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**AMBICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY. THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE**

**Gladys Ruvimbo Ndoda**

Chinhoyi University of Technology  
School of Tourism and Hospitality  
P Bag 7724, Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe

**Mike Nyamazana Sikwila**

Chinhoyi University of Technology  
School of Business Sciences and Management

**ABSTRACT**

This article advances the notion that wealth creation, innovation and technology (WIT) are cumulative derivatives over time drawing from cultural perspectives that are unique to a nation. We follow qualitative analysis of the factors that affect wealth creation in Zimbabwe. We review and synthesise literature on culture as an endogenous factor affected by intervening variables and yet simultaneously, culture being an exogenous factor of economic development. The paper extends literature on the causal effect of culture and economic development thereby promoting indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), thus providing evidence for the salience of African culture in WIT. The study contributes to the new cultural economics in an in-depth study of an economic possibility story - where Zimbabwe's am bicultural influences economic outcomes as a transmission mechanism (Hjort, 2010) from historical to current institutions. We argue that previous models on economic growth, change and development have ignored the role played by culture perhaps this is the reason why Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and other domestic programmes have not been successful. We aver that to bridge this gap, subsequent models to be adopted should encapsulate the importance of culture in WIT in Zimbabwe. This paper's approach is to combine a literature review and discussion of issues. The analysis in this paper indicates that culturally-specific views of management, are the very origins of comparative-competitive advantage and economic success in wealth-creation, sophistication in innovation and technology as they pass through culture in stages, offering economic advantages to architects, which are never revealed to emulators. Until and unless there is a paradigm and mind-set shift that WIT is culturally embedded, Zimbabwe's economic growth will remain stagnant.

**Keywords:** Culture, ambicultural, economic development, strategy, wealth creation, innovation, technology.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study of human networks has a long tradition in academic research, spanning disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, organizational behaviour and management (Grossman, 2010). While such inquiry is not new, there has been an increasing interest in the role of culture as it pertains to business and economic activities. Ethnic business networks, while not formally institutionalized, can serve important functions in reducing barriers to international trade and in facilitating transnational and national knowledge flows. Moahi, (2012) contends that every community has its own knowledge system, which enables it to survive, relate and make sense of its context and environment through culture. Africa has a lot to offer in terms of its indigenous knowledge (IK) and studies have shown that IK is used and applied by a majority of communities in Africa in the areas of health, agriculture, arts, and education.

Moahi (2012) maintains that the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) has recognized the fact that Africa has a rich knowledge base and technologies that have played a major role in “biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and prospecting,” but there is also recognition that IK and technologies are not adequately promoted and protected in most African countries (NEPAD), hence the need for inclusion in curriculum as a way of increasing visibility of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), especially the transmission of WIT through culture as an economic development strategy. Whilst various literatures has advanced the notion of strategic human resources planning and culture, these researches have overlooked the aspect of African culture, as an innovative, diagnostic approach to manpower planning.

Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007) contends that culture is of crucial importance in the development and integration of a nation, as it ensures that economic development is in line with philosophical values and social values. Zimbabwe’s development must, therefore, be looked at with culture in mind. Culture must be seen as integral part of economic growth and development. In Zimbabwe, colonisation brought with it cultural conflict between the two cultures of Africa and Europe. Whilst there is the need to protect and nurture Zimbabwean indigenous culture, which lays claim to the cultural identity and authenticity of the nation as paramount, Zimbabwe, akin to any other African country having been colonised, exhibit an ambicultural perspective due to the inherent culture of its people, and that inherited due to the aspect of colonisation. Culture, which is embedded in nationalities, should be used to full advantage.

As such, a critical question arises in that; Does Zimbabwe’s ambiculture influence economic outcomes as a transmission mechanism and if not, where are they now? The remaining gap depends on the competence of the leaders in cultural management, building blocks in WIT sustained through culture, tracing innovation through culture and building upon it, hence the need to discuss the concept of ambicultural perspective as an economic development strategy through unionism embedded in African culture. In order to revitalize the country’s industrial sector after more than a decade of economic downturn, this paper addresses managerial implications of ambicultural management for the nation cascading down to business organisations with a particular focus on human resources management, thereby drawing several leadership insights as lessons for Zimbabwe from Japan and China (Ming-Jer & Miller, 2010). The objective of this paper therefore is to:

- explore the role of national culture in business and economic activities; and
- Narrow the interstice on the role of national culture as a transmission mechanism influencing economic outcome.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hjort (2010) motivates a definition of culture as the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. Abe and Fitzgerald (1995) advocate that, though there is no commonly accepted view of culture, it implies those elements of human nature which are neither genetically inherited and so common to mankind, nor those that are the province of individual personality. Natural cultures are attitudes and patterns of behaviour that are learned within different societies and the results of socialisation are understood, communicated and reinforced by shared symbols, language and expectations (Abe & Fitzgerald, 1995). In the process of 'mental programming,' genetic influences, culture and individual development represent increasing degrees of human uniqueness and through the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of 'programming,' a society acquires those values that are associated with a significant portion of its population (Slater & Robson, 2012).

Other proponents have argued that the dichotomy between cultural and organisational factors is an unnecessary reductionism. They claim that it leads to an 'over-socialised' view, where economic growth was explained only through the influence of transforming cultures. Arguably, this paper on the other hand, depicts management and organisations buying into culture in terms of what society allow them to do, in terms of what the superstructure of a community say. Hofstede (1991, p. 5) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from those of another." Hofstede (1991) contends that cultural differences can be found at the regional, national, ethnic, and organizational levels, Tan (2002) suggests that cultural influences on organizations "are most clearly recognizable at the national level". Hofstede (1991) argues that researchers can use the word "culture" when referring to "national culture." UNESCO (2012) defines culture as the totality of a people's way of life, the whole complex of distinctive spiritual material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group and includes not only arts and literature, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems and traditions and beliefs. Beyond this definition, Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2012) has advocated that Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is defined as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity (so essential in WIT) thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

A study by Salavrakos (2010) notes that although the term "culture" can apply to nations, organisations, occupations and other groups, it is generally agreed that the influence of culture is most clearly recognisable at the national level. Hjort (2010) posits that cultural explanations of economic phenomena have recently enjoyed a renaissance among economists. Landes (2000), for example, argues that economies succeed (or fail) as a result of attitudes driven by cultural factors and concludes that culture grow fast than those who do not and this is the case in East Asia economies (Hjort, 2010).

In addition, culture has received much attention in studies of strategic management (Huang, 2009); Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998). Characteristics of Japanese and Chinese cultures warrant some elaboration because of their relevance to the study of strategic management from a cultural and a complexity perspective. Japanese and Chinese cultures are holistic and dialectic thinking and societies where connections, relationships, are considered more significant and important. Employees' understanding of work, their approach to it and their perceptions towards

motivational practices are factors most directly influenced by intervening variables of culture which are inclusive of the values and norms of their nations (Hulpke & Lau, 2008; Salavrakos, 2010). Hulpke and Lau(2008) argue that organizational culture and the leadership who initiates and perpetuates the culture are critical with culture starting at the top of the organization permeating throughout, becoming part of the DNA of the organization. Salavrakos (2010) expounds that organization culture and business practices varies in countries and are directly associated with the cultural differences at national and organizational level. What makes it all come together in a particular organization, are the leaders and the culture they create with a pivot of the national culture. This point is further emphasised by Hofstede (1980) who argues that national culture was essential for business. If the culture can be driven to all corners of the organization through; leader's behaviour, appropriate control systems, and shared values, one can be sure that no employee would act unethically. If the culture, the DNA, does *not* support ethical behaviours, then the entire organization or institution may develop an unethical culture. Salavrakos (2010) elaborates that this leads many researchers to argue that it is important and necessary for managers to understand the cultures of countries where their organisations are located and adapt their management practices to the environment (Ryan et al., 1999). Cultural values and cultural differences between countries are formed through a long history and therefore, are stable. Subsequent researches have confirmed this conclusion (Salavrakos, 2010; Hofstede, 1980; Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997). Japan and China could be used as special cases to highlight the importance of culture in economic growth and development.

**Japanese Economic Success:** Economists such as Salavrakos (2010), Radelet & Sachs (1997) and Abe & Fitzgerald (1995) argued that the economic success of Asian countries was rooted in their "Asian values." As a result of culture enabling organisational capability, Asian industries were undoubtedly the fastest growing sector of the economy as indicated in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1: Growth Prospects for Asian Economies, 1995 – 2005

Economy	GDP Per Capita Relative to U.S.A			Projected Per Capita GDP growth rate 1996 - 2005
	1965	1995	Projected In 2005	
<b>Four Tigers:</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
Hong Kong	30.1	98.4	116.5%	2.1
Singapore	15.9	85.2	107.0	2.5
South Korea	9.0	48.8	82.6	3.5
Taiwan	14.2	56.2	88.0	3.1
<b>China</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>South East Asia</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Indonesia	5.2	13.1	35.8	5.0
Malaysia	14.3	36.8	71.2	3.9
Philippines	10.7	9.4	28.5	5.3
Thailand	9.7	25.6	47.4	3.8
<b>South Asia</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Bangladesh	9.9	8.5	17.2	3.9
India	6.5	7.8	24.4	5.5
Pakistan	7.7	7.7	18.1	4.4
Sri Lanka	10.1	12.6	25.3	3.9

Source: Radelet and Sachs, 1997.

Change was more securely located through the use of modern technology, vertical integration and investment in human resources and its developing managerial hierarchies were staffed by indigenous people. Japanese emphasise on companies as human organisations, paying attention to the complexities of human motivation. The association of collective and personal motivation with Japanese economic success reinforced the greater premium to be placed on the contribution of people through culture. Nairn (2009) postulates that the case of Japan points to the fact that culture matters more, a trait honed in societies where the community's collective well-being is more important than the rights of any single person.

**Japanese Culture:** Mujtaba, and Isomura (2012) contend that Japanese are often regarded to be strongly relationship-oriented because Japanese culture and management style are thought to be collectivism-oriented. On one hand, the research about Japanese culture has emphasised that Japan is a group-, long-term-, oriented and high-context society (Nakane, 1967, 1970; Hall, 1976; Ouchi, 1978, 1980; Hofstede, 1980, 1991). On the other hand, research studies about the Japanese style of management have argued that Japanese companies utilise strong, long-term relationships among their colleagues and with partners to be successful in business (Ouchi, 1978, 1980, 2004; Nonaka, 1988; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka and Konno, 1998; Asanuma, 1989; Aoki, 1990; Badaracco, 1991). Moreover, Japan's historically recent and relatively rapid success serves as an invaluable comparison of economic growth and development. It stands as a notable 'development model', a rich repository of case-material in unlocking the secrets of economic growth. Hofstede (1980) helped make common knowledge the idea that Japan is high in collectivism though he reiterates that "organizational characteristics" have importance's enshrined in national cultures as determinants of management practices and employee behaviours (Hulpke and Lau, 2008).

Japanese change and adapt their leadership tendencies over time and with changing conditions (Mujtaba, and Isomura, 2012). Japanese management characteristics stem from particular cultural traits and the 'economic miracle' is rooted in attitudes and patterns of behaviour favourable to commercial enterprises and organisation (Abe and Fitzgerald, 1995). Ouchi (2004) explains that the Japanese acquisition of cultural traits can only be understood historically, and one recurrent theme is the historical influence of geographical and physical adversity, and concomitant need for group cohesion, collective identity and 'uncertain avoidance.' Consequently, Abe and Fitzgerald, (1995) informs, hierarchical connections had a political and military purpose as well as an economic and social one, and, within this 'vertical society', membership of a group became closely tied to personal identity. Slater and Robson inform that the 'vertical society' proved an enduring aspect of Japanese society and culture. Culture played an important role in harmonising individual and organisational goals in organisations (Ouchi, 2004). This point was stressed by Mujtaba, and Isomura, (2012) who contends that in-order to maintain group cohesiveness, an inculcated sense of mutual obligation, discipline, respect for elders, and seniority-based rank limited disruptive forces and the naked expression of personal ambition. Individuals gauged their worth according to their place and respect within the collective, not by assertion of their own views and interests. But, in addition to obligations, mutual rights and the welfare of all group members were secured through consultation procedures and a common sense of security was preferred to direct talking and confrontation.

Japan's traditional cultural traits were modified (Slater and Robson, 2012) and transferred to its emerging industries, and it is maintained that the influence on employment systems was most profound. It follows that Japan's success is rooted in the adaptation of well-entrenched cultural traits, or to give it a name, the establishment of neo-Confucian societies. Japan and the 'Pacific Tigers' share one common feature, namely the sense of duty, hard work and collectivism inspired by Confucianism. Tan (2002) advocates that comparative studies of entrepreneurship represent a major effort in search of "context- embedded relationships" (Cheng, 1994, p. 164). The Confucius culture is

said to be an underlying source behind such entrepreneurship (Fukuyama, 1996; Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

Wolf and Mujtaba, (2011) suggests that in-order to operate effectively many key Japanese companies were obliged to internalize activities within the enterprise or conglomerates. Grossman (2010, Abe & Fitzgerald, 1995) assert that the attention paid, first, to the management of human resources and second, to the flow of raw materials and finished goods shaped the objectives and structure of Japanese companies. Japanese enterprises assumed a culture of constant personal and organizational development adapting western corporate structures, managerial procedures and product and production technology. Employees become integrated into the culture of the organisation, and this is a positive element for long-term sustainability (Wolf & Mujtaba, 2011).

The view of companies as a collection of people implicit in the world of *kaisha*, is seen by many commentators as the defining element of Japanese management. Self-reliance of Japanese companies, their sense of internal loyalty and vigorous competitiveness always combined with the establishment of networked alliances that encompassed suppliers, buyers, fellow manufacturers and banks (Slater & Robson, 2012). There were consequent benefits in sharing market and technical information and resources could be marshalled behind a workable objective instead of being dissipated amongst rival projects.

Abe and Fitzgerald (1995) motivate that the culturally specific explanation of Japanese success seeks to identify business methods with the adaptation of deeply entrenched, traditional attitudes, namely a sense of collective spirit and commitment. Imported production methods and organisational systems are modelled by cultural norms to produce a unique management system, which cannot be wholly replicated outside Japan. Nonaka (1988) discusses that Japanese style of decision-making is the middle-up-down management. According to Nonaka (1988), the middle-up-down management is an intermediate form of top-down management and bottom-up management. In Japanese companies, the middle managers play an important role in combining strategic macro-information and hands-on micro-information. The middle managers serve as the agents for change in the organisation's self-renewal process. The middle managers deeply commit to their organisation; therefore, they translate top management's vision into operational-level and support ideas created from the bottom.

Nonaka (1988) emphasises that Japanese organisations create information by sharing not only explicit knowledge but also implicit knowledge among employees. Grossman (2010) argues that in today's global business environment, knowledge is considered to be the most important driver behind sustained competitive advantage (Stewart, 1997). Success in the "knowledge economy" depends primarily on leveraging intellectual assets, as opposed to the traditional factors of production (i.e. land, labour, and capital) of the industrial age. Vaughan, Yang, Tang, (2011) contend that Japan akin to China, engages in web data mining for business intelligence. Information on business competition generated from this kind of study is useful for people who need a global view of an industry such as industry analysts or policy makers.

The value of business information about countries such as China is obvious, given the global nature of contemporary business competition and the significance of the Chinese economy to the world. Decisions are based on sharing deeply explicit and implicit knowledge with leaders and followers; therefore, leaders are considered to represent their decisions. Grossman (2010) presents that, access to information has always been a critical aspect of doing business. At the most elemental level, the primary advantage of ethnic business networks is the transfer of tacit knowledge within the group. Mujtaba, and Isomura, (2012) sums up Japanese leadership behaviours and the role of leaders in Japan as to maintain relationships, coordinate others' interests, and authorise their decisions to implement them effectively. Therefore, the Japanese leadership style is relationship and consideration-oriented and has an intermediate form not only between autocratic and democratic but also directive and participative approaches. Porter (1990, p. 780) argues that "the process of

innovation cannot be separated from a firm's strategic and competitive context". Johannessen and Olsen (2009) argues that it is the continuous changes in the state of knowledge that produce new disequilibrium situations and, therefore, new profit opportunities. Hence, we have seen an increased attention toward innovation as the principal source of economic rent.

**Chinese culture:** Salavrakos (2010) advocates that the dominant explanation of China's astonishing economic performance in the literature of transition economics, political economy or international economics is associated with low labour costs, high productivity, tax reforms, huge natural resources, special economic zones (SEZs), etc., all enshrined in Chinese culture thus the Chinese culture has the potential to provide leadership in world prosperity. Chinese culture perpetuated via networks, permeating in the professional organisations, is a culture in pursuit of harmony and is attributed to the commercial success of the Chinese across the world (Tsao, 2011; Grossman, 2010). The dominant faiths in China have been Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Their proponents have co-existed peacefully in China for 2,500 years. All three faiths are compatible in their beliefs of peace and harmony. Their recurring theme is "peace, love, harmony"—harmony among humans (Confucianism), harmony with nature (Taoism), harmony with all life (Buddhism). These three spiritual philosophies form the core value of Chinese culture, with Confucianism as the mainstream ideology. Ming-Jer and Miller (2012) argue that a thriving Chinese business culture represents not only a source of economic partnership but a potential fount of managerial wisdom that can help renew African economies. Salavrakos (2010) asserts that China's ability to attract massive FDI inflows is associated with business history as well as business, managerial culture.

Indeed, "Chinese" as a way of thinking, with its emphasis on balance and self-other integration, offers the promise to bridge global divides and facilitate the formation of global-minded executives. In the West, the blame for the decline in many corporations and in financial and real estate markets has been assigned largely to greed, short-termism, and excessive risk taking, all of which seem to have increased significantly over the past several decades (Tsao, 2011). Ming-Jer and Miller (2012) indicate that China, today's darling of Asia, has emerged over the past two decades as an economic powerhouse. With its GDP surpassing Japan's by the second quarter of 2010, China had become the second-largest economy in the world, lagging behind only the United States (Barboza, 2010). It is currently the world's leading recipient of foreign direct investment and the largest holder of U.S. Treasury bills, with some \$843 billion in June 2010. No longer simply the factory of the world, China is now an overseas expansionist on a shopping spree (Walt, 2009). Its compound annual GDP growth of 9.9% over the past two decades and its stunning 11.9% increase in GDP in the first quarter of 2010 contrast sharply with the world's arid economic landscape. The shift from West to East is palpable, with companies from emerging economies among the leaders in growth and innovation (Wooldridge, 2010).

Ming-Jer and Miller (2012) argued that the transition is seen most clearly in technology, innovation, ideas, and entrepreneurship. More than ever, we need business professionals and executives who can make sense of today's global complexity and multiplicity by thinking in broad and integrative ways. Grossman (2010) maintains that it is of particular interest to couch this discussion in the context of China's ascension on the world stage and its transition to an innovation-based economy. A continuing interplay between the Diaspora and the motherland has facilitated the flow of knowledge and has played a significant role in China's transformation. Grossman (2010) reiterates that economic integration is accomplished by more natural means, such as geographic proximity and ethnic ties.

Although not typically considered a traditional subject in international business, informal integration has played a significant role in fostering innovation, facilitating knowledge flows, and lubricating business transactions around the world. Several important advantages may accrue from business networks, among them that they enable free and unfettered communications without fear,

they enrich the quality of and speed of decision making (Huang, 2009), they allow members to build trust, they alleviate problems inherent in contract enforcement, they reduce transaction costs, they provide information about trading opportunities and they build customer satisfaction (Charan, 1991; Yanagida, 1992; Rauch, 2001). China's "re-emergence" (a term that reflects both Chinese history and world history) and the ascendance of India and other burgeoning economies challenge the conventional wisdom on globalization (Cappelli, Singh, Singh, & Useem, 2010) and offer an opportunity for Africa to more closely study and learn from the model of the East. The mandate for managers and management scholars alike, therefore, is to find leaders who utilize, very selectively, the thinking and orientations of both cultures in a manner that each can understand, identify with, and benefit from, as well as envisioning a parallel application on African culture as a transmission vehicle on WIT.

Huang (2009) postulates that it is widely acknowledged that complexity studies can provide important metaphors and analogies for understanding how organisations and industries behave, change and evolve, hence strategic management of organisations (Anderson, 1999; Tsoukas, 1998). Boisot and Child (1999) argued strongly that differences in history, culture, and institutional settings cause Chinese organisations to handle complexity differently from their Western counterparts. The former uses complexity absorption strategy while the latter employs complexity reduction strategy. By keeping one's position in the middle point, one can be better prepared to handle various different outcomes as events unfold as a whole. In other words, it advocates developing options to handle a complex task or phenomenon, but never to take an extreme position. In essence, this is what is called "complexity absorption strategy" (Boisot and Child, 1999). Grossman (2010) indicates that complexity absorption strategy is enhanced through the Chinese cultural networks. Haley et al. (1998) argues that Chinese networks function to facilitate business transactions by empowering the discussion and sharing of important information without fear of reprisals or embarrassment. This is due to the close nature of the network's members, i.e. family and friendship relationships (based on clan, locality, dialector guild). Cultural networks enhance the decision-making process. Members of the network may transmit information along with the contextual meanings and implications of that information. Often times this level of tacit knowledge, which is less readily available in the Asian context, can enable informed decision making and provide a competitive advantage. They test members' motives and build trust. In the Chinese context, trust is not necessarily a transferable asset; it often needs to be established and tested individually. They encourage members to evaluate problems from the perspective of what is right for the customer and company, rather than from a narrow departmental or functional perspective.

Neo-Confucian's a common denominator for both Japan and China. Neo-Confucianism represents a fusion of both cultural and economic considerations. Neo-Confucianism assumes cultural adaptation as a response to economic, political and social considerations. Tsao (2011) motivates that "harmony" was the mainstream ideology of Confucianism; "world peace" was its goal. Character development among the "eight virtues" of loyalty, filial piety, kindness, love, trust, righteousness, harmony, and peace have formed the core values of Confucianism. People with Confucian qualities value hard work, family harmony, education, and frugality (Peng, Moffett and McAdam, 2010). Instead of spending and wasteful habits, they have had the amazing ability to accumulate wealth.

Liang-Hung and Yu-Ling (2009) articulate that Confucian ethics, as the essence of the Chinese and Japanese traditional culture, have been widely applied to social sciences from economics to business. Confucian dynamism, a concept proposed by researchers during the 1980s, was understood to boost Asian economies. Economic researchers were quick to detect the past two decades exceptional growth performances of China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea. Kahn (1979) was one of the foremost to suggest that the variation of national culture might be a crucial reason for their success.



Differing from the traditional Western theories of knowledge and science, Confucian philosophy is a form of intentional truth, which contains sensible feeling and bounded rationality but is not completely limited to scientific knowledge (Mou, 1983). In fact, the core concept of the Confucian philosophy is on the emphasis of ethics. Consisting of sense and sensibility, Confucian ethics could be suitably applied to the management of business organizations and human resource management, especially in the Asian nations, because they are both humanly oriented (Liang-Hung & Yu-Ling, 2009).

Confucianism, as the most important part of Chinese and Japanese culture, has a great impact on the management of business organizations and human resources (Child and Warner 2003; Rowley, Benson and Warner 2004). With the rapid economic rise of East Asian countries, Confucian philosophy has also made a deep impression on corporate management in terms of organizational culture and business ethics. Grossman (2010) explains that to a large extent, the origin and character of bonds in business can be attributed to Confucianism, a belief system in which human relations play a central role. The system is as an expanding pattern of concentric circles, with the family as the centre and social connections as the radius: The whole ethnic Japanese and Chinese network consists of numerous such circles. A Chinese businessman would seek a business partner from the nearest circle. The circle will expand as the business expands (Peng, 2000, p. 232).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology we follow is qualitative analysis of the factors that influence wealth creation in a given environment such as the one experienced by Zimbabwe.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Does the Culture-Economic Development Link Exist in Zimbabwe? :** The role of culture in development has recently emerged as an important policy issue (UNESCO Framework for Culture Statistics, 2009). Sifelani, (2013) argues that the strength of the new economy rests on the foundation of creative thinking. IKS endows creative thinking. Indigenous knowledge System (IKS) has defied common definition, and means different things to different people. It is generally perceived as knowledge that is possessed by communities, with culture as a vehicle of transmission. There is however, no clear escalation to national culture as the kernel of transmission of WIT cascading to organisations in Zimbabwe, although IKS is used to understand communities' realities and to resolve problems of survival (Moahi, 2012). According to Dei (2000), IK is about the common sense ideas and cultural knowledge of local people concerning day-to-day life. IK is critical to the way communities regard and live in their environment and presents communities with ways of managing their environment – be it natural, cultural, economic or political. Dei (2000) identified three broad aspects of IK: as traditional knowledge which is inter-generational knowledge that it passed from generation to generation; empirical knowledge which is based on observations of the surrounding environment; and revealed knowledge which is provided through dreams, visions and intuition. Clearly therefore, IK is holistic and encompasses the physical and spiritual aspects of life. Tella (2007) states that IK is important for a number of reasons inclusive of providing problem solving strategies for communities; it contributes significantly to global development knowledge; it is relevant for the development process; and it is an under-utilized resource in the development process especially in WIT. Organisational capacity for transformation, specifically in WIT, in response to the economic change forces, has become the critical success factor in the ever-changing business environment where more competition means more intense selection (Moahi, 2010). As organisations fight to remain on the market, un-adaptive and consequently unsuccessful rivals unanchored in

culture as a transmission mechanism of WIT, fail to capture an adequate market share and have to exit (Tella, 2007).

Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2012) connotes that IKS refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds. Traditional knowledge is mainly of a practical nature, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fisheries, health, horticulture, forestry and environmental management in general (SCBD, 2007), at the exclusion of usage in business organisations exhibited as a variable cascaded from a national perspective giving import to the argument that previous models on economic growth and change such as ESAP, disregarded the role of culture.

The definition of a cultural domain may begin with a number of industries (commonly termed collectively as cultural industries or performing industries) since these can be formally defined using existing international classifications. A domain can also include all cultural activities under the appropriate heading, including informal and social activities. From the perspective of the framework, a domain includes all related activities, whether economic or social. The following are the 2009 UNESCO FCS cultural domains: Cultural and Natural Heritage; Performance and Celebration; Visual Arts and Crafts; Literary Arts & Publishing (Books and Press); Film, Audio-visual and Interactive Media; Design and Creative Services; Tourism; and Sports and Recreation. These domains inform the formulation of appropriate policy, strategy and institutional interventions for encouraging the development and growth of cultural industries in Zimbabwe. Of 6 Domains, the domain of Cultural and Natural Heritage constitutes 9.7% distribution of the population in the Culture sector in Zimbabwe (CSS Zimbabwe, 2012). The question still remains on whether the cultural domain definition permeates to commerce, but as the current definition stands, such distinction is silently conspicuous.

Grossman (2010) argues that establishing a model of brain circulation, as opposed to brain drain, has become an important priority as emerging nations make the transition to the knowledge economy. It is of utmost concern to China and Japan, who have made the commitment to embrace innovation as a key part of its competitiveness strategy. Increasingly, overseas Chinese communities around the world, through their strength in culture and IK, are making an impact on the economic growth of China as Zimbabwe can through her citizens in the diaspora rather than view them as 'brain-drain.' Ocholla (2007) stated that IK continues to be marginalized, and that this has resulted in its limited use in the development process, much like Zimbabwe's case. One of the reasons that IK is marginalized is because of the tacit nature of IK. It resides in people's memories and is largely transmitted through word-of-mouth, this means that it is in many senses endangered as its custodians (who are elderly) die out and those that remain do not have the whole story or look down upon IK as backward. IK is also viewed in some quarters as the knowledge of the poor and illiterate. Moahi (2012) presages that, an effect of colonialism, was the adoption of a different way of knowing that devalued most of the indigenous knowledge present in communities. The colonized were encouraged to enter formal education and to abandon their traditional ways, and integrate instead, the Western modern ways that relied on science to explain phenomena where they could, and invoked religion where they could not. IK is marginalized in the conventional processes of knowledge production (Dei, 2000). It is asserted that many of today's leaders and educated people went through an education system that looked down and downplayed the achievement of African people and their contribution to knowledge in general; this form of marginalization produced a generation that for the most, does not understand, recognize, appreciate, value or use IK producing people with an intellectually colonized mind-set (Ocholla, 2007).

Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007) maintains that whilst Zimbabwe has a rich cultural heritage built over a long period of time, the defeat of indigenous people by settler colonialists in the first Chimurenga witnessed some erosion of traditions, values and religion. Some of traditional, values and beliefs seem to be disappearing owing to various factors, which include colonialism, urbanisation, globalisation and acculturation. The need to promote and preserve cultural heritage has become more important in the face of the above factors. Concerted efforts have to be put in place to preserve this cultural heritage for posterity and to maintain it as a unique part of world cultural heritage, implying that an advancement of cultural perspective as an economic development strategy is in fact still to be developed. Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007) indicates that the role of public institutions dealing with the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage should be clearly spelt out. Arguably, their focus is currently on performing arts and cultural groups promoting research, preservation and creativity with no clear escalation to the business world through IKS and WIT. This viewpoint is supported by Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007) which affirms that Zimbabwean culture was one of the unifying factors during the second Chimurenga. There is need, however, to revitalise it, both as a unifying factor and for nation building, both locally and abroad cannot be over emphasised. There is need to tap the potential of the creative and cultural industry both for employment creation and economic and social development of Zimbabwe.

IK is further marginalized, because, according to Escobar (1995, cited in Briggs, 2005), development relies exclusively on the modern Western knowledge system. This marginalizes non-Western knowledge systems. Nyamnjoh (2004) fomented that the type of education provided in Africa is an export from the West. As such therefore, it represents a “cultural violence on African society. . . Education in Africa has been and mostly remains a journey fuelled by an exogenously induced and internalized sense of inadequacy in Africans, and endowed with the mission of devaluation or annihilation of African creativity, agency and value system” (Nyamnjoh, 2004, p. 168).

Dei (2000), on the other hand, points out that the problem arises from dichotomizing traditional and modern knowledge as though they have no relation or impact on each other. Many writers tend to invoke the differences between IK and Western system of knowledge in order to explain what IK is. For example, they will state that IK is holistic, orally communicated, and experiential in nature and very much linked to spiritual and social values. Western system of knowledge is said to be compartmental, written, theoretical and value free. However, Dei states that IK is affected by and affects other forms of knowledge, emphasizing the collaborative dimension of knowledge, which would seem to point to the need to integrate or synthesize the two systems of knowledge.

The knowledge economy is defined as a new order where knowledge is recognized as capital to be leveraged for development and prosperity through culture as a transmission vehicle. IK is relatively invisible in the knowledge economy. If IK has contributed to modern knowledge systems, then this has not been recognized. If participation in the knowledge economy is about leveraging one’s knowledge for some benefit then it can be said that Africans have not yet begun to leverage that IK especially in WIT. Instead, because much IK is in the public domain, it has been vulnerable to misappropriation. A pertinent question then arises that: “What lessons can be drawn for Zimbabwe, relating to the strength embedded in culture that will inform management of enterprises? Indeed, during this time of humbling results, volatility, and uncertainty, the world is looking for new sources of growth and alternative business models for achieving profitability. Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) argue that centralized pre-colonial institutions allowed some colonial and post-colonial African governments, successfully to implement ‘modernization’ programmes in rural areas by increasing the accountability of local chiefs (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson, (2003). Hjort (2010) support their argument that economic success is more likely in countries where post-colonial economic institutions are consistent with ‘pre-existing, informal arrangements’ (Gennaioli & Rainer, 2007). Hjort (2010) argue that emphasis should be on individual property rights, inter-ethnic unity,

and democratic traditions that developed in people in a nation, before and during the days of colonialism in shaping the post-colonial path, by contrasting economically important aspects of pre-colonial culture with those of colonial and postcolonial time.

**Endogenous cultural factors:** The findings of Miguel (2004) suggest that ethnic conflict should be seen as an endogenous variable in the development equation, albeit one that is clearly shaped by long-term historical forces. An exploration of the role of traditional Zimbabwean culture in the inception and solidification of national unity is called for. In sum, the main endogenous cultural factors in post-colonial Zimbabwe appear to have been: state legitimacy, democracy and good governance, property rights, a ‘culture of commerce’, and inter-ethnic unity.

**Exogenous/Intervening cultural factors:** The scope of the term culture to the anthropologist is illustrated by the elements included within the meaning of culture, are inclusive of: material culture-technology, economics divided into two parts, that is, technology and economics. Technology includes the techniques used in the creation of material goods; it is the technical know-how possessed by the people of a society. Language is a set of symbols used to assign and communicate meaning. Language is important for communication and passing on of traditions such as in wealth creation, innovation and technology. Etymology is thus a social product, for cognition and reality as embedded in culture. Social Institutions include social organization, education, and political structures that are concerned with the ways in which people relate to one another, organize their activities to live in harmony with one another, teach acceptable behaviour to succeeding generations, and govern themselves.

Within the category of humans and the universe-belief systems, are norms, religion (belief systems), superstitions, and their related power structures. The impact of norms and religion on the value systems of a society must not be underestimated. Religion impacts people's habits, their outlook on life. Religion is one of the most sensitive elements of a culture. Superstition plays a much larger role in a society's belief system. For example, in parts of Asia, soothsayers (a fundamental part of strategy implementation) are integral parts of certain cultures. Closely interwoven with the effect of people and the universe on a culture are its aesthetics, that is, aesthetics-graphic and arts, folklore, music, drama, and dance. These teach about cultural values promoting pride and unity.

**Ubuntu:** Ngunjiri (2010) intimates that the African worldview is sometimes described in terms of ubuntu – that is, the essence of being fully human. Slavery, Colonialism, Western education and missionary Christianity all but destroyed this cultural worldview, but conscious African men and women are finding a way to renegotiate their spiritual and African identity with Ubuntu in mind. Ngunjiri (2010) informs that Ubuntu is seen as solidarity, explaining how Africans are able to resolve their economic and social problems. Ubuntu values include solidarity, mutuality, generosity, and a commitment to the community wellbeing (Battle, 1997; Mbigi, 1996; Nafukho, 2006; Tutu, 1999). Ubuntu adds to our understanding of leadership praxis contributing to the leaders’ ability to build and sustain community. Ubuntu becomes a common denominator for Africans, much like Confucianism is for the Japanese and the Chinese, (Ndoda, Sikwila and Tukuta, 2013) an aspect of culture which can be reclaimed and implemented in organisations in Zimbabwe.

**Ambicultural Lessons in Management:** Ming-Jer and Miller (2012) indicated that the essence of Stan Shih’s approach to management, as is evident from Lin and Hou’s interview, has been to take the best from Chinese and Western philosophies and business practices while avoiding the negatives. This is called the “ambicultural” approach to management. An ambicultural manager is one who has taken profound learning from; absorbed the richness of; and enthusiastically embraced the best models of governance, leadership, and administration and has recognition of the shortcomings of the

prevailing business models to meet the challenges and complexities presented by globalization and emerging markets. As such, ambicultural perspective embraces the following tenets; an openness to new ways of thinking, and an ability to see the wisdom and strength in other cultural and business paradigms, an understanding that business cannot operate independently of social, geopolitical, environmental, and human needs, but must balance these diverse needs, an ability to transcend divisions around the globe, a dedication to integrating global awareness into everyday actions, an emphasis on unity and morality, an ability to balance social good and self-interest, an emphasis on trust-based and legal relationships, an equal appreciation for teamwork and individual stars and a commitment to continued learning, to sharing knowledge and experience with others in the interest of mutual improvement, ultimately, to reaching the pinnacles of professional achievement and humanity (Ming-Jer & Miller, 2010).

## **CONCLUSION**

If we examine the discussion above, a theme becomes clear. In bridging cultures, there is a need to pursue the best of both worlds, anchored in one's culture even when there are tensions between particular polarities (Ndoda, Sikwila & Tukuta 2013; Sikwila, Ndoda & Mosikari 2013; Luo & Rui, 2009; Bruton et al., 2008; Duncan, 1976). There is, in short, a need sometimes to integrate opposites, and that too must become part of an ambicultural orientation: social good *and* self-interest, trust-based *and* legal relationships, teamwork *and* individual achievement, risk taking *and* caution, business *and* society, locally sensitive *and* foreign (Ming-Jer & Miller, 2010; Paine, 2010). Of course, there are challenges and dangers in blending opposites—potential clashes between values, policies, departments, and people, or a scattershot approach that blends the wrong elements and forgoes the benefits of a complementary configuration (Miller, 1996). Therefore, there must be in place strong leadership with the ability to reconcile polarities and manage contradiction.

The leaders in Zimbabwe need to acquire and exhibit abilities - skills that extend well beyond cultural adaptability, being strategic yet hands-on; disciplined yet entrepreneurial; process oriented yet sensitive to people; authoritative yet nurturing; firm yet flexible; and action driven yet circumspect (Paine, 2010). Above all, they must have the intellectual dexterity to develop new frameworks and capabilities to meet Zimbabwe's particular circumstances. In the Eastern context, "paradox" implies a consideration not of individual parts and their existence in a state of conflict, but of the whole and how it *links* diverse and conflicting elements. It is a dynamic conception that seeks accommodation and inclusion—essentially, the balancing of paradoxical tendencies (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). One of its principal tenets is holism, the idea of a self-other integration in which "self" and "other" are interdependent opposites that can only be defined as a pair and together form a totality (Chen, 2001). The two opposing ideas represent danger and opportunity. To turn the current economic and administrative challenges for Zimbabwe into opportunities, our call to educators and scholars is to contribute to the development of ambicultural professionals at all levels who can engage in critical and independent thinking and thereby draw on the ideals of enlightenment, balance, and transcendence. Enlightenment opens up opportunities for richer and more expansive new paths of scholarly, managerial, and human pursuits. Balance calls for identifying commonalities and relationships, applying universalities from setting to setting, and integrating extremes. Transcendence offers the ability to comprehend paradigmatic differences, similarities, and interrelationships. Ambicultural managers and entrepreneurs who enact these ideals will make our world and Zimbabwe, not simply smaller but better (Ming-Jer & Miller, 2010).

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

1. Gladys Ruvimbo Ndoda (DPhil CM-SM, University of Zimbabwe), a Senior Lecturer at Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT), is a 'Pracademic' with vast experience obtained from various capacities inclusive of: General Manager Hotel Operations; General Manager R&D; has initiated & operated from conception, a viable business hotel school; and has taught and served in various universities. Publications have been on strategic management.
2. Mike Nyamazana Sikwila (PhD, University of Bath, England), is a Senior Lecturer at Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT). He has supervised several post-graduate students at universities in Zimbabwe and SA. He has held post of Director of Policy and Plan formulation for Government of Zimbabwe. Publications have been on monetary policy and foreign investment.