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# Cross-Cultural Management Research: The Ostrich and the Trend<sup>1</sup>

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*The trends in cross-cultural management papers published in 24 journals during the last decade, 1971 to 1980, are examined. Less than 5 percent of organizational behavior articles published in top American management journals focused on cross-cultural issues. The majority of the cross-cultural articles were single culture studies; less than 1 percent investigated the interaction between employees of different cultures. No increase was seen in the number of international organizational behavior articles over the decade.*

The corporate world is becoming more and more interrelated—more and more international. Improvements in transportation and communication and lower production costs abroad have made global markets more accessible. Even United States-based firms, with their immediate access to extensive domestic markets, have steadily increased the proportion of their foreign to total operations. As shown in Table 1, major economic indicators of internationalization (including foreign direct investment, international sales, and profits earned overseas) have been steadily increasing. Increased multinational operations mean increased multiculturalism within the organization, increased interaction between employees and managers of different cultures. Increased multiculturalism calls for new strategies for organizations.

The United States historically has been in the forefront in the development of management theory, research, and practice. Given the current internationalization of business, the United States could be expected to lead the development of a cross-cultural perspective to management. What have researchers publishing in American management journals written to help managers understand the behavior of people in multinational and transnational organizations? Although there has been a proliferation of books in the field (Bass & Burger, 1979; Harris & Moran, 1979; Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979; Hofstede, 1980),

the survey presented here questions the extent to which management journals have provided theories, models, and research focusing on managers working in multinational and multicultural environments. Have authors chosen to submit and journal editors to publish cosmopolitan papers or papers that reflect a strictly parochial point of view?

## Method

Cross-cultural management is the study of the behavior of people in organizations located in cultures and nations around the world. It focuses on the description of organizational behavior within countries and cultures, on the comparison of organizational behavior across countries and cultures, and, perhaps most importantly, on the interaction of peoples from different countries working within the same organization or within the same work environment. The present survey sought to identify the trends in the publication of cross-cultural management articles in major American management journals over the last decade, 1971-1980.

Based on reviews of the literature in the field (Barrett & Bass, 1976; Hofstede, 1980; Kraut, 1975; Roberts, 1970), it was hypothesized that (1) the published articles in cross-cultural management would be few relative to the amount of international business activity, and (2) there had been an increasing awareness of the importance of international and cross-cultural issues as reflected in increased publication of cross-cultural management articles during the

<sup>1</sup>The author would like to thank Arshad Ahmad, research assistant, for his many hours analyzing the publishing trends.

**Table 1**  
**Economic Indicators of Internationalization in the United States<sup>a</sup>**

Year	A	B	C	D	E
1966	51,792	5,259	3,467	1,791	1,163
1967	56,560	5,605	3,847	1,757	1,354
1968	61,907	6,592	4,152	2,440	1,431
1969	68,093	7,649	4,819	2,830	1,533
1970	75,480	8,169	4,992	3,176	1,758
1971	82,760	9,159	5,983	3,176	1,927
1972	89,878	10,949	6,416	4,532	2,115
1973	101,313	16,542	8,384	8,158	2,513
1974	110,078	19,156	11,379	7,777	3,070
1975	124,050	16,595	8,547	8,048	3,543
1976	136,809	18,999	11,303	7,696	3,530
1977	149,848	20,081	12,795	7,286	3,793
1978	167,804	25,165	13,696	11,469	4,775
1979	192,648	37,815	19,400	18,414	5,042

<sup>a</sup>A is foreign direct investment position (in millions) of U.S. corporations; B is income; C is interest, dividends, and earnings of unincorporated affiliates; D is reinvested earnings of incorporated affiliates; E is fees and royalties. Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (1980).

*decade 1971-1980.*

As listed below, 24 journals were selected that either (1) are recognized to be the better journals in the field of management and organizational behavior and/or (2) tend to carry more international management articles. These selection criteria were designed to identify the maximum number of international organizational behavior articles published during the past decade.

- \*\* *Academy of Management Journal*
- \*\* *Academy of Management Proceedings*
- \*\* *Academy of Management Review*
- \*\* *Administrative Science Quarterly*
- \*\* *California Management Review*
- \*\* *Columbia Journal of World Business*
- \* *Conference Board Record*
- \* *Dun's Review*
- \*\* *Group and Organization Studies*
- \*\* *Harvard Business Review*
- International Journal of Intercultural Relations*
- Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*
- Journal of Applied Psychology*
- \*\* *Journal of International Business Studies*
- \* *Journal of Management Studies*
- Journal of Social Psychology*
- \* *Management International Review*
- \* *Management Japan*
- \* *Management Science*
- \*\* *MSU Business Topics*
- \*\* *Organizational Dynamics*
- \*\* *SAM Advanced Management Journal*
- \*\* *Sloan Management Review*
- The Bridge*

Of these 24, 19 are management (\* and \*\*), 3 are applied psychology, and 2 are international journals. Of the 19 management journals, 13 are published in the United States and are considered top academic

journals in management. These formed a separate subgroup for purposes of analysis and are double-starred (\*\*).

As shown in Table 2, articles were classified as to their management focus: general management, organizational behavior, or general interest. They were classified further in two ways according to their cross-cultural focus: as either international or domestic (i.e., as including a country other than the United States or not) and as either cultural or not cultural (i.e., as including culture as a variable or not). Organizational behavior articles that were both international and cultural were defined as cross-cultural management articles. This category, which was the primary focus of the survey, was further categorized as follows into (1) unicultural, (2) comparative, or (3) intercultural articles:

1. Unicultural articles are those organizational behavior articles that focus on the management of organizations in any country other than the United States, such as an article on motivating workers in Israel.
2. Comparative articles are those organizational behavior articles that focus on a comparison between (among) the organizations in any two or more countries or cultures, such as a comparison between leadership styles in Brazil and Japan.
3. Intercultural articles are those organizational behavior articles that focus on the interaction between (among) organization members from two or more countries or cultures, such as a description of the process of negotiation between the Chinese and the French.

Culture has been defined in many ways (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) and in management studies often has been equated with nation-state. For this survey, it was not found necessary to categorize articles ac-

**Table 2**  
**Categorization of Articles in Cross-Cultural Management Literature Review, 1971-1980**

Journals	International		Domestic		Total Number (%)
	Geographic Number (%)	Cultural Number (%)	Not Cultural Number (%)	Cultural Number (%)	
Organizational behavior articles					
<i>n</i> = 24	54 (.48)	400 (3.6)	2,225 (19.8)	159 (1.4)	2,838 (25.3)
<i>n</i> = 13	39 (.85)	193 (4.2)	1,239 (27.0)	83 (1.8)	1,554 (33.9)
Management articles, not organizational behavior					
<i>n</i> = 24	658 (5.9)	29 (.26)	2,659 (23.7)	42 (.37)	3,388 (30.2)
<i>n</i> = 13	474 (10.3)	18 (.39)	1,431 (31.2)	18 (.39)	1,941 (42.3)
General articles, not management					
<i>n</i> = 24	644 (5.7)	55 (.49)	4,036 (35.9)	258 (2.3)	4,993 (44.5)
<i>n</i> = 13	241 (5.3)	2 (.04)	819 (17.9)	26 (.57)	1,088 (23.7)
Total articles					
<i>n</i> = 24	1,356 (12.1)	+ 484 (4.3)	8,920 (79.5)	+ 459 (4.1)	11,219 (100.0)
	1,840 (16.4)		9,379 (83.6)		
<i>n</i> = 13	754 (16.4)	+ 214 (4.6)	3,489 (76.1)	+ 127 (2.8)	4,583 (100.0)
	967 (21.1)		3,616 (78.9)		

cording to a particular definition of culture. Articles were categorized as cross-cultural if the researcher used any implicit or explicit definition of culture, including nation-state. It also should be noted that including the concept of culture did not mean that the researcher had claimed that culture was a significant variable. It simply meant that culture, as a variable or a construct, was not ignored. Furthermore, other salient dimensions of international organizations—such as geographical dispersion—were recognized but not combined with the cross-cultural category.

## Results

As shown in Table 3, the results of the literature survey showed that 4.2 percent of the articles published in top American management journals were in the cross-cultural management category. Even fewer, 3.6 percent, of the articles published in all 24 surveyed journals were in the cross-cultural management category.

The majority of the articles published in the surveyed journals were domestic; in the top 13 American management journals, 19.6 percent were international. Of these international articles, the majority, 76.3 percent, were geographically international but did not refer to the concept of culture.

About a third (33.4 percent) of the articles published in the 13 top American management journals focused on organizational behavior issues. Of these organizational behavior articles, more than three-

quarters, (84.9 percent), were domestic; 15.1 percent were international.

The remaining category of interest to this study was domestic articles that included cultural issues: 5.5 percent of the articles fell into this category. An example of an article in this category would be the decision making practices of Hispanics living in Los Angeles.

Table 3 presents the breakdown of cross-cultural management articles into unicultural, comparative, and intercultural articles. Of the total articles, 4.2 percent were cross-cultural management articles. Of these, 1.9 percent were unicultural, 1.4 percent were comparative, and .9 percent were intercultural. Within the cross-cultural management category, nearly half of the articles were unicultural (47.2 percent); about a third were comparative (34.2 percent); and about a sixth (18.6 percent) were intercultural. Table 4 and Figure 1 show that there was not a rising trend across the decade. The proportion of cross-cultural management articles did not increase substantially from 1971 to 1980. Furthermore, the relative proportions of unicultural, comparative, and intercultural articles did not follow a stable trend.

As summarized in Table 5, these aggregate trends appeared to hold for the individual journals. Of the 13 top American management journals, the range in cross-cultural management articles was from 9.7 percent (*Journal of International Business Studies*), 7.8 percent (*Administrative Science Quarterly*), and 7.3 percent (*Columbia Journal of World Business*) to .8

**Table 3**  
**Publishing Trends**  
**in Cross-Cultural Management**

	<i>All Surveyed Journals</i>	<i>Management Journals</i>	<i>Top Academic Management Journals</i>
Number of journals	24	19	13
Number of articles	11,219	8,795	4,583
	%	%	%
Of the total articles			
Domestic	83.6	81.8	80.4
International	16.4	18.2	19.6
Of the total articles			
General	44.5	37.9	31.3
Organizational behavior	25.3	24.3	33.4
Management	30.2	37.8	35.3
Of the total international articles			
Cross-cultural	26.3	21.9	23.7
Geographic	73.7	78.1	76.3
Of the total organizational behavior articles			
Domestic	84.0	82.3	84.9
Cultural	5.6	4.9	5.5
Not cultural	78.4	77.4	79.4
International	16.0	17.7	15.1
Cultural	14.1	15.2	12.6
Unicultural	6.8	7.9	5.9
Comparative	4.2	4.5	4.3
Intercultural	3.1	2.9	2.4
Geographic	1.9	2.5	2.5
Of the total cross-cultural articles			
Unicultural	1.7	1.9	1.9
Comparative	1.1	1.1	1.4
Intercultural	.8	.6	.9

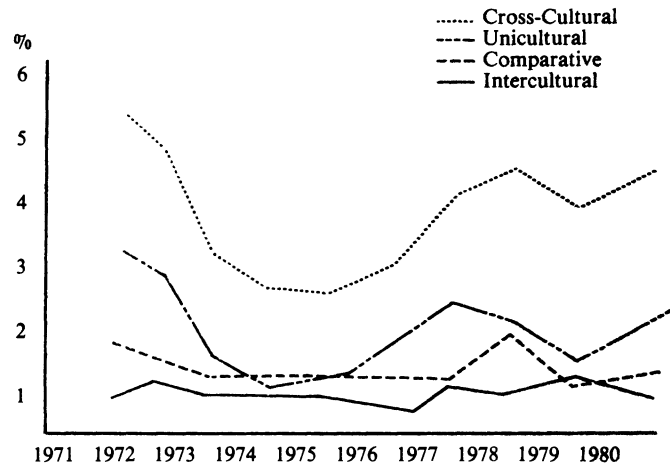
**Table 4**  
**Trends in the Publication of Cross-Cultural Management Articles in 24 Journals, 1971-1980**

Year	Total Articles	International Articles %	Organizational Behavior %	Cross-Cultural Management %	Of the Total International Articles				Of the Total Organizational Behavior Articles			
					Cross-Cultural %	Unicultural %	Comparative %	Intercultural %	Cross-Cultural %	Unicultural %	Comparative %	Intercultural %
1971	973	17.2	28.2	5.4	31.4	19.2	8.1	4.1	19.1	11.7	4.9	2.5
1972	1229	17.7	23.4	4.8	27.1	15.3	6.8	5.0	20.4	11.5	5.1	3.8
1973	1154	16.9	25.5	2.9	17.1	8.3	4.7	4.1	11.3	5.5	3.1	2.7
1974	990	14.8	26.3	2.6	17.6	5.4	6.8	5.4	9.8	3.0	3.8	3.0
1975	1140	15.8	23.8	2.3	14.6	4.4	5.1	5.1	9.7	2.9	3.4	3.4
1976	1200	14.4	25.3	2.7	18.8	10.4	5.6	2.8	10.7	5.9	3.2	1.6
1977	1197	15.2	26.1	3.9	25.7	13.2	6.6	5.9	14.9	7.7	3.8	3.4
1978	1227	15.1	27.5	4.1	27.1	11.9	10.6	4.6	14.8	6.5	5.8	2.5
1979	1170	11.3	23.5	3.4	30.0	11.5	8.8	9.7	14.5	5.5	4.3	4.7
1980	939	14.8	24.2	3.9	26.4	12.2	8.1	6.1	16.0	7.4	4.9	3.7
Total	11,219	16.4	25.2	3.6	26.3	10.8	7.1	5.3	14.1	6.8	4.2	3.1

percent (*Organizational Dynamics*) and 1.8 percent (*Harvard Business Review*). The journals that publish more international articles—*Journal of International Business Studies* (97.3 percent international) and the *Columbia Journal of World Business* (91.6 percent international)—seem to publish relatively fewer organizational behavior articles (15.6 percent and 11.2

percent, respectively). On the other hand, those journals that have published the greatest number of organizational behavior articles—*Organizational Dynamics* (83.3 percent), *Group and Organization Studies* (56.4 percent), and *Administrative Science Quarterly* (44.9 percent)—have not published as many international articles (1.7 percent, 4.9 percent,

**Figure 1**  
**Cross-Cultural Management Articles**  
**as a Proportion of the Total Articles**



**Table 5**  
**Organizational Behavior, International, and Cross-Cultural**  
**Management Articles Published in 24 Journals, 1971-1980**

Journal	Total Articles	Percent of Total Articles That are:					
		Organizational Behavior %	Inter-national %	Cross-Cultural %	Unicultural %	Compar-ative %	Intercultural %
Management Journals	8,795	23.3	18.1	3.6	1.9	1.1	.6
<i>Academy of Management Journal</i> **	412	37.9	5.0	4.3	1.9	2.4	0.0
<i>Academy of Management Proceedings</i> **	825	29.9	9.4	4.6	1.6	1.9	1.1
<i>Academy of Management Review</i> **	218	39.4	3.2	3.2	1.8	0.0	1.4
<i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> **	347	44.9	8.1	7.8	4.3	2.6	.9
<i>California Management Review</i> **	398	32.2	15.0	3.5	2.0	.5	1.0
<i>Columbia Journal of World Business</i> **	508	11.2	91.6	7.3	4.1	2.4	.8
<i>Conference Board Record</i>	1,227	8.1	16.7	1.0	.4	.1	.5
<i>Dun's Review</i>	1,018	9.9	12.5	.3	.1	.1	.1
<i>Group and Organization Studies</i> **	101	56.4	4.9	4.9	.1	0.0	3.9
<i>Harvard Business Review</i> **	703	21.8	11.6	1.8	.9	.6	.3
<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> **	154	15.6	97.3	9.7	3.9	3.2	2.6
<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	192	62.5	16.2	14.1	8.9	4.2	1.0
<i>Management International Review</i>	342	45.3	51.2	15.5	8.5	3.5	3.5
<i>Management Japan</i>	112	18.8	73.3	18.8	15.2	3.6	0.0
<i>Management Science</i>	1,321	1.4	.6	.2	0.0	.1	0.0
<i>MSU Business Topics</i> **	293	30.0	12.9	3.7	2.0	1.0	.7
<i>Organizational Dynamics</i> **	114	83.3	1.7	.8	0.0	.8	0.0
<i>SAM Advanced Management Journal</i> **	328	69.5	4.5	1.5	.3	.9	.3
<i>Sloan Management Review</i> **	182	32.9	8.1	1.0	.5	.5	0.0
<i>13 Double Starred Management Journals</i>	4,583	33.5	8.1	4.3	1.9	1.4	.8
Psychology Journals	2,245	9.8	5.8	2.7	.9	.8	.4
<i>Journal of Applied Behavioral Science</i>	310	46.5	4.2	2.9	2.3	.3	.3
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	1,143	47.6	2.7	2.8	.9	1.2	.7
<i>Journal of Social Psychology</i>	792	4.4	1.5	.7	.3	.3	0.0
Cross-Cultural Journals	179	29.1	64.2	22.9	5.0	5.6	12.3
<i>The Bridge</i>	103	26.2	65.0	23.3	4.8	7.8	1.7
<i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i>	76	32.9	63.1	22.4	5.3	2.6	14.5
All Journals	11,219	25.2	16.4	3.6	1.7	1.1	.8



and 8.1 percent, respectively). Although there are numerous international management articles in the various functional areas (i.e., finance, marketing), there have been few international articles in organizational behavior.

## Discussion

This survey clearly demonstrates that corporate activity has internationalized faster than has the publishing of articles in American management journals. The majority of the total articles and of the organization behavior articles published in American management journals focus on the domestic U.S. environment; they do not refer to culture in any way. Within the category of international organizational behavior articles that do refer to culture, the majority are studies of a single foreign country or studies comparing two countries' organizational practices. The minority are articles that refer to the interaction between people from different cultures within a single organizational setting. Over the decade 1971-1980 there appeared to be no trend either toward increasing the overall proportion of cross-cultural management articles or toward increasing the relative proportion of unicultural, comparative or intercultural articles.

If, at a minimum, organizational behavior research is to remain relevant to managers and not become an ivory tower aside, it must begin to include in its leading journals a substantially greater proportion of articles that go beyond the purely domestic perspective. It also must begin to address international problems and issues. An international perspective is particularly important for the field of organizational behavior. Recent studies (Brossard & Maurice, 1976; Child, 1981; Hofstede, 1980; Laurent, 1979) have concluded that there are major impacts of culture on the ways individuals and groups work within systems. The impact on the behavior of people within work systems appears to be greater than the cultural impact on the systems themselves.

It is suggested that journal editors, scholars, management professors, and working managers need to address the growing internationalism of the work environment more directly. All four groups need to question whether paradigms developed in and for the domestic U.S. environment are applicable outside of

the United States. It is recommended that:

*Journal editors and reviewers* be aware of the importance of cross-cultural and international management to their readership and seek to lead the profession in this new area.

*Scholars* question the applicability of their research (a) beyond the U.S. management community—that is, that they question the universality of their research—and (b) beyond the shrinking segment of the U.S. management community that works strictly within a domestic, unicultural milieu.

*Management professors* question the relevance of material that is based strictly on a domestic, unicultural U.S. population; that they question the types of environments that their students are most likely to be facing during their professional careers and design courses accordingly (AACSB, 1978-1979).

*Managers* question the relevance of management articles that do not address international issues; furthermore, that they question the universal applicability of research results and consultant programs that do not consider the cultural dimension.

Beyond awareness of the international dimension, there are many dilemmas impeding cross-cultural management research. The first is funding. International studies are more expensive than domestic studies. The second is methodological complexity. Issues involving access to representative samples, translation, equivalence of concepts, instrumentation, administration, analysis, and interpretation are difficult, time consuming, and expensive. Frequently they are impossible to solve with the rigor usually required of within-culture studies (Bennett, 1977; Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973; Hofstede, 1980; Kraut, 1975; Sekaran, 1981; Triandis, 1972). Compared with the study of organizational behavior in domestic settings, cross-cultural management research is in its infancy. Perhaps reviewers and journals editors will need to keep this fact more closely in mind when evaluating international organizational behavior studies submitted for publication.

The field of cross-cultural management does not exist with a set of ready answers. Management, as a professional and an academic discipline, must address itself more directly to a new set of issues. Kuhn (1962) suggested that it is very difficult for the scientific community to give up a cherished paradigm. Growing internationalism demands that a narrow domestic paradigm be replaced with one that can encompass the diversity of a global perspective.

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