

**THE ASIAN WAY OF HIRING:
A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON**

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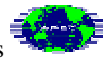
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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the Asian economy prior to 1997 was partially attributed to the thriving small and medium-size enterprises in many Asian countries. The key to learn their secrets of success resides in a better understanding of the “Asian way” of managing human resources, particularly how they recruit talented new employees. With this purpose in mind, we analyzed the data on hiring practices gathered from nine different countries using the Best Practices (BP) Survey instrument. These nine countries include two clusters. The Asian cluster consists of Chinese Taipei, PRC, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea. The North American cluster is made of three nations: United States, Canada, and Mexico. Hiring practices in Australia were also examined, as this country is geographically close to Far East yet has an Anglo-dominant culture. In contrast with the common belief that the recruiting practices are relatively uniform across different nations in comparison with other human resource subareas, we found significant cross-national differences in terms of recruiting criteria and procedures. Among all the ten items used in BP survey, only two were found to be universally important as they were consistently rated high for both "is now" and "should be" situations in almost all the nine countries. The other eight items reflected a high degree of culture-driven divergence and, for these items, we found significant gaps between "is now" and "should be" situations. Our results of data analysis also suggest that the Asian cluster is not as homogeneous as we expected in terms of the hiring criteria actually used.

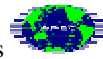


Selecting the most qualified persons to fill job vacancies seems to be a universal goal for both human resource and line managers around the world, as a mismatch between jobs and people in the first place could dramatically reduce the effectiveness of other HRM functions (Dunnette & Borman, 1979; Florkowski & Schuler, 1994; Mendenhall, 1987). However, few would expect the hiring practices used in different cultural environments to be the same. The success of some Asian economies has been partly attributed to the "Asian values," which emphasize thrift, hard working, family ties, and other time-honored virtues. Unfortunately, as researchers scramble to find explanations for the rapid expansion of the Asian economy before 1997 -- sometimes labeled as the "Asian miracle" -- little work has focused on the hiring practices commonly used in the Asia Pacific region, which could hold the key to understanding the secrets of success of Asian countries where small and mid-size enterprises have thrived for years.

Paucity of research in this subject area may have stemmed partially from a parochial orientation of conventional organization studies, which has been criticized as a major shortcoming of management research in North America (Boyacigilar & Nadler, 1991). Such a parochialism continued to drive the "mainstream" research even after HRM scholars gradually started to recognize the importance of strategic human resource management in the international context (Lengnick Hall & Lengnick Hall, 1988). Some researchers examined the human resource management issues from a

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As we look into the Asian way of hiring, two fundamental questions have caught our attention. First, do significant differences exist between Asian countries and the rest of the world in terms of commonly used hiring practices? If so, what are these differences? Although few would expect human resource managers around the world to recruit new employees in the same way, it is reasonable to assume that certain practices are more ubiquitously used by organizations of various nationalities. Apparently, the degree of "ubiquity" characterizing each selection criterion is a critical issue that cannot be adequately addressed on the basis of pure theoretical arguments. Rather, it requires an empirical examination in the prevalence of each selection criterion



used in both Asia and the Western world.

The second question is whether people agree that there are some universally desirable selection criteria that can be used for recruiting new employees in any continent. This question would differ little from the first one if all selection criteria practically used in all organizations were also viewed as highly desirable by all organizational members. We know, however, by observing real organizations that such a consensus rarely exists; no matter how judiciously the personnel selection criteria were set by the human resource department, some employees would complain about the inequity caused by the hiring practices. Even in the most democratic organizations, personnel selection criteria are rarely set through a consensus generation process; more likely, they are a result of the trials and errors over the years, bound by legal requirements, and subject to many other institutional constraints. As such, the degree of "universality," or the extent to which a selection criterion is universally desirable, ought to be treated as a separate issue from ubiquity.

In this paper, we attempt to address these two issues by comparing the hiring practices in nine countries. Five of them are located in Asia, including Chinese Taipei, PRC, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea. Three countries in North America, USA, Canada, and Mexico, were selected, too. These two clusters of countries may reveal a sharp contrast in hiring practices between two continents across the Pacific Ocean. In addition, we selected Australia as a middle-ground representative, as this country is geographically close to Asia Pacific region but has been known for its Anglo-dominant culture.

The fact that both developed countries and developing ones were included in our sample promises an interesting comparison, as IHRM practices in these two categories of nations could differ dramatically from each other (Napier & Vu, 1998). In general, small and medium enterprises thrive in developing countries while large multinational corporations tend to dominate the economies of developed ones. Similarities and dissimilarities of selection criteria that are either actually used or strongly preferred by employees in these places could, in our opinions, reveal valuable information about the convergence or divergence of personnel selection practices in either Asia or North America. The empirical study was part of a large-scale, multinational research project conducted by a consortium of international scholars with the purpose of identifying the "best" international human resource management practices (Von Glinow, 1993).

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Data were gathered by more than twenty scholars from nine countries, using the Best Practices (BP) survey as the measure instrument. The idea of conducting a multiple-year, multinational project on HRM practices was conceived in 1990 by Mary Ann Von Glinow and her colleagues in North America. As a result of one year's worth of collective effort, a standardized questionnaire was developed for the purpose of making cross-national comparisons. Since then, this research consortium has grown into a team of over thirty international scholars (Teagarden et al., 1995).



Although the wording "best" was used for the sake of highlighting our intention to benchmark HRM practices globally, we did not presume that the same HRM practices could be uniformly applied in all countries or cultural environments. With this caveat in mind, members of the BP project team developed the questionnaire with a combination of deductive and inductive methods. A literature review was first conducted to identify important hiring-related factors that have been recognized by HRM researchers in the past. Based on the results of the literature review, we designed the draft of the questionnaire and used it to survey a small group of managers who attended executive education programs at two different universities in the U.S. As we conducted the pilot survey, the participants were encouraged to either suggest items that they considered important but were missing in the original questionnaire or identify items that they considered redundant or noncritical.

In the meantime, we consulted with several experts in the area of cross-national HRM research in order to obtain their feedback on the relevance of individual items. After gathering all the feedback we could solicit, the consortium members then reevaluated the suitability of each item. Some items were added, deleted, or consolidated before the final version was readied for the official survey.

At the conclusion of this evolutionary process, it became clear to us that HRM practitioners usually care about both the technical and social calibers when they screen the job candidates. The evaluation of technical skills has two aspects. First, recruiters want to find out whether the job candidate *is able to* or *has the potential* to meet the technical requirements. This aspect was addressed by two items in our survey:

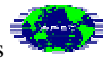
- A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (Q1)
- A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start (Q8)

The second aspect concerns whether the technical skills are directly tested or inferred from the past job experience. Another two items address this issue:

- An employment test in which the person needs to demonstrate the skills (Q6)
- Proven work experience in a similar job (Q7)

Likewise, the social caliber of the job candidate may be assessed on the basis of either interpersonal or interorganizational skills. In the work place, a person who can mingle with other organizational members and fit into the organizational culture is usually preferred. Moreover, if the person is well connected to either internal or external constituencies, there would be a higher likelihood that he or she could easily assimilate with the task environment. This aspect is addressed by the following items:

- A person's ability to get along well with others already working here (Q3)
- How well the person will fit the company's values and ways of doing things (Q9)



-- Having the right connections (e.g., school, family, friends, region, government, etc.) (Q4)

Aside from the importance of various aspects of social caliber, another critical issue is how the employers actually *assess* a job candidate's social caliber. The assessment method could be used for screening the candidates and socializing insiders simultaneously (Sutton & Louis, 1987). We identified two major methods:

--A personal interview (Q2)

--Future co-workers' opinions about the person (Q10)

To be sure, these two methods may be used for assessing both technical and social skills. However, since technical skills can be reliably measured by many other means, in practice the major role played by these two factors is more likely social than technical (Guion, 1987).

Finally, most managers may hope that, once a job candidate is hired, he or she will stay with the organization long enough so that their investments on recruiting, training, and socializing this person may pay off. Although this factor is not directly related to either technical or social caliber, it could affect the total "yield" of a hire, which may be viewed as a special form of capital spending. Naturally, managers always care about whether the anticipated ROI during the life span of a piece of human asset could justify the amount of time and money invested up front. Thus, we added one more factor:

--The company's belief that the person will stay with the company (e.g., five years or longer) (Q5)

A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a very great extent) was used in grading the responses. One special feature of the BP survey is that respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each one of these items affects the hiring decisions in their organizations in both "Is Now" and "Should Be" situations. Although we expected these two sets of responses to be correlated and both are subject to the influence of the national culture, we are convinced that the cultural impact on the "Is Now" condition is likely to be diluted by a large number of non-cultural factors, such as the past history of the organization, the industry structure, and the leadership style. By contrast, the "Should Be" condition is, theoretically, more susceptible to the impact of culture as it reflects organizational members' personal preferences. If we follow Hofstede's paradigm and define culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (Hofstede, 1980), it should not be surprising to find that people's preferences in this regard are heavily influenced by culture.

Although measuring organizational performance is not the main purpose of the BP project, we do believe that there is a positive relationship between the use of appropriate hiring practices and organizational effectiveness in general as perceived by



employees. For the purpose of measuring the perceived hiring effectiveness, we used three items:

- (a) The hiring practices help our company to have high-performing employees
- (b) The hiring practices help our company to have employees who are satisfied with their jobs
- (c) The hiring practices make a positive contribution to the overall effectiveness of the organization

These three items were also rated on a five-point Likert scale.

Results

Being aware of the potential systemic bias in the responses due to cultural differences, we decided not to directly compare the averaged item scores across nations. Instead, within each national/regional sample we merely identified three items with the highest ratings.

Comparison of the "Is Now" Conditions

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the "Is Now" responses, with the three top-ranking items in bold face. The nine countries or regions covered in the data analysis include Australia (AUS), Canada (CAN), People's Republic of China (PRC), Indonesia (IND), Japan (JPN), South Korea (KOR), Mexico (MEX), Chinese Taipei (TWN), and the United States (USA). A quick glance at Table 1 reveals that two selection criteria stand out as the most commonly used ones in all settings. The first one is "a person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job" (Q1) while the second one is "a personal interview" (Q2). The prevalence of Q1 should not be surprising as technical skills ought to be the ultimate yardstick of a person's qualification in a rational perspective. In fact, the more interesting finding is that Q1 was *not* among the top-three selection criteria actually used in Japan and Chinese Taipei. It probably reflects the predominance of non-technical criteria in these cultures, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

Insert Table 1 About Here

As an important personnel screening tool, job interview (Q2) was ranked among the top three factors in almost every country except PRC. Again, this fact indicates that few people would feel comfortable with making a job offer without seeing the candidate in person. Even in PRC, the relatively lower importance of Q2 may be due to practical difficulty rather than a deemphasis of personal acquaintance.

In the meantime, the other eight items seem to reflect significant cross-cultural differences, although a certain degree of clustering is also evident. For one thing, the

top three factors found in the people of Chinese Taipei and Japanese samples are identical. We think it is unlikely to be purely coincident. Rather, such a similarity may have reflected the cultural similarities, the intertwined histories in the past century, and close economic ties between these two countries. As a matter of fact, many industries in Chinese Taipei were started after World War II under the support of Japanese enterprises. Understandably, their human resource management systems were initially borrowed from Japan. The high importance of these three items (Q2, Q3, and Q8) also reflect the extra value placed on harmonious human relations by these two cultures.

Next to Q1 and Q2 in terms of prevalence of use is Q7, proven work experience in a similar job, which was ranked among top three by five countries. It is interesting to note that three of them are Anglo-culture countries (Australia, Canada, and the U.S.), although people in PRC also consider it very important.

Certain degrees of similarities were also found among other cultures, although the patterns of similarity are not very clear. For example, people in PRC, South Korea, and Indonesia seem to trust employment test (Q6) more than their counterparts in other nations do. Although the small sample size in most countries prevent us from confirming these similarities with full confidence, we do see potential effects of geographic proximity or cultural similarity on hiring practices in these countries or regions.

Comparison of the "Should Be" Conditions

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of "Should Be" ratings for the ten items in the nine countries. Overall, this table is similar to Table 1 only to the extent that Q1 and Q2 continue to be the most prevalent hiring criteria. The other eight items reflect varying patterns of similarities across different countries.

It is noteworthy that "a person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (Q1)" is ranked among top three "Should Be" conditions in *all* the nine nations, confirming the universal desirability of using technical skills as the selection criterion. As a "Should Be" condition, "a personal interview" (Q2) lost its top-three ranking status in Chinese Taipei and South Korea and continue to be out of the top-three category in PRC. Interestingly, all these three countries are located in East Asia. We should not infer from this finding that interpersonal relations are unimportant in these nations. Rather, it is more likely that managers in these countries have found other yardsticks to assess a person's non-technical characters, thereby making the use of interview less necessary.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Aside from Q1 and Q2, the eighth item, "a person's potential to do a good job" (Q8) is the third most prevalent "Should Be" factor in our multinational sample. It is



ranked as top three by four countries: PRC, Japan, South Korea, and Chinese Taipei. The "Asian flavor" is quite clear as all of them are located in Asia. In the meantime, since this item was ranked among top three only by respondents in Chinese Taipei and Japan for the "Is Now" condition, we can see a gap between ideal and reality in the other two countries; that is, this item is viewed as very important ideally but has not been treated as important in practice.

Other items are valued differently by countries in a way inconsistent with the "Is Now" conditions as well. For instance, a person's ability to get along well with others (Q3) is viewed as very important by South Korea, Chinese Taipei, and the U.S., but only in Chinese Taipei is it also considered one of the top three criteria in actually used hiring practices. Employment test (Q6) is among top-three criteria in PRC, Indonesia, and Mexico, but in our sample only PRC and Indonesia treat it as a top-three factor in practice. As mentioned earlier, "proven work experience" (Q7) was among the top-three criteria in five countries in light of "Is Now" condition, but it was not recognized as a top-three "Should Be" criterion in any country or region.

The ninth item (Q9), how well the person will fit the company's values and ways of doing things, was ranked among top three "Should Be" factors only by Australia and Canada, but neither country ranked it so high for "Is Now" situations.

It is also noteworthy that four items in the BP questionnaire were not ranked by any national subsample as top-three "Should Be" practices. These four items are: having the right connections (Q4), likelihood of staying in the company for the long haul (Q5), proven work experience in a similar job (Q7), and future coworkers' opinions about this person (Q10). All these factors are either relatively intangible or highly subjective. Understandably, even though they might affect the hiring decisions in practice, few people would suggest that they ought to be formally considered.

Comparison of Country Profiles

In order to make it easier to see the gap between "Is Now" and "Should Be" conditions, we also compiled a table that lists the top-three items on a nation-by-nation basis.

Insert Table 3 About Here

An interesting phenomenon that strikes us is, the "top three" profiles for Australia and Canada are identical. Apparently, this similarity can be attributed to the common cultural roots of these two nations as well as their historical ties with the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Table 3 also reflects the gap between reality and ideal in each nation. For instance, the actual hiring practices used in Japan seem to emphasize a person's potential and interpersonal skills, but the Japanese respondents did recognize the

importance of technical skills required by the job. That's why, although Q1 was not among their top-three "Is Now" factors, it was one of the top-three "Should Be" factors for recruiting. The commonality of Australian and Canadian "top-three" profiles also reflects a common gap between reality and ideal for these two nations. Specifically, proven work experience is an important selection criterion in these two nations in the "Is Now" situation. When it comes to the "Should Be" situation, however, a good fit with the company's values and ways of doing things becomes more crucial.

Likewise, in the case of Mexico, having the right personal connections is one of the top three hiring factors in practice, but the use of a more objective employment test is viewed as very desirable in a "Should Be" situation. A personal interview is a very crucial step in the actually used hiring procedure in Chinese Taipei, but people in Chinese Taipei respondents seem to believe that job-related technical skills ought to be a more important selection criterion.

Among other countries/regions, our Indonesian sample has shown a better match between reality and ideal -- the top three factors for the "Is Now" situation are also the top three for "Should Be" situation -- while the reality-ideal gaps for South Korea appear to be relatively large. One reason why these gaps deserve our attention is that they may point to the likely direction of change, or the trend, in a nation's prevalent hiring practices. For instance, although proven work experience is ranked by our U.S. respondents as one of the top three most important hiring factors, its position was replaced by the ability to get along with others already working here in the "Should Be" part. We should not be surprised if American human resource managers start to deemphasize the past work experience but give heavier weight to interpersonal skills in the future.

Effects of Recruiting Practices on Organizational Effectiveness

The last but not the least important question we try to answer is: Do hiring practices really matter? In other words, are those personnel selection criteria examined by us tied to the overall organizational performance? To address this issue, we did a multiple regression analysis with the three aforementioned measures of perceived effectiveness as the dependent variables. The results are shown in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 About Here

Although most factors are not statistically significant due to the inherent collinearity problem of using the five-point Likert scales, the F and R^2 values listed at the bottom of the table, reflecting the explained variation in the dependent variables, may still reveal useful information about the relative importance of hiring practices in affecting organizational effectiveness in each country. Overall, all samples yield significant F values for the three measures of hiring effectiveness.

In the meantime, hiring practices account for organizational effectiveness in



these nations by varying degrees. Since the sample sizes vary wildly across nations and smaller samples tend to yield larger R^2 values when everything else is equal, we have to use the F value and R^2 together to evaluate the power of these regression models. In light of these two indicators, Mexico, South Korea, and Chinese Taipei seem to demonstrate the highest impacts of hiring practices; that is, the relationship between hiring practices and perceived organizational effectiveness is clearest in these nations. Interestingly, Chinese Taipei and South Korea are two of the "four little tigers" in Asia while Mexico may be the new little tiger in North America. Although we do not have data gathered from two other little "tigers" in Asia (Hong Kong and Singapore), it seems likely that the best human resource management practices model would work best in those fast-growing, developing economies.

DISCUSSION

The empirical results of analyses generated from our multinational data set are more complicated than we expected and do not lend themselves to any coherent theoretical interpretations. As hypothesized at the beginning of this paper, if culture has any impact on recruiting practices, its impact is more likely manifested in the "Should Be" rather than "Is Now" conditions. Our empirical findings, however, do not seem to support this hypothesis. In fact, we suspect that the striking similarities among the U.S., Australia, and Canada in terms of "Is Now" conditions could be attributed to their common Anglo roots. Interestingly, the profile of Mexico differs from that of the U.S. or Canada despite the fact that it is also located in North America probably owing to its Hispanic cultural root.

Among Asian nations, the striking similarity between Japan and Chinese Taipei in terms of "Is Now" conditions may reflect the close historical and cultural ties between these two nations in the past one hundred years. Even when we compare the "Should Be" conditions, the similarities among Chinese Taipei, Japan, and South Korea are still impressive. However, the situation at the People's Republic of China seems to be one of a kind; its profile appears to be positioned somewhere between Asia and North America -- which may be attributed to a combination of fifty years of implementation of socialism and twenty years of economic reforms (Cyr & Frost, 1991; Holton, 1985; Warner, 1993; Zhu & Dowling, 1994).

Although little research in the past has directly focused on the cross-national difference of hiring practices, we could still find some partial explanations by examining the evolutionary process of human resource management practices in different countries. For instance, Shelton (1995) reviewed the HRM system in Australia and detected a perceived need to "move from a centralized industrial relations system to a decentralized system focused around enterprise-based employment agreements" (p. 52), which relies heavily on a massive increase in the extent and frequency of joint consultation between employers and employees at the enterprise level. If that is indeed the new trend in the Australian HRM system, we can easily understand why our Australian respondents have ranked the good fit with the corporate values and ways of doing things so high. As a matter of fact, in recent years federal legislation has been introduced to shift the focus of industrial relations to the enterprise level,

indicating that the Australian system has indeed moved toward decentralization (Gough, 1996).

We suspect that a similar transition is also going on in Canada. Moore and his colleagues conducted some surveys with human resource departments in Canada and noticed that the role of HR department has changed or grown since early 1990s. Such a development is often attributed to the HR department's taking on greater responsibilities and handling these in a more professional manner (Moore & Jennings, 1995; Moore & Robinson, 1989). As such, we may expect to see an increasing desire to recruit new employees whose personal value systems are compatible with the company's culture.

The heavy emphasis placed by Japanese companies on a person's potential and his/her ability to get along with others may be traced to their renowned life-time employment system. As noted by some researchers (e.g., Pucik, 1984), large Japanese organizations usually conduct recruitment and selection on a yearly basis and tend to hire a cohort of fresh school graduates annually in April rather than conduct recruitment throughout the year as vacancies arise. This phenomenon reflects the importance of *wa* (or harmonious human relations) in Japan and is perfectly consistent with our findings, since people from the same schools would find it easier to develop a smooth interpersonal relationship within a team due to their common educational backgrounds.

The relatively low weight given to job-related skills as a selection criterion that we observed should not be surprising, either, in light of findings of the past research on Japanese management. Morishima (1995) points out that important selection criteria used by Japanese firms revolve around trainability or ability to learn rather than the ability to execute tasks and duties. In a survey conducted by Fujiwara (1993), even for white-collar technical employees, fewer than 10% of the firms reported primarily emphasizing "technical expertise" for selection, with even smaller percentages for blue-collar workers and white-collar administrative employees. This might be the reason why Q1 was not ranked among the top three selection criteria by our Japanese respondents. Nonetheless, the technical-skill item was indeed ranked as a top-three criterion for the "Should Be" situation, probably because the deep recession experienced by the Japanese industry in the past ten years has urged Japanese managers to reevaluate their past hiring practices, thereby recognizing the importance of job skills as a factor in hiring decisions.

We also see some similarity between Korean and Japanese hiring systems. Although no lifetime employment system has been adopted by any large firms in South Korea, organizations in both nations seem to deemphasize proven work experience and prefer hiring new graduates out of schools. A study conducted by Koch, Nam, and Steers (1995) clearly shows that in Korea most applicants for white-collar jobs must pass company-sponsored entrance examinations that typically include English-language proficiency in addition to knowledge both in a major field and in general abilities or common sense. This is consistent with our finding that employment tests are considered crucial in the "Is Now" situation in South Korea. Koch et al. (1995) also found that employee referral is widely used for recruiting blue-collar employees in



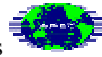
South Korea. This practice may explain why a personal interview has been found to be crucial in our Korean respondents' "Is Now" conditions -- oftentimes it is the only screening tool used by the employers in filling blue-collar positions.

Our findings with the Chinese Taipei sample are in general consistent with what has been reported by Farh (1995). However, Farh also points out that the hiring practices used in the public sector are dramatically different from the counterparts in the private sector. Since our sample of Chinese Taipei is primarily made of employees in the private sector, the findings are naturally more similar to what has been reported by the past studies in this sector. For instance, Huang (1992) has found that job interview is a very crucial part of the personnel selection process. We found that a personal interview is indeed among the top three "Is Now" hiring criteria in the sample of Chinese Taipei.

In spite of the striking similarities that we have found between Japan and Chinese Taipei in hiring practices, we can still see a couple of crucial differences between these two systems. First, because of a shortage of skilled technical employees, many employers in Chinese Taipei obtain experienced personnel by hiring them away from competitors with more attractive offers (Farh, 1995). This phenomenon is common not only in Chinese Taipei but also in all developing countries, particularly as employees consider the companies they work for as "training grounds" (Napier & Vu, 1998). By contrast, in Japan it is strictly a taboo for a large company to steal talented employees away from its competitors.

Second, although familism plays a central role in staffing for both the firms of Chinese Taipei and Japan, owners of many companies in Chinese Taipei tend to plug their relatives into important corporate executive positions while Japanese firms are less likely to do so (cf. Cheng, 1991; Farh, 1995; Peng, 1989). This phenomenon was not mirrored by our empirical findings about Chinese Taipei as it applies only to a few privileged organizational members. In a sense, the wording "familism" means different things in Japan and Chinese Taipei. In Chinese Taipei it implies primarily appointments of relatives and family members for crucial positions while in Japan it is largely referred to a "whole life concern" displayed by employers for their employees.

Finally, we found that the currently prevalent hiring practices in the U.S. seem to consider the job interview performance, technical skills, and proven work experience as the most important selection criteria. This is hardly surprising in light of the past research on American HRM systems (Jennings & Moore, 1995). Nonetheless, in our U.S. sample, "the ability to get along with others already working here" replaces "proven work experience" as one of the top-three hiring factors, probably reflecting a trend toward deemphasizing the past work experience. Indeed, a recent article in the *Fortune* magazine clearly points out that a person's past work experience is no longer highly valued in the U.S. industry as in the past, while a person's potential to become a competent manager in the future has become an increasingly important selection criterion (Munk, 1999).



CONCLUSION

Any conclusion made at this juncture should be viewed as tentative. The BP project group is still in the process of collecting more data from more countries. We are convinced that the validity and reliability of our results will continually improve as we accumulate more data on this subject. In the meantime, we are afraid that in the field of international human resource management there is probably no such thing as a final conclusion anyway. As a former CEO of Apple Computer, John Sculley, once said: "In today's global economy, the only constant is change." It is plausible that the hiring practices in different nations are also undergoing major changes due to the globalization of modern industries. In spite of the lack of evidence supporting a coherent pattern of hiring practices that may be dubbed the "Asian way" of hiring, the trend toward convergence seems to be irresistible. This trend of convergence seems to be well in shape in light of the "Should Be" portion of our data. We also foresee an accelerated pace of global convergence in recruiting practices as a result of the advancement of contemporary information technology (e.g., Internet).

While the recruiting practices used in different countries are inching toward global convergence, we expect national cultures to continue affecting the hiring practices used in various countries (Yuen & Kee, 1993). Inasmuch as national cultures remain different, cross-national differences in HRM practices will continue to exist. As such, human resource managers still need to be culturally sensitive when devising the recruitment systems in various cultural environments. After all, the "best international human resource management practices" ought to be the ones *best* adapted to cultural and national differences.



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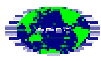


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Table 1 A Multinational Comparison of "Is Now" Conditions on Hiring Practices

	AUS	CAN	PRC	IND	JPN	KOR	MEX	TWN	USA
Q1	4.10* (.73)	4.08 (.68)	3.76 (.82)	3.58 (.90)	3.01 (.97)	3.22 (.94)	3.39 (1.02)	3.53 (.86)	3.98 (.83)
Q2	4.22 (.76)	4.18 (.72)	3.27 (.83)	3.55 (.89)	3.62 (.91)	3.31 (.89)	3.77 (1.06)	3.55 (.78)	4.17 (.85)
Q3	3.47 (.97)	3.44 (.90)	3.34 (.78)	3.13 (.87)	3.13 (.88)	3.18 (.95)	3.03 (1.07)	3.50 (.84)	3.45 (1.09)
Q4	1.74 (1.01)	2.06 (.96)	3.16 (1.00)	2.69 (1.22)	2.57 (1.09)	2.50 (1.03)	3.26 (1.21)	3.19 (.98)	2.66 (1.29)
Q5	2.73 (1.07)	3.06 (1.06)	3.25 (.91)	2.95 (1.04)	2.87 (1.05)	2.98 (1.02)	2.79 (1.24)	3.48 (.89)	2.76 (1.05)
Q6	2.31 (1.16)	2.34 (1.24)	3.54 (.81)	3.27 (1.09)	2.91 (1.05)	3.34 (.93)	3.02 (1.24)	3.49 (.80)	1.91 (1.01)
Q7	3.80 (.87)	3.82 (.83)	3.56 (.79)	3.05 (.98)	2.59 (1.10)	2.75 (1.01)	3.11 (1.17)	3.47 (.82)	3.68 (.93)
Q8	3.09 (.98)	3.10 (1.01)	3.35 (.87)	3.08 (.73)	3.14 (.94)	2.94 (.99)	3.15 (1.04)	3.71 (.81)	2.97 (.93)
Q9	3.61 (.96)	3.58 (.94)	3.31 (.85)	3.14 (.86)	2.94 (.89)	3.11 (.97)	3.23 (1.07)	3.39 (.83)	3.44 (1.11)
Q10	1.87 (.99)	1.94 (.98)	2.82 (.93)	2.46 (1.09)	2.12 (1.04)	2.22 (.98)	2.32 (1.18)	2.94 (.98)	2.42 (1.18)
N	436	124	521	237	502	234	479	237	143

* Standard errors are in parentheses.

**Table 2 A Multinational Comparison of "Should Be" Conditions on Hiring Practices**

	AUS	CAN	PRC	IND	JPN	KOR	MEX	TWN	USA
Q1	4.19* (.72)	4.31 (.64)	4.36 (.68)	4.16 (.66)	3.77 (.94)	4.16 (.69)	4.57 (.65)	4.21 (.68)	4.40 (.62)
Q2	3.99 (.85)	4.10 (.81)	3.56 (.85)	3.93 (.70)	4.00 (.77)	3.88 (.74)	4.30 (.88)	3.91 (.67)	4.19 (.78)
Q3	3.71 (.89)	3.94 (.76)	3.71 (.80)	3.82 (.77)	3.57 (.84)	4.12 (.75)	3.71 (1.20)	4.13 (.64)	4.14 (.71)
Q4	1.31 (.64)	1.41 (.61)	2.96 (1.20)	1.88 (1.06)	2.54 (1.15)	1.82 (1.05)	3.31 (1.32)	3.33 (1.01)	1.80 (.91)
Q5	2.72 (1.12)	3.10 (1.12)	3.58 (.91)	3.67 (.97)	3.27 (1.09)	3.99 (.93)	3.73 (1.20)	4.02 (.75)	2.93 (1.05)
Q6	3.25 (1.06)	3.03 (1.19)	3.96 (.72)	4.04 (.75)	3.11 (.93)	3.55 (.92)	4.42 (.74)	4.04 (.67)	2.80 (1.28)
Q7	3.82 (.87)	3.93 (1.00)	3.91 (.84)	3.50 (1.09)	3.00 (1.10)	3.31 (1.00)	4.23 (.89)	3.88 (.73)	4.01 (.80)
Q8	3.60 (.90)	3.58 (.96)	3.92 (.78)	3.82 (.70)	3.80 (.86)	4.12 (.75)	4.18 (.78)	4.31 (.58)	3.67 (.87)
Q9	3.99 (.84)	4.10 (.76)	3.76 (.81)	3.89 (.79)	3.20 (.94)	4.09 (.78)	4.23 (.86)	4.00 (.70)	4.10 (.82)
Q10	2.54 (1.11)	2.71 (1.14)	3.11 (1.01)	2.64 (1.16)	2.60 (1.09)	3.16 (.99)	3.18 (1.29)	3.50 (.91)	3.38 (1.02)
N	435	124	483	233	500	224	471	236	142

* Standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 3 Three Top-Ranking "Is Now" and "Should Be" Factors in Each Country/Region (In Order of Importance)

Nation/Region	"Is Now" Conditions	"Should Be" Conditions
Australia	(A) A personal interview (B) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (C) Proven work experience in a similar job	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) A personal interview (C) How well the person will fit the company's values and ways of doing things
Canada	(A) A personal interview (B) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (C) Proven work experience in a similar job	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) A personal interview (C) How well the person will fit the company's values and ways of doing things
PRC	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) Proven work experience in a similar job (C) An employment test in which the skills	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) An employment test in which the person needs to demonstrate the skills (C) A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start
Indonesia	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) A personal interview (C) An employment test in which the person needs to demonstrate the skills	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) An employment test in which the person needs to demonstrate the skills (C) A personal interview
Japan	(A) A personal interview (B) A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start (C) A person's ability to get along well with others already working here	(A) A personal interview (B) A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start (C) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job

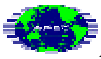


Table 3 Three Top-Ranking "Is Now" and "Should Be" Factors in Each Country/Region (In Order of Importance)
(*Continue*)

Nation/Region	"Is Now" Conditions	"Should Be" Conditions
Korea	(A) An employment test in which the person needs to demonstrate the skills (B) A personal interview (C) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) A person's ability to get along well with others already working here (C) A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start
Mexico	(A) A personal interview (B) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (C) Having the right connections (e.g., school, family, friends, region, government, etc.)	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (B) An employment test in which the person needs to demonstrate the skills (C) A personal interview
Chinese Taipei good	(A) A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start (B) A personal interview (C) A person's ability to get along well with others already working here	(A) A person's potential to do a good job, even if the person is not that good when they first start (B) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of the job (C) A person's ability to get along well with others already working here
USA	(A) A personal interview (B) A person's ability to perform the the technical requirements of job (C) Proven work experience in a similar job	(A) A person's ability to perform the technical requirements of job (B) A personal interview (C) A person's ability to get along well with others already working here

TABLE 4 Relationships Between Hiring Practices and Effectiveness Measure

(A) Dependent Variable: Hiring practices help recruit high performing employees

	<u>USA</u>	<u>CAN</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>JPN</u>	<u>KOR</u>	<u>MEX</u>	<u>TWN</u>	<u>USA</u>
Q1	.132**	.199*	.227***	.195**	.228***	.176**	.243***	.071	.393***
Q2	-.055	-.061	.005	.174**	.121**	.009	.023	.069	.035
Q3	.124*	.156	.010	.107	.117*	.118	.147***	.049	.116
Q4	-.269***	-.296***	-.072	.013	.025	-.081	-.081*	-.063	-.126
Q5	-.121**	-.020	.075	.145*	.087*	.164**	.053	.151*	.098
Q6	.164***	.273***	.163**	.218**	.094*	.230***	.209***	.139*	-.043
Q7	.089	.067	.102*	-.089	-.086*	.098*	.134**	.149*	.005
Q8	.101*	.024	.052	.127	.089	.003	.035	.018	.035
Q9	.165***	.177*	-.010	-.043	.019	.247***	.095*	.035	.141
Q10	.016	.165*	.081	-.011	.132**	.042	.023	.282***	.103
F	13.973***	6.160***	14.849***	10.909***	15.094***	23.449***	26.510***	14.678***	8.522***
R ²	.251	.355	.249	.343	.241	.517	.379	.409	.396
N	428	122	458	219	486	229	444	222	140

* p < .05
 ** p < .01
 *** p < .001

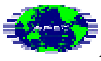


TABLE 4 Relationships Between Hiring Practices and Effectiveness Measures
(*Continue*)

(B) Dependent Variable: Hiring practices help improve job satisfaction

	<u>AUS</u>	<u>CAN</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>JPN</u>	<u>KOR</u>	<u>MEX</u>	<u>WNTWN</u>	<u>USA</u>
Q1	.083	.164*	.134*	.189*	.226***	.082	.172***	.041	.221**
Q2	-.031	-.041	-.033	.116	.065	.050	-.075	.081	-.111
Q3	.132**	.175*	.071	.053	.099*	.066	.092*	.009	.217*
Q4	-.301***	-.213**	-.025	.024	-.019	-.055	-.069	-.056	-.221**
Q5	-.034	.065	.113*	.129*	.095*	.176**	.140***	.209**	.040
Q6	.112**	.158*	.123*	.069	.068	.197***	.200***	.199**	.054
Q7	.062	.114	.079	-.066	-.054	.115*	.100*	.048	.038
Q8	.144**	-.004	.015	.191**	.125*	.067	.088	.003	.113
Q9	.101*	.327***	.125*	.047	.010	.204**	.024	.048	.091
Q10	.091*	.109	.014	-.048	.150***	.077	.126**	.239***	.150*
F	13.206***	7.229***	10.488***	6.350***	13.048***	15.783***	18.046***	12.098***	6.438***
R ²	.240	.392	.191	.233	.216	.419	.294	.363	.331
N	428	122	453	219	485	229	444	222	140

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

TABLE 4 Relationships Between Hiring Practices and Effectiveness Measures
(*Continue*)

(C) Dependent Variable: Hiring practices help improve overall organizational effectiveness

	<u>AUS</u>	<u>CAN</u>	<u>PRC</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>JPN</u>	<u>KOR</u>	<u>MEX</u>	<u>TWN</u>	<u>USA</u>
Q1	.054	.060	.215***	.223**	.201***	.141*	.256***	.101	.251**
Q2	-.022	.054	.028	.185**	.065	.039	-.039	.059	.040
Q3	.127**	.182*	.045	.044	.160***	.175*	.104**	.102	.122
Q4	-.288***	-.303***	-.088	.075	.003	-.013	-.034	-.004	-.277***
Q5	-.079	.010	.090	.129*	.072	.107	.018	.069	.042
Q6	.068	.248**	.077	.086	.114**	.170**	.180***	.194**	.012
Q7	.049	.127	.092	.059	-.064	.082	.124**	.124*	-.039
Q8	.160***	.023	.037	.170*	.122*	.059	.098*	.046	.054
Q9	.141**	.239**	.009	-.119	.018	.218**	.064	-.003	.216**
Q10	.113*	.144	.125*	-.077	.104*	-.021	.121**	.264***	.165*
F	13.370***	7.371***	13.018***	7.142***	14.406***	15.691***	24.554***	14.907***	9.075***
R ²	.242	.397	.224	.254	.233	.417	.362	.413	.411
N	428	122	460	220	485	229	443	222	140

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001