Revisiting Hofstede's Dimensions: Examining the Cultural Convergence of the United States and Japan

Erich B. Bergiel
University of West Georgia

Blaise J. Bergiel
University of West Georgia

John W. Upson
University of West Georgia

It has been over forty years since Hofstede's groundbreaking study on cultural values. Since then, there have been drastic changes to the global landscape influenced by political, environmental, and technological factors. Utilizing Cultural Convergence Theory we suggest that increased similarities can be observed in cultures with strong international linkages. Specifically, this study utilized the new Value Survey Module 08 to test theoretically justified hypotheses examining the cultural convergence of the United States and Japan. Results suggest interesting changes have occurred in these cultures, to include a strong trend towards convergence. Implications as well as directions for future research are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Success in the global market depends on understanding the cultures you are doing business with. For this reason, studies on work-related cultural values continue to show prominence in both industrial and organizational research. The framework for most of this research can be attributed to Geert Hofstede and his initial four dimensions of cultural values, as well as his Value Survey Module (VSM) to capture these dimensions (Hofstede, 1984). The reviews of cross-cultural studies have suggested that Hofstede-inspired research is increasing exponentially (Taras, Kirkman & Steel, 2010). The intent of this current study is to continue this trend while attempting to address potential short-comings in recent cross-cultural research.

The most prevalent short-coming is that researchers still reference Hofstede's original findings or outdated versions of the VSM for empirical or theoretical support. The challenge of cross-cultural research is to attempt to stay abreast of evolving cultures by evolving our methods of analysis and observation as well. The latest iteration of the VSM has three additional dimensions that were not measured in the original module. However few researchers have utilized this tool to assess values across cultures. To adequately advance cross-cultural research it is essential to use the most advanced available methods.

In order to accomplish this we have two primary objectives. First, this study has collected data from the United States and Japan in order to provide updated information on work-related values of these two cultures. The data was collected to test theoretically justified hypothesis that state that countries with

strong international ties like the United States and Japan will undoubtedly inflict their own values and beliefs on the evolving culture of the other, potentially causing a convergence of these two cultures. Second, the data was collected using the most recent VSM 08. The researchers undertook the task of both conducting the initial translation of the VSM 08 into Japanese and collecting the first results from Japanese respondents. Cultures evolve and so should the methods used to assess them. The VSM 08 is the most current method and this study will not only provide an additional translation of the VSM 08 but it will also further validate it as an assessment tool.

A REVIEW OF HOFSTEDE'S VALUE DIMENSIONS

In Hofstede's original study data was collected from a large multinational business corporation (IBM) with subsidiaries in 64 countries. The data consisted of answers to questions about their values and perceptions of their work situation. Careful post-analysis of the initial and subsequent surveys started to show a "global structure" that could not be suppressed by the idiosyncrasies of the individual countries (Hofstede et al., 1990, p. 288). This initial structure consisted of four individual cultural value dimensions.

The first dimension is power distance. According to Hofstede (1984), power distance is the extent to which the less powerful individuals in a society accept inequality in power and consider it as normal. In high power distance cultures, individuals respect their superiors and avoid criticizing them. In low power distance countries, it is very acceptable to challenge superiors, albeit with respect. The second dimension is individualism – collectivism, which reflects the degree to which a society views its members as individuals or as group members (Hofstede, 1984). In individualistic societies, individuals are primarily concerned with their own interests and the interests of their immediate family. In highly collectivistic societies, individuals are not defined by their own actions but rather the groups' actions. The third dimension is masculinity – femininity, with masculinity described as cultures where the dominant values are expected to be ambitious, assertive, and competitive. In contrast, in cultures high in femininity there is a dominance of feminine values such as preference for "friendly atmosphere, position security, physical conditions [and] security" (Hofstede, 2001, p.281). Fourth, uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which people in a culture generally prefer structure to risk (Hofstede, 1984). Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance are made anxious by situations that are unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable. On the other hand, cultures low in uncertainty avoidance are reflective, less aggressive, relatively tolerant, and unemotional.

Subsequent research initiated by Michael Harris Bond (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) revealed a fifth meaningful dimension. This dimension originally labeled "Confucian dynamism" represented the opposing views time orientation has on life and work (Hofstede et al., 1990). This dimension, later termed long-term orientation, refers to the preference for instant reward versus delayed reward (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). More recently, Minkov (2007) proposed three new dimensions: Exclusionism – Universalism, Indulgence – Restraint, and Monumentalism – Flexhumity. From these, post-analysis found that exclusionism – universalism was strongly correlated with power distance and collectivism so it was not been treated as a new dimension. However, the remaining dimensions were. The indulgence – restraint dimension considers indulgence as the value that a society places on relatively free gratification of desires and feelings (Fontaine et al. 2005). Opposite indulgence is restraint, or the values which control such gratification and place limits on individuals' enjoyment behaviors. Monumentalism refers to the cultural dimension characterized on one extreme by self-enhancement (a tendency to seek positive information about oneself) and self-stability or self-consistency (a conviction that one should have unchangeable values, beliefs and behaviors that are not influenced by shifting circumstances) (Heine, 2003). At the other extreme are flexhumble cultures. Flexhumity is characterized by humility, flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

Hofstede released the most recent Values Survey Module in 2008 (VSM 08). In this survey, Hofstede measured his five dimensions of culture, and included the two additional dimensions he derived from Michael Minkov (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov & Vinken, 2008, p. 2). We argue that as cultures evolve

they must constantly be assessed with respect to each of Hofstede's seven cultural dimensions. We base the argument on the belief that culture is dynamic and evolving due to influential interactions with other cultures, a belief rooted in Cultural Convergence Theory (Barnett & Kincaid, 1983).

THE DYNAMICS AND CONVERGENCE OF CULTURAL

Societies have evolved into groups with distinguishable characteristics that set them apart from other groups (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002). One distinguishing characteristic is culture. Hofestede (1980, p. 25) states that culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another." The national culture is dynamic and is constantly influenced by changes in the environment (technological, political, legal, etc.) which would by all logic influence cultural values.

There are two opposing views of the changing of values within cultures. One view is that culture is very stable within a society and when cultures change they do so independently of each other (Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997). An opposing view of cultural change is *Cultural Convergence Theory*. This theory argues that when different cultures experience frequent interactions, the cultures will become more similar over time (Axelrod, 1997). It is based on the premise that culture is affected by outside influences and external changes. Cultural Convergence Theory is an extension of Convergence Theory or as more aptly known in the realm of the physical sciences, the second law of thermodynamics (Kincaid et al., 1983). This foundational theory states that a physical system cannot be stable if not in equilibrium, and that to become stable the various particles or subsystems of that larger systems must interact and converge to reach an equilibrium state (Sachs, 1973). Progress has been made in adapting convergence theory to chemical, biological and social systems (Prigogine & Nicolis, 1977), and appropriately to study the convergence of cultures (Barnett & Kincaid, 1983). The rationale being that national cultures are essentially subsystems of a larger global system. Cultures are open systems that exchange inputs and outputs with other cultures. Due to globalization this interaction has become essential for survival; if cultures did not interact they could reach that point of entropy. To avoid entropy, when cultures interact they must reach stability through a state of equilibrium, this equilibrium is reached through the convergence of cultures. For example, two cultures that become intermingled through trade or communication can influence each other. Given the strong ties between the U.S. and Japan, and the dependency on each as both a trading partner and global ally, it is apparent that a great deal of interaction occurs between these two cultures. Therefore, with respect to cultural convergence theory, these cultures are becoming more alike over time. In the context of this study, it is proposed that to reach stability and equilibrium, the Japanese culture and the U.S. culture are becoming more similar.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

There are signs that the U.S. culture may be influenced by other cultures. One such way is the increasing prevalence of teams and groups in organizations. Concurrently, the traditional Japanese culture has been often viewed as very masculine, collectivist, and long term oriented. However, many years of interaction between Japan and western countries may have led them to become more individualistic, short term oriented and feminist. By utilizing Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a framework, and comparing our result to those of his original sample, we are able to explore and analyze this convergence of these cultures.

Power Distance

Japan is near the world average in power distance, according to Hofstede's studies. However, recent trends suggest that the Japanese are beginning to question those in power more frequently. This change has occurred dramatically in the political arena where there have been no fewer than 14 prime ministers in the last 20 years (Economist, 2010). The recent victory of the Democratic Party of Japan in the 2009 elections was a significant event as the party vowed to diminish the power of the bureaucrats. These

displays of power change and willingness to criticize suggest that Japan is becoming less tolerant of power distance, a stance very reflective of the U.S.

In the original data from the IBM survey in the 1970's the U.S. had a value score of 40 and Japan had a value score of 50 on the power distance dimension. Based on our arguments we propose that these value scores will have shifted, and that because of U.S. influence, Japan will exhibit lower power distance.

Hypothesis 1: The cultural values of the U.S. and Japan associated with power distance have become more similar. Specifically, Japan has become lower in power distance which will be more closely aligned with the power distance of the U.S.

Individualism – Collectivism

In previous studies, Japan has tended to lie toward the collectivist end of the individualism – collectivism dimension. Historically, a major factor of Japan's collectivism was its ability to provide full employment to its citizens (Economist, 1994a). However, there are signs that this close relationship between employer and employee is becoming strained. Further, white collar workers are being laid off due to a bloated management system (Schlender, 1994). Other employers are becoming increasingly reliant on "irregular," or temporary, workers (Economist, 1994b), a practice already well-established in the U.S.

The U.S. has historically been a very individualistic society focused on entrepreneurial effort and individual success, but there has been a shift away from the "self-made man" image that America grew up on. Now U.S. culture depends heavily on communal assistance such as social security and welfare. Also, it's more prevalent to see U.S. students and employees in teams and groups (Townsend, DeMarie, & Hendrickson, 1998). We believe that both countries are moving toward a central position on the individualism scale.

The U.S. had a value score of 91 and Japan had a value score of 41 in regards to the individualism – collectivism dimension in Hofstede's original study. It is proposed that convergence has occurred between these cultures as the U.S. has become more collectivist and Japan has become more individualistic.

Hypothesis 2: The cultural values of the U.S. and Japan associated with individualism – collectivism have become more similar. Specifically, Japan has become more individualistic and the U.S. more collectivist.

Masculinity – Femininity

Japan is one of the most masculine countries in the world. In fact, according to Hofstede's original sample Japan is number one in the world in this dimension, but this too is changing. One reason occurred in 1986, when the equal-employment-opportunity legislation removed many legal barriers to women in the workplace. Women now frequent the workplace. This shift in culture is tempered by the fact that 62% of women quit work after their first child (Wei-hsin, 2005). However, more women are choosing to remain in the workforce even after child-birth.

It is becoming much more acceptable in both countries for women and men to perform the same tasks. The U.S. experienced a large part of this change in the early 20th century, but it has just begun to surface in Japanese culture. This may be part of a global cultural trend toward femininity that is affecting both cultures. The results from the original sample show that the U.S. was less masculine with a value score of 62 while Japan had a value score of 91 on the masculinity – femininity dimension. We propose that both cultures will demonstrate higher values of femininity but that convergence will occur because the change to femininity in Japan has been more drastic.

Hypothesis 3: The cultural values of the U.S. and Japan associated with masculinity – femininity have become more similar. Specifically, while Japan and the U.S. have

become more feminine, the increased rate of this change in Japan will cause the countries to more closely align on this dimension.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Japanese tend to avoid uncertainty but the current and future work environments may be affecting their tolerance for uncertainty. One possible cause of this change is that manufacturers are leaving Japan. This has limited job opportunities domestically and effectively made Japan a "one-shot society" student have one shot to find employment upon graduation or they are frozen out of the market. This will effectively decrease the number of employees that are loyal to a firm and cause an increase in entrepreneurial traits commonly seen in the U.S.

Traditionally, the U.S. is a bit more risk-seeking; however recent trends may cause its citizens to avoid risk. The stock market decline, housing bubble bust, and recession of 2007-2009 have caused many to seek secure, safe returns with their investments (Telegram & Gazette, 2010). Further, the threat of other nations becoming more economically powerful may cause Americans to develop a defensive and conservative stance in which they seek to avoid uncertainty (Zweig, & Jianhai, 2005).

The U.S. had a score of 46 while Japan scored much higher on the uncertainty avoidance dimension with a score of 89. As proposed, the U.S. has become more risk adverse while Japan has become more risk-seeking. These changes in values will cause a convergence of cultures as their scores become more similar.

Hypothesis 4: The cultural values of the U.S. and Japan associated with uncertainty avoidance have become more similar. Specifically, Japan is lower in uncertainty avoidance while the U.S. is higher in uncertainty avoidance.

Long-Term Orientation

Traditionally a long-term oriented society, Japan is facing factors that may cause its orientation to become more short-term. One major factor is the aging of society. Japan's working-age population has been in decline for almost 15 years (World Economic and Social Survey, 2007). The effects of an aging society will therefore be felt greater in Japan than in most countries. Fewer working individuals will be taking care of an increasing number of elderly citizens. It is likely that retirement benefits will decrease. Younger workers may begin to focus on life in the short-term as the long-term becomes less attractive. Consequently, as economic power has shifted to the east the U.S. has had to become equally acceptable of Japan's long-term focus as they commonly take time to ponder decisions. Originally, Japan scored high on this dimension with a score of 77, while the U.S. only scored a 29. We propose that as both cultures have attempted to adapt to the needs of the other, their time orientation has become more similar.

Hypothesis 5: The cultural values of the U.S. and Japan associated with long-term orientation have become more similar. Specifically, Japan will have lower long-term orientation while the U.S. will have higher long-term orientation.

Indulgence – Restraint

The Japanese are known as savers (Hayashi, 1986), so much so that the government is considering financial services and social security reforms focused at persuading the elderly to release some of their ¥1,500 trillion in household savings (Economist, 2010). The U.S. is a country where it is not frowned upon to enjoy oneself. Overspending on cars and luxury is considered part of life. Because this dimension has no previous measurement, we cannot judge the movement of this cultural dimension over time. However, we do propose that Japan demonstrates values that resemble those described by indulgence and that the values of the U.S. are much more representative of restraint.

Hypothesis 6: Japan's values will score lower than the U.S. on the indulgence – restraint dimension. Specifically, Japan will demonstrate more restraint while the U.S. will demonstrate more indulgence.

Monumentalism – Flexhumity

Japan has a traditionally flexhumble culture. Individuals in Japan attribute success to external factors and failure to internal factors. Recent trends suggest that Japan is remaining true to their flexhumility traits. At least a few big firms, Sony and Nissan, have hired outside leaders as they face severe competition from abroad (Holstein, 2002). These leaders have had to battle with corporate culture to formulate their turnaround strategies. In the US, success is the result of ability or talent and failure the result of bad luck, other's errors, or lack of effort. This means that individuals from the U.S. tend to overestimate their own uniqueness. Therefore, the U.S. should fall toward the monumentalism end of the scale. As mentioned this dimension has no previous measurement, so once again we hypothesize as to where the U.S. and Japan will fall on the scale in relation to one another. Given the above argument we feel the U.S. values are more representative of monumentalism and the values of Japan are more representative of flexhumity.

Hypothesis 7: Japan's values will score lower than the U.S. on the monumentalism – flexhumity dimension. Specifically, Japan will be more flexhumble and the U.S. will be more monumental.

METHODS

Sample and Procedures

The survey was administered to undergraduate students from a midsize university in the southeastern part of the United States and undergraduate students from a midsize university in southern Japan. Once the surveys were collected, and those surveys that contained responses from students with nationalities other than American or Japanese were removed, a total of 237 (N=237) responses were deemed acceptable. Of these, 107 (n=107) represented responses from the students from the United States and 130 (n=130) responses represented students from Japan. Hofstede et al., (2008) recommended that for statistical purposes an ideal size for a homogenous sample would be fifty, our sample far exceeds this criteria.

The samples for this study were selected based on Frey's (1970) three criteria of accessibility, functional equivalence, and representativeness. While equivalence is not absolutely vital for cross-national surveys (Wu, 2006), an attempt was made to match the samples from these two cultures as much as possible. Functionally, the samples were equivalent because they were all students from mid-size universities from their respective countries. Demographic data collected strengthened the argument of equivalence for this sample. 31% of Japanese respondents were female while 50% of U.S. respondents were female. The majority of respondents from both countries indicated that they were between the ages of 20-24 (65% of Japanese respondents and 86% of U.S. respondents). And finally, 33% of Japanese respondents had at least 15 years of schooling while 34% of U.S. respondents had at least 16 years of schooling.

Research Instrument

The instrument used to assess our hypothesized dimensions of culture was Hofstede's Value Survey Model 2008 (VSM 08). It is a 34-item paper-and-pencil questionnaire developed for comparing cultural values of similar respondents from two or more countries. Respondents indicate their answers using a 5-point likert scale. The VSM 08 assesses seven dimensions of culture on the basis of four questions per dimension. These dimensions include: power distance, individualism – collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity – femininity, and long-term orientation. The other two dimensions were added based on the work of Minkov (2007) for experimental purposes in an attempt to capture dimension not yet

covered in previous modules. These dimensions include: indulgence – restraint and monumentalism – flexhumity. The score for each dimension is calculated utilizing a formula derived by Hofstede so that results in most instances will approximate between 0-100. Included in the formula is a constant to be utilized for 'anchoring' scores which will be described later. The remaining questions ask for demographic information from respondents.

Prior to the VSM 08 was the VSM 94, which was used extensively for 14 years. The VSM 08 is touted as a more complete, yet less complex version of the VSM. However, current reliability and validity of the VSM 08 has to be "taken for granted" (Hofstede, et al., 2008, pg. 10). As Hofstede et al., (2008) describes country-level correlations differ from individual level correlations, and thus a reliability test like Cronbach's alpha should not be based on individual scores but country mean scores. Additional utilization and testing of the VSM 08 will be needed to accomplish this.

At the onset of this research the VSM 08 was not available in Japanese. Thus the researchers undertook the task of providing that initial translation. To accomplish this a Japanese graduate student translated the English version of the VSM 08 into Japanese. The survey was then back-translated into English by a Japanese professor. After some minor adjustments and a few pilot surveys were administered, the English and Japanese version of the questionnaires appeared to match and all criteria for Brislin's (1970) rules for back-translation were met.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A drawback of cross-cultural research is the inability to make direct comparisons. The VSM 08 is not for comparing individuals or even organizations across national cultures. In addition results cannot be compared to published scores (Hofstede et al., 2008). Essential to the VSM 08 is that comparisons be made between matched samples of respondents who are as similar as possible in all criteria other than nationality. The original study was done using subsidiaries of IBM, a matched sample is virtually impossible since it was conducted around 1970. It is suggested that extensions of this research should include two or more matched samples from different countries with one of these countries being from the original IBM set. The new data can then be 'anchored' to the existing framework by shifting the new data by the differences of the old and new scores for the common country. We chose to anchor our U.S. scores from our current sample to those of the original IBM set. Consequently, while convergence or divergence of values can be observed, specific shifts in independent country values will be undetectable. Therefore, the results explained below and shown in Table 1, though very exploratory in nature should still provide important insight into potential shifts in cultural values.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF CULTURAL VALUES OF THE U.S. AND JAPAN

	Original Sample			Current Sample		
Value Dimensions	U.S.	Japan	Difference	U.S.*	Japan	Difference
Power Distance	40	50	-10	40	20.8	19.2
Individualism - Collectivism	91	41	50	91	108.85	-17.85
Masculinity – Femininity	62	91	-29	62	26.65	35.35
Uncertainty Avoidance	46	89	-43	46	110	-64
Long-Term Orientation	29	77	-48	29	42.1	-13.1
Indulgence – Restraint	N/A	N/A	N/A	82.7	57.85	24.85
Monumentalism - Flexhumity	N/A	N/A	N/A	89.1	34.55	113.65
*Data was anchored to the original U.S. sample results						

Power Distance

From the original IBM set there was a difference of -10 between the scores of the U.S. and Japan. Our current results show a difference of 19.2 between the U.S. and Japan. Though Hypothesis 1 is not supported due to increased divergence, the divergence that has occurred is potentially the result of hypothesized shifts. From the results, power distance values are now higher in the U.S. than they are in Japan. While we cannot determine whether one or both cultures experience a shift in values, a trend towards convergence has occurred.

Individualism – Collectivism

The U.S. values have always been very individualistic while Japan was always considered very collectivist. The results for this dimension were probably the most surprising. It appears that a great deal of convergence between the U.S. and Japan in regards to individualism – collectivism has occurred. The original difference was 50 while our results show a difference of -17.85, providing partial support to Hypothesis 2. Again, while we are unable to determine exactly how much each culture or cultures have changed, it is interesting to note that these results suggest that Japan is now more individualistic than the U.S.

Masculinity – Femininity

For this dimension we hypothesized that both the U.S. and Japan would demonstrate more feministic values. Yet, we felt that the changes would have occurred more quickly in Japan so that a convergence of cultures would be noticed. The difference for the original sample by Hofstede was -29 and the difference for our current sample is 35.35. For this dimension our results suggest that there is now more divergence in the values between the U.S. and Japan. While it could be reasoned that this means Japan has become more feminine, this cannot be determined definitively. The only thing these results do definitively suggest is that Japan is now more feminine than the U.S. Regardless, Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Japan's values in regards to uncertainty have always been higher than the U.S. In the original sample there was a difference of -43. While it was hypothesized that the U.S. has become more risk- adverse and Japan has become more risk-seeking, the opposite is seen in our results. Our sample showed a difference of -64. For this to occur, one or both of the cultures had to shift in the opposite direction hypothesized. So in essence either Japan has become more risk-adverse (higher uncertainty avoidance), the U.S. has become more risk-seeking (lower uncertainty avoidance), or a combination of both. Result being that Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Long-Term Orientation

The U.S. was much more short-term oriented in the initial sample. However, the difference has converged from -48 to -13.1. Therefore, the values of one or both countries have shifted in the hypothesized direction. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is supported; the U. S. and Japan have become more similar in regards to values associated with long and short-term orientation.

Indulgence – Restraint

There were no previous results comparing the U.S. and Japan in relation to indulgence and restraint. Therefore it was hypothesized that the U.S. would score higher on this dimension thus demonstrating values of more indulgence and Japan would have a lower score reflecting restraint. Our results show a difference of 24.85 thus Hypothesis 6 is supported.

Monumentalism – Flexhumity

No previous research comparing the U.S. and Japan on the monumentalism – flexhumity dimension could be found either. It was hypothesized that the U.S. would score higher towards the monumentalism

side of the dimension and Japan would score lower towards the flexhumity side of the dimension. Our results showed an extreme difference of 113.65, providing support for Hypothesis 7.

DISCUSSION

We hypothesized that the cultures of the U.S. and Japan would have shifted over time becoming more similar. This was based on cultural convergence theory and the belief that cultures that interact will influence the opposite culture to resemble themselves. However, though a trend of convergence was noticed, it was much more extreme than expected. For instance, our results suggest that the relationship of the U.S and Japan in regards to power distance, individualism – collectivism and masculinity – femininity has reversed. Perhaps a shift in power distance can be attributed to the changing values of the U.S. The growing disparities in U.S. incomes, resentment toward executive compensation, and economic downturn have caused U.S. respondents to perceive greater power distance. The individualism dimension values were not only opposite but also more similar. Japan's trend to become more individualistic is not surprising considering the extended economic struggles and decrease in stable employment (Economist, 1994a). As entrepreneurship increases, this trend may continue. Finally, while there is likely a global trend towards femininity, it appears that Japan is making this transition quicker than most.

Strong convergence of values was noticed in the dimension of long-term orientation. This was not surprising given that both societies run on business quarters and are technologically developed. Perhaps these factors cause individuals to focus on the short term as a means of survival in business. In contrast divergence of values was noticed in uncertainty avoidance. Descriptors of cultures with low uncertainty avoidance include low stress, hard-work only when needed, and lenient rules for children (Hofstede, 1997). Perhaps this divergence can be blamed on the U.S. as we observe evidence of these descriptors in our culture to include increased obesity, welfare and lack of obedience from juveniles. Lastly, our results for the final two dimensions supported our hypotheses. The U.S. is more indulgent and monumentalist than Japan.

Ultimately we were able to accomplish our two objectives and our contributions to the field of international management are several. We did collect and analyze data from the U.S. and Japan to update work-related values of these two cultures and continue the advancement of Hofstede-inspired cross-cultural research. Additionally, we provided another theoretical adaptation of convergence theory for cross-cultural research. We also conducted the initial translation of the VSM 08 into Japanese and submitted our translated survey to the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation (IRIC) for utilization and distribution. Our use of the VSM 08 also further validated it as a current assessment tool of cultural values and has provided results for the initial comparison of the values of the U.S. and Japan in regards to the newly added dimensions (Indulgence – Restraint and Monumentalism – Flexhumity).

Limitations

While we believe that this study makes a significant contribution to furthering cross-cultural research, it is not without its limitations. The greatest limitation of this study is the inability to make direct comparisons. The explanations given for a number of our results are speculative at best. While this is a shortfall commonly associated with cross-cultural research it does not dilute the importance and novelty of our results, yet it does prevent the ability to distinguish specific shifts in culture. Next, our sample was drawn from a population of university students. Hofstede's samples were primarily white collared employees within a single global firm. Additionally, while our sample size met the requirements established by Hofstede, a larger sample and more universal sample would enhance validity.

CONCLUSION

Granted our hypotheses were not all supported, and we have probably generated more questions than we have answered, given the importance and dynamic nature of this topic it is a necessary step. With the increase in globalization the subsequent influence of cultures on one another is inevitable. As these

cultures evolve and change under this influence it is imperative that we stay abreast of these changes. As noted, we suggest that a number of these cultural changes have already occurred.

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