do you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activiti...- Cinema	Tra gruppi	7,482	2	3,741	,941	,393
	Entro i gruppi	616,315	155	3,976		
	Totale	623,797	157			

Cinema: Sign. 39,3% is higher than 10%, it follows that it is not significant and this activity appeared to be not influenced by the variable “Nationalities”

Appendix 4

The Robust Test of Equality of Means or Welch- Forsythe Test

Test robusti dell'uguaglianza delle medie					
		Statistica ^a	gl1	gl2	Sign.
Q6) How much do you think that participating with your parents on the following cultural activiti...-Theatre	Welch	28,231	2	61,964	,000
	Brown-Forsythe	20,522	2	98,906	,000

Theatre: Sign 0% is lower than 10%, it follows that it is significant and this activity appeared to be influenced by the variable “Nationalities”

Appendix 5

Contingency table – Most selected answer

Tavola di contingenza \$Q17_Group*Nationality						
			Nationality diff			Totale
			Indian	Italian	Portuguese	
Imagine that the parents of a 5 years... ^a	Q17) Imagine that the parents of a 5 years old child, who want their child to be very successful,...- Sports	Conteggio	36	36	54	126
		% del totale	4,7%	4,7%	7,0%	16,4%

Appendix 6

Contingency table / Chi-squared Test – Foreign Languages

			Q17) Imagine that the parents of a 5 years old child, who want their child to be very successful,...-Foreign Languages		Totale
			0	1	
Nationality diff	Indian	Conteggio	22	18	40
		Conteggio previsto	9,0	31,0	40,0
	Italian	Conteggio	2	44	46
		Conteggio previsto	10,4	35,7	46,0
	Portuguese	Conteggio	12	62	74
		Conteggio previsto	16,7	57,4	74,0
Totale		Conteggio	36	124	160
		Conteggio previsto	36,0	124,0	160,0

Test chi-quadrato			
	Valore	gl	Sign. asintotica (bilaterale)
Chi-quadrato di Pearson	34,597 ^a	2	,000
Rapporto di verosimiglianza	33,508	2	,000
Associazione lineare per lineare	16,627	1	,000
N. di casi validi	160		

Sign. 0%, looking at the difference between the obtained answers and the awaited ones it follows that this activity appeared to be less important for the Indians and more important for Portuguese and Italians