Work Group Orientation of Industrial Workers: A Japan-U.S. Gender Comparison

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This study examines the empirical validity of the uniqueness of Japanese employees’ group orientation on the basis of the Japan-U. S. gender comparisons of individual work attitudes. The study investigates the persistence of cultural and gender discrepancies in group attitudes when considering structural factors of work. Analyses of the data from Japanese and American manufacturing employees suggest that job structures, in particular the degree to which team work is required and the level of intrinsic job rewards, are important determinants of work group attitudes for employees in Japan and the United States. The findings, however, indicate that gender and nationality differences in work group orientations do not necessarily stem from the fact that jobs are differently structured for men and women in organizations in the two countries. The possibility of cultural embeddedness of individual affective work orientations is discussed.

Introduction

Ever since James Abegglen’s work The Japanese Factory (1958), the extraordinary collective identification that Japanese workers exhibit has been one of the most pervasive research topics in organizational analysis and industrial psychology. While a general consensus seems to exist that unusually strong group orientation is distinctive of Japanese industrial workers, there are several methodological problems in prior research.

First, the past studies almost exclusively focused attention on the group attitudes of Japanese male workers, whereas the female workers’ reactions have been totally ignored. As is well documented, the number of Japanese employed women has significantly increased during the past decade (Japan Ministry of Labor, 1989). In 1980, there were 11.7 million Japanese employed female workers, and this number increased to 16.7 million by 1988. Although the ratio of women in production jobs has somewhat declined in recent years (26.6% in 1970 and 21.1% in 1988), the figure is relatively higher compared to most other advanced industrial nations (Carney and O’Kelly, 1990). These facts reveal that female workers are now an integral part of the Japanese economy, and thus the exploration of the female labor consciousness is essential for the understanding of modern labor relations in Japan.

Secondly, despite the repeatedly stressed distinctiveness of Japanese collective orientation, deliberate international comparisons to validate this global-level uniqueness have been rare (see Koike, 1988 for critique). Most prior research that touched upon cross-national issues of worker orientation has been somewhat speculative and often remains obscured or subject to debate.

Finally, the concept “group orientation” has been monolithically operationalized in past empirical research. The concept has been mainly operationalized in prior research (e.g., Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1985; Marsh and Mannari, 1976) as workers’ psychological attachment to the employer or the organization, rather than workers’ immediate work group. In the sense that factory workers normally belong to a narrowly construed group such as line teams and QC circles, along
with the broadly construed group, i.e., the firm itself, reducing the concept of group orientation solely to worker commitment to the organization is imperfect. Also it is important to define carefully what work group orientation means. We need a comprehensive definition of the concept, including not only personal preference for group task performance but also workers’ conformity attitudes towards other members of the group. This research will address the weaknesses in prior research by directly comparing the work group-oriented attitudes among factory men and women in the United States and Japan. Specifically, it addresses several questions: (1) Are Japanese factory workers more group-oriented than American factory workers? (2) Are Japanese factory workers generally group-oriented, or is their orientation gender-specific? (3) How do circumstances of work affect group orientation for both American and Japanese factory workers?

Significance of Japan-U.S. Comparison

A comparative research of Japanese and American workers is important for two reasons. First, while Japanese management practices have received a great deal of attention in both the popular press and professional literature in the 1980’s, the general tendency has been to stress the cultural embeddedness of Japanese business. As Japan became more powerful in the world capitalist economy, however, investigation of the universality, rather than cultural specificity, of Japanese management has become imperative. A cross-national comparison in this area is essential to understand if what is believed to be unique to the Japanese is truly absent among other nationalities.

The second importance lies in the gender aspect of Japan-U.S. comparisons. Although Japanese female workers more and more resemble their American counterparts in terms of their rates of labor force participation and demographic traits, a deliberate comparison of their social psychological experiences at work may reveal significant differences. Women’s perception of work can vary between the two nations despite the fact that the concrete indicators of their work have begun to converge. Whereas Japanese social norms that govern gender roles and marriage behaviors are persistently influential, the United States has experienced during the past several decades a drastic normative change in the gender relations. This suggests that despite the emerging surface-level similarities between Japanese and American working women, they may indeed experience distinct normative constraints, and as a result they may perceive work quite differently.

Background

In earlier works about Japan, considerable importance has been given to group membership in understanding Japanese social life (e.g., Nakane, 1970; Vogel, 1963). Frequently, Japanese groupism is contrasted with American individualism which rests upon personal orientation and self-reliance. This type of broad national characterization has been used, without deliberate assessment, to account for the differences in the industrial structures and organizations of work between the United States and Japan. Some observers of the Japanese economy have repeatedly stressed that the Japanese workers’ psychological group orientation is uniquely strong (e.g., Abegglen, 1958; Clark, 1979) and that it is one of the key background factors of Japan’s success. They have emphasized that this worker attitude reflects the traditional Japanese cultural values of group loyalty and devotion. In effect, Japan’s success has been mystified as a “culture’s consequence”. Meanwhile, America’s declining economy has been deemed to be a necessary consequence of the excessive pursuit of individual self-interest on the part of both employers and workers. This view has further developed into a broader advocacy of groupism over individualism. The main argument is that Japanese group values are superior to American individualistic values. More bluntly, the Japanese are diligent but the Americans are not industrious.

The deterministic culture-based explanation of Japanese groupism mystifies the whole process through which Japanese workers are motivated.
This seems dangerous in part because almost all the alternative explanations, e.g., organizational structures, are excluded in the culturalist discussion. Also the culturalist approach tends to put a disproportionate emphasis on the cross-national differences rather than the similarities. Most importantly, in a time when anti-Japanese sentiment is running high, this cultural determinism hinders international discussions that are indispensable for the mutual understanding of the United States and Japan. It may be more constructive to contrast the concrete attributes of American and Japanese workers, rather than the general cultural tendencies of the two countries.

In dealing with Japanese groupism, the question of who the dominant group-centered social actors are, and what motivates their group orientation, needs to be addressed. In past studies of Japanese organizations (Abegglen, 1958; Cole, 1979; Marsh and Mannari, 1976; Whitehill and Takezawa, 1968), limited attention has been given to this issue. Previous researchers have often assumed that dominant workers in Japan are men, while disregarding the women, as if they were simple social appendages of the men. These studies assume that groups have similar meanings to all participants, regardless of gender. In fact, in-depth studies that have explored Japanese women’s group orientation are almost nonexistent up to the present. Since little empirical evidence exists to support the assumption that Japanese women are oriented to groups to the same extent as men, we still do not know whether Japanese group orientation is a general socio-cultural phenomenon or whether it is a gender-specific phenomenon. Thus, one question that remains unclear is whether groupism is a form of general worker reaction to the social organization of work in Japan, or whether it evolves from the gendered organization of work. Succinctly stated, are Japanese women and men equally group-oriented, or is Japanese groupism male-specific? It must be investigated whether the “Japanese Way” is typical for everyone or if it describes only Japanese men whose organizational participation presupposes clearly split gender roles.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Three conceptual models provide potential explanations for gender/national differences in individual reactions to work: job model, gender model, and culturalist model. First, job model argues that individual differences in work attitudes are principally caused by the disparities in working conditions across workers (Kanter, 1977). According to this model, the characteristics of jobs themselves are more important than the personal characteristics of workers in determining individual work attitudes (Kohn et al., 1983). Kanter (1977) argues that organizational roles carry certain images of the types of persons that should occupy them, encouraging incumbents of the job positions/roles to turn into those types of persons. That is, positions in an organization carry with them different sets of constraints on the possibilities for incumbents to behave in a certain way and to expect certain job outcomes. This model has been frequently used to explain gender differences in work attitudes (e.g., Loscocco, 1990). Based on the assumption that the only source of gender differences is the work itself, this model predicts that if women and men are exposed to the same job characteristics, they should show similar attitudinal responses to them (Miller, 1980; Moore, 1985). Evidence supports the argument that women, as well as men, derive satisfaction from intrinsic job rewards, for example (Loscocco, 1990; Mansfield et al., 1988). Similarly, one could argue that cross-national disparities in worker attitudes can be reduced to the fact that structural features of work settings are different across countries.

In contrast, gender model and culturalist model present more static views on the processes through which worker attitudes are formed. The base argument of these models is that individual attitudes towards jobs are essentially shaped by the forces that are external to the work settings. The gender model of work attitudes (cf. Lorence, 1987; Loscocco, 1990) posits that differences in work attitudes between men and women arise from differential gender socializations. This model
assumes that men are raised to fill the social role of family economic provider, while women are socialized to accept the homemaker role as the primary source of their identity. This is the type of argument eminently developed by human capital theorists (e.g., Becker, 1985). Based on the gender model, some argue that women derive higher satisfaction from the social aspect of work, but do not value autonomy and achievement in their jobs as much as men do (Murray and Atkinson, 1981).

The culturalist model (cf. Nakane, 1970) holds that the ways individuals react to their jobs are a manifestation of the cultural values that are pervasive among actors in a given socio-cultural setting. According to this model, the traditional Japanese value of duty, loyalty, and devotion have been preserved intact since Tokugawa feudalism through the Meiji era to shape modern worker attitudes, management styles, and organizational structures in Japan. The culturalist theory ultimately argues that the elements of the Japanese enterprise community—a strong sense of duty and mutual dependency—are natural reflections of the embeddedness of Japanese organizations in the pervasive culture of Japanese society. Thus, group orientation is conceived as an exceptional cultural tendency of the Japanese nation. It is implied that group orientation is a given and diffuse trait of the Japanese as a whole, thus it would hardly be determined by any occupational and organizational conditions.

Given these theoretical approaches, the major goal of this research is to assess the theoretical expectations as to how group-oriented attitudes are formed among American and Japanese workers. This study draws on the job model, contrasting it with gender and culturalist models, to form its basic analytic framework. The following expectations derived from the job model will be tested quantitatively.

According to the reasoning of the job model, no gender and national differences should emerge in individual orientation to the work group when job characteristics of Japanese and American workers are the same. For instance, an employee’s group attitude may be determined by the degree to which team work is required of him/her to successfully perform the job. That is, individual differences in work group orientation may be caused by the fact that jobs are structured differently for employees in different locations of an organization, or for those in different social settings (cf. Koike, 1990). The job model predicts that when employees are in a setting where team work is required, they all should be equally group-oriented, irrespective of their gender and socio-cultural backgrounds. This prediction contradicts the view of gender and culturalist models, that employees bring certain values and attitudes towards work from outside the employment relationship. Thus, the following hypotheses emerge from the job model:

HYPOTHESIS 1a: Team work requirement positively affects work group orientation for Japanese and American employees of either gender, when other conditions are equal.

HYPOTHESIS 1b: The direct effects of gender and nationality are non-significant when team work requirement is held constant across individuals.

Intrinsic job rewards, or benefits that employees derive "from" task performance (Kalleberg, 1977), may also determine the level of individual orientation to the work group. Evidence exists that intrinsic rewards increase organizational and work commitment for both Japanese and American workers (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1985; 1990). As Seeman (1976) has argued, when one’s work is not fulfilling in itself, the work tends to be viewed instrumentally, as merely a means to the fulfillment of non-work needs. Seeman called this "self-estrangement". When one feels that his or her job is meaningless, work itself tends to become less important to his or her sense of self. As a result, the importance of the work group as his or her reference group should decrease. Thus based on the job model argument, one could predict that when employees are provided with sufficient amounts of intrinsic rewards, they would be equally group-oriented, irrespective of their gender and socio-cultural backgrounds. This prediction is, again, contradictory to the
assertions of gender and culturalist models. Thus, the following hypotheses emerge:

HYPOTHESIS 2a: Intrinsic job reward positively affects work group orientation for Japanese and American workers of either gender.

HYPOTHESIS 2b: The direct effects of gender and nationality are non-significant when intrinsic job reward is held constant across individuals.

The job model suggests that the effects of job characteristics on work group attitudes should be more pronounced than those of personal backgrounds. Individual attributes, such as educational attainment, marital status, and earnings, will exhibit lesser magnitudes of effects on one's attitudes towards a work group, compared with those of job attributes such as team work requirements and intrinsic job rewards. Thus, the following hypothesis emerges:

HYPOTHESIS 3: The effects of job characteristics are stronger than those of education, marital status, and earnings for both Japanese and American employees of either gender.

Methodology

Data

The data used in this study come from the Japan-U.S. comparative research conducted by James Lincoln and Arne Kalleberg between 1981-1983 (for details, see Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990). This study is perhaps the largest and most comprehensive survey ever conducted of American and Japanese manufacturing workers. The manufacturing plants studied were located in central Indiana (mostly the Indianapolis metropolitan area) and in the Atsugi area of Kanagawa prefecture. These two areas have a similar industry distribution and they are comparable in degrees of urbanization, proximity to major cities, etc.

The total sample size was 3,735 in Japan and 4,567 in the U.S.. Sixteen percent of the total population in the Atsugi sample was female (N=594) and 26% fell into this category in the Indiana sample (N=1,194). In the present analysis, missing cases on crucial variables reduced the effective sample size. The sample sizes were different for two dependent variables for each gender/nationality combination: 2,500 and 2418 for Japanese males, 488 and 468 for Japanese females, 2,866 for American males, and 998 and 1,000 for American females.

The sample largely comprises employees in production departments (on average 82% in Japan and 96% in the U.S.). The majority of employees surveyed are non-managerial/supervisory employees, although 34% of Japanese males are managers or supervisors. The average company tenure of American employees of either sex is approximately 11 years. A large tenure disparity exists between Japanese males (13 years) and Japanese females (6 years). The average firm size for American employees is 1,015, which is twice as large as that for Japanese employees (555). Over 70% of both Japanese and American males in this sample are married, while many more American females (57%) than Japanese females (43%) are married. The typical employee in this sample of either nationality and gender has a high school level education (see Table 1).

Weaknesses of the data should be mentioned. As noted above, the data information comes exclusively from manufacturing workers in restricted areas of the United States and Japan. Information on hours of work and race are not available in the data. There is no information on workers' family background (e.g., length of marriage, number of children, or the age of the youngest child). Japanese female workers are underrepresented, in contrast to the government statistics on female labor participation rate between 1981 and 1983 (39.1% on average).

Measures

All the attitudinal variables used in the analysis were measured on 5-point Likert-format scales, with higher values indicating greater amounts of each variable. The variables with missing values were substituted with the mean for that respondent's nationality and gender.

Work Group Orientation was measured by two separate items: (1) Group Work Preference (PREF): "When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself." (2) Group Priority
PRIOR: “I try to do my best for my work group even if it costs me.” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

Team work requirement was tapped by a single item, how closely the respondent must work closely with others to do the job well.

Intrinsic job reward was tapped by a scale which averaged four items, measuring whether the respondent thinks the job is meaningful and challenging, and the extent to which the respondent can see the results of the job, and use his or her own skills and knowledge on the job. The internal reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha) of the intrinsic reward scale was .49 for the Japanese male, .39 for the Japanese female, .68 for the American male, and .54 for the American female sample.

Tenure was measured by the appropriate number of years employed at the present firm.

Job rank and functional department were measured by the following dummy codes: 1 = manager or supervisor, 0 = worker; 1 = line or technical production, 0 = other.

Firm size was tapped by the number of employees in the plant.

Gender, nationality, and marital status were measured according to the following dichotomous codes: 1 = female, 0 = male; 1 = Japanese, 0 = American; 1 = married, 0 = unmarried.

Education was tapped by a 6-point scale, where 1 = elementary, 2 = some high school, 3 = high school graduate, 4 = some college, 5 = college graduate, 6 = more than B.A.

Income was measured by a proxy variable. A proxy of income had to be used because of a serious missing cases problem in the original variable measuring respondent’s yearly earnings. In constructing the proxy, the original earnings were used as the dependent variable, and this was regressed on the respondents’ firm identification number, job rank, age, marital status, education, and tenure. This multiple regression was separately performed for each gender/nationality combination. The variance in the dependent variable explained by these predictors was .64 for Japanese male, .47 for Japanese female, .49 for American male, and .42 for American female sample. Based on the coefficients obtained from these regressions, proxy income was computed for each gender/nationality group.

Statistical Procedure

The statistical analysis proceeded in two steps. First, overall gender/national differences were explored in the variables used in the analysis. The probabilities of mean differences between males and females, and Japanese and American samples were computed.

The second step consisted of a sequence of multiple regressions. The basic regression model to be estimated for each gender/nationality combination employed two separate measures of work group orientation as the dependent variable: group work preference and group priority. The independent variables consisted of team work requirement, intrinsic job reward, tenure, job rank, functional department, and demographic backgrounds. As a macro organizational variable, firm size was also included. For each equation estimated, vector of controls was included that consisted of education, marital status, and income.

In the first phase of the regression analysis, regression model was estimated for a single sample of women and men in each country. In the base model, work group orientation was regressed on tenure, job rank, department, and a vector of control including gender and firm size (Model 1). Following this regression, team work requirement and intrinsic job reward were entered into the base model, to examine whether the main effect of gender persists, within each nation, when controlling for job attributes (Model 2). Similarly, a regression model was estimated for a single sample of each gender pooled from the two countries, to examine whether the main effect of nationality persists, within each gender, when the job attributes are controlled.

Furthermore, to investigate whether gender and national differences exist in the effects of team work requirement and intrinsic reward for Japanese and American workers, four interaction terms were computed by multiplying these job characteristics by gender/nationality. These
interactions were entered into the above Model 2.

Results

Mean Comparison

The results of t tests computed to assess the overall gender and national differences in work group attitudes and job characteristics are presented in Table 1. Significant gender and national differences appeared in the mean levels of two work group orientation variables. The results revealed the complexity and multidimensionality of employee orientation to work groups.

When employees were asked whether they would try to work in a group when they have a choice (PREF), females in both countries reported higher mean scores than the males. The Japanese males and females were much more likely than their American counterparts to agree that they would try to work in a group.

The Japanese males were more likely than Japanese females to agree that they would try to do their best for their work group even if it is costly to them (PRIOR). For American employees, however, there was no significant gender difference in their responses to this item. Interestingly, the American males and females were much more likely than their Japanese counterparts to say that they would do their best for the work group.

Overall, Japanese employees were more likely than Americans to agree that they must work closely with others to perform the job well. In both countries, however, the score was higher among males than among females. These results seem to imply that jobs are generally more collectively structured in Japanese workplaces than in American work settings, but that male jobs in both countries require more group coordination than female jobs. Though American females reported a higher score of intrinsic job reward than Japanese females, both Japanese and American females, unsurprisingly, perceived lower intrinsic reward in their jobs than the males.

To address the question of whether the gender and national differences in individual work group orientation can be reduced to the differences in job characteristics, I turned to multiple regression analyses.

Multiple Regressions

The results of multiple regressions performed for a single sample consisting of Japanese males and females are presented in Table 2. In Model 1 of group work preference regression, gender exhibited no statistically significant effect, with-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Comparison of the Variables in Analysis for Japanese and American Males and Females Based on t Tests: Means and Standard Deviations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Japanese Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Preference</td>
<td>3.23 (1.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Priority</td>
<td>3.40 (.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work Requirement</td>
<td>3.85 (.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Job Reward</td>
<td>3.55 (.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>13.08 (8.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rank (1 = manager/supervisor)</td>
<td>.34 (.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department (1 = production)</td>
<td>.85 (.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm Size / 1000</td>
<td>.64 (.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status (1 = married)</td>
<td>.71 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12.08 (2.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (proxy)</td>
<td>22.95 (7.38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scores in brackets are significantly different between male and female samples at the .01 level. Underlined scores are significantly different between Japanese and American samples, within the same gender, at the .01 level.
out controlling for team work requirement and intrinsic job reward. After controlling for the job characteristics, however, magnitude of the gender effect was boosted to .13 and it was significant at .05 level. The statistically non-significant interaction effects of job characteristics and gender in Model 3 reveal that there were no gender differences in the effects of team work requirement and intrinsic reward on individual preference to group work among Japanese employees.

For group priority in contrast, gender exhibited a moderate negative impact (b = -.13), when job characteristics were not held constant. When the job characteristics were controlled, the magnitude of this gender effect was significantly diminished (b = -.06) and it was no longer significant. Note that between Models 1 and 2, the job rank effect changed from .22 to .16, indicating an association of the higher degree of team work requirement / intrinsic reward with managerial / supervisory positions. As was the case with group work preference, the interaction effects of job characteristics and gender were not significant in Model 3 of group priority.

Table 3 reports the results of multiple regressions performed for a single sample consisting of American males and females. The effect of gender was statistically significant in Models 1 and 2 for both dependent variables. The magnitude of gender effect was slightly boosted after controlling for team work requirement and intrinsic job reward. Between Models 1 and 2 for PREF, magnitude of the job rank effect was diminished from .41 to .23. Since the effect of team work requirement, but not that of intrinsic reward, reached statistical significance in the Model 2 equation,
this result suggests that the higher job ranks are associated with the increased levels of team work requirement among American employees. We find a similar result in Model 2 for PRIOR, though both team work requirement and intrinsic job reward were significant in this specification.

In Model 3 for PREF, the effect of team work requirement was .22 (p < .001) and its interaction effect with gender was −.09 (p < .01). Considering these two effects together, team work requirement exhibited a net positive effect of .17 for American females. Similarly in Model 3 for PRIOR, the effect of team work requirement was .08 (p < .001) while its gender interaction was −.05 (p < .05), producing in effect a net positive impact of .03 for American females.

The results of multiple regressions performed for a single sample consisting of Japanese and American males are presented in Table 4. In Model 1 for PREF, the positive nationality effect reached statistical significance (p < .01) without controlling for job characteristics. When the job characteristics were held constant in Model 2, however, the nationality was no longer significant and the magnitude of this effect was significantly smaller. Since team work requirement reached significance in this specification, reducing the coefficient size of the job rank effect from .21 to .10, it appears that the nationality impact found in Model 1 is largely due to the differences in task performance structures between Japan and the United States. The interaction effects revealed that, being a Japanese male, team work requirement decreased his group work preference by .09, whereas intrinsic reward increased the preference by .12. For group priority in contrast, the nation-
Table 4: Unstandardized (and Standardized) Coefficients Obtained from Regressions of Work Group Orientation on Selected Variables for a Single Sample of Japanese and American Males

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>PREF (N = 5366)</th>
<th>PRIOR (N = 5284)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>.13 ***</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 = Japanese)</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>-.12 ***</td>
<td>-.13 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 = married)</td>
<td>(-.05)</td>
<td>(-.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.02 **</td>
<td>-.03 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.04)</td>
<td>(-.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-.01 ***</td>
<td>-.01 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.06)</td>
<td>(-.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.01)</td>
<td>(-.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rank</td>
<td>.21 ***</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 = manager/supervisor)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>-.11 *</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 = production)</td>
<td>(-.03)</td>
<td>(-.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm Size</td>
<td>.07 ***</td>
<td>.06 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work Requirement</td>
<td>.19 ***</td>
<td>.22 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.19)</td>
<td>(.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Job Reward</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work * Nationality</td>
<td>-.09 ***</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Reward *</td>
<td>.12 ***</td>
<td>.14 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>(.20)</td>
<td>(.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Table 4 presents the results of multiple regressions performed for a single sample consisting of Japanese and American females. For PREF, the nationality effect was positive and significant both with and without controlling for team work requirement and intrinsic job reward. In Model 2, we find a significant effect of team work requirement, yet the effect of intrinsic reward did not reach statistical significance. Although the direct effect of intrinsic reward was not significant in Model 3 for PREF, the interaction of intrinsic reward and nationality exerted a positive influence on work group preference (.23), changing the direction and the magnitude of the nationality effect.

For PRIOR in contrast, as was the case with the sample of Japanese and American males, the nationality exerted strong negative influence...
before and after holding the job characteristics constant. In Model 2, the effects of both team work requirement and intrinsic reward were positive and significant, yet the team work effect was much weaker than the intrinsic reward effect. Neither team work requirement nor intrinsic reward interacted with nationality to effect group priority among Japanese and American females.

### Conclusion

This paper began with the premise that gender and cultural differences in Japanese and American employees’ work group orientation can be reduced to individual differences in the circumstances of work. Considerable evidence has been marshaled for a more complex view of the processes through which the employees come to perceive their work groups. The results reported here indicate that in general, job characteristics have a more powerful impact on both American and Japanese employees than their personal backgrounds. However, results provided mixed support for the job structural perspective. Gender and nationality differences in work group orientation did not necessarily stem from the fact that jobs are differently structured for men and women in organizations in the two countries. For some cases, the differences were even more pronounced when individuals worked under the same condition.

Although Japanese men and women preferred task performance in a group setting more than their American counterparts, American employees of either gender showed significantly stronger psychological readiness to prioritize their work group than their Japanese counterparts. Thus,
while it is true that many Japanese employees do
place considerable emphasis on group work, this
does not immediately mean self-sacrificing loy-
alty to their group. In contrast, the fact that
American employees do not stress group work to
the same extent as the Japanese do, does not
preclude American employees’ psychological
attachment to their work groups. Taken together,
males and females in the U.S. and Japan
showed different types of orientation to their work
groups.

It must also be noted that the regression analy-
sis performed in this analysis failed to explain
a large proportion of variation in attitudinal orient-
tion to a work group. The disappointing results
may be, in part, due to the present conceptual
framework that limited the focus on the job-
related aspects of employees’ lives. For example,
if attitudes are formed in the web of complex
social relations, cues provided by individual
perceptions of gender-based norms about work
and non-work roles may have been an important
omitted variable. For males, the importance of
team work may be closely related to self-identity
as economic providers, while for females, group
work may be important for integration of work
and the family. The patterns of such gender differ-
entiation may be deeply embedded in social struc-
tures of different socio-cultural settings.

While this study opened the way for an explana-
tion of the gender and national differences in work
group orientation, more rigorous investigation is
necessary to understand what it is about group
work that motivates and inhibits American and
Japanese employees. Future research of job atti-
ditudes would benefit by looking more closely at
the similarities and dissimilarities in the ways that
social institutions condition attitude formation in
individuals across different cultural settings.

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