



Organizational Contexts Relate to the Choice of Assessment Center Exercises?





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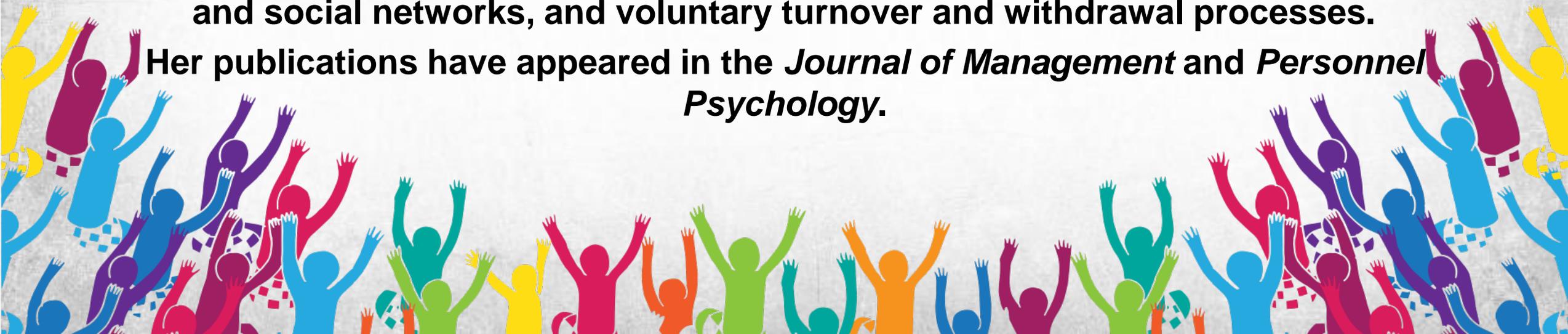
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Her publications have appeared in the *Journal of Management and Personnel Psychology*.





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Caitlin Porter, Ph.D.,
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Do Organizational Contexts Relate to Choice of Assessment Center Exercises?

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40th International Congress on Assessment Center Methods
October 26-28, 2016 Bali, Indonesia

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Case Study: Indonesia

- Inbox (In-basket, In-tray) involves extensive de-brief
- Interactive simulations involve more time for extensive rapport building
- Simulations need visual aids
- Fits with educational and cultural conditions

(Pendit in Povah & Thornton, 2011)



Case Study: Japan

- Use 3 group discussions
- Use Coaching Interaction
- Fits with Japanese culture and corporate culture of peer feedback

(Hiorse in Povah & Thornton, 2011)



Cultural Context Matters

- Differences in HR practices across countries exist (e.g., Dipboye & Johnson, 2008)
- International Task Force on Assessment Center Guidelines (2015) suggests that adaptation to (national) cultural context may be necessary.

Purpose: To investigate whether AC features systematically differ by cultural context.

Which Features?

- 1) **Use of Exercises:** Inbox, Leaderless Group Discussion, Case Study, Oral Presentation, Role Play, Number of Exercises
- 2) **Use of Additional Assessments:** Cognitive Ability Test, Knowledge Test, Personality Test, Background Interview
- 3) **Designer:** Internal HR/IO, External HR/IO, Off-the-Shelf, Off-the-Shelf with Modifications, Integrated (Day-in-the-Life)
- 4) **Cultural Adaptations:** Exercise Types, Exercise Content, Local Examples, Number of Adaptations

Which Contexts?

- 1) Organizational Culture (GLOBE)
- 2) Region of World
- 3) National Culture (Hofstede, 1980)



Method & Analytic Procedures

- 529 responses to a large scale survey of AC practitioners across the globe
- Organizational Culture (GLOBE) - logistic and linear regression
 - All 9 culture variables were investigated simultaneously
- Region of World- Chi-square tests
 - Responses of practitioners working with an AC operating within a single country ($N = 278$)
- National Culture – Multi-level Modeling
 - All 4 culture variables were investigated simultaneously

Which Contexts?

Organizational Culture (GLOBE)

- 1) **Assertive:** To what extent are individuals in this organization assertive and aggressive in work settings?
- 2) **Future Orientation:** To what extent does this organization plan for the future?
- 3) **Gender Egalitarianism:** To what extent does this organization promote equality of men and women at work?
- 4) **Humane Orientation:** To what extent does this organization encourage and reward people for being fair, generous, and kind?
- 5) **Institutional collectivism:** To what extent do the practices of this organization encourage and reward actions by groups of employees and equally distribute resources to everyone?

Which Contexts?

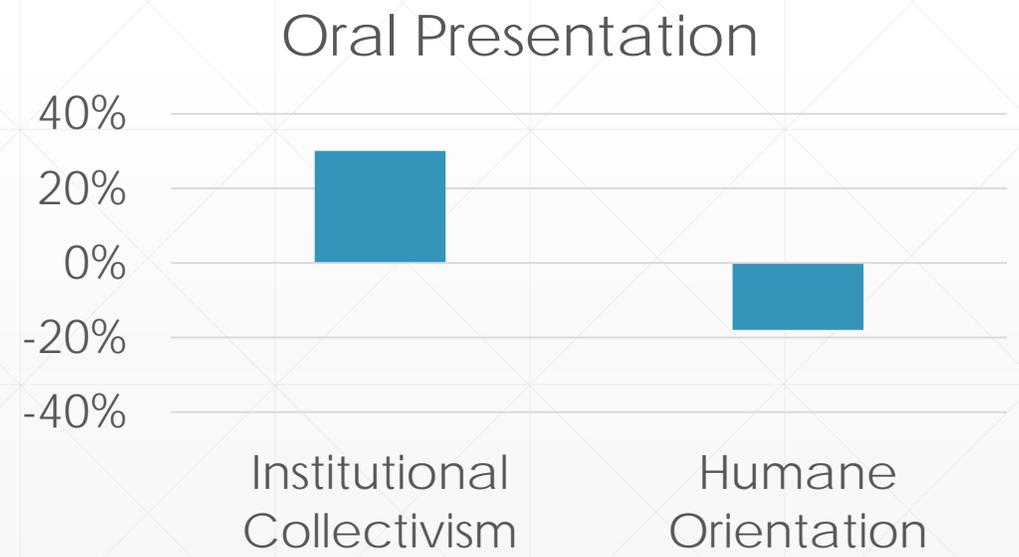
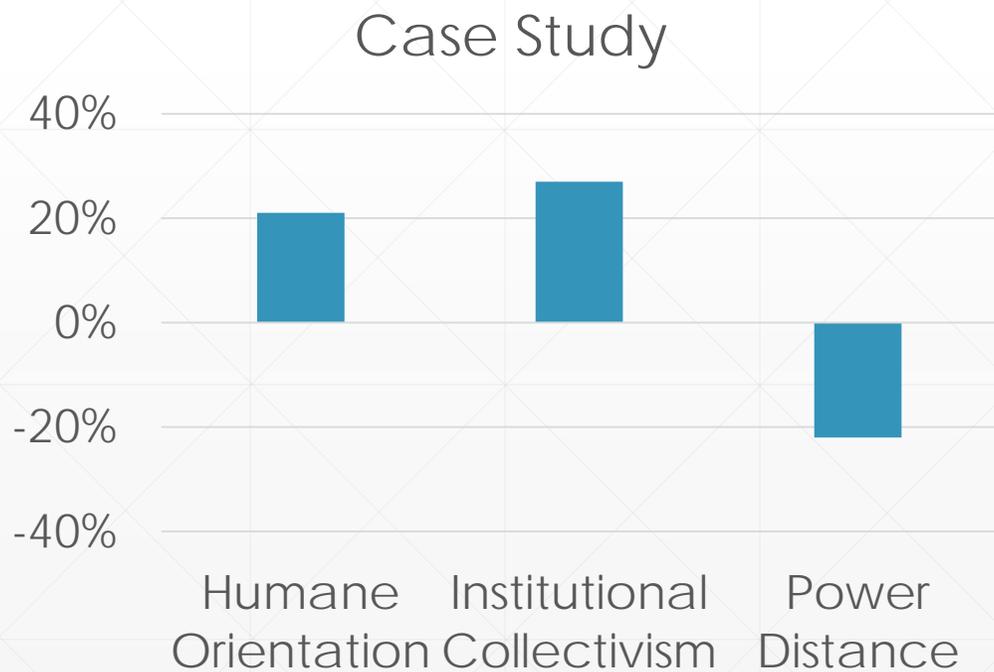
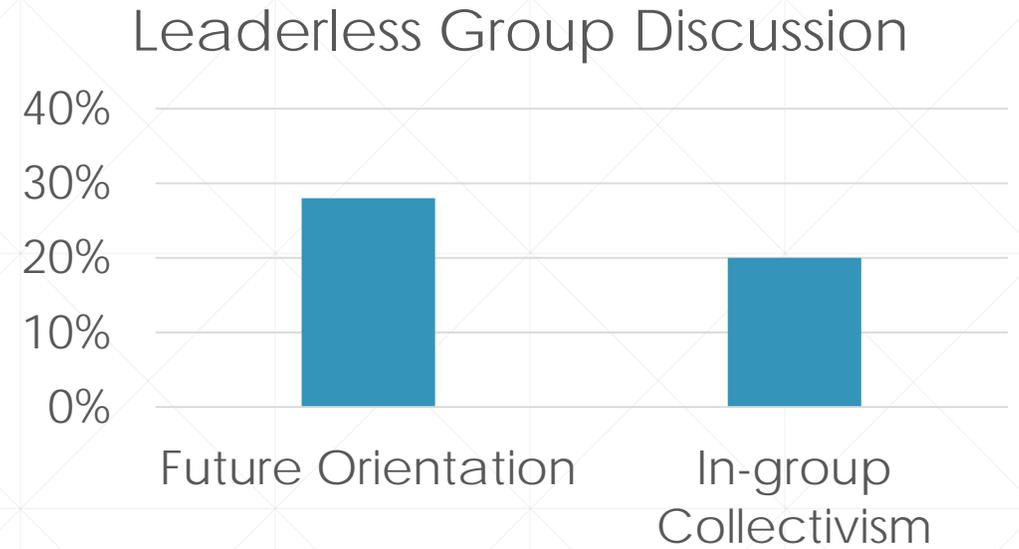
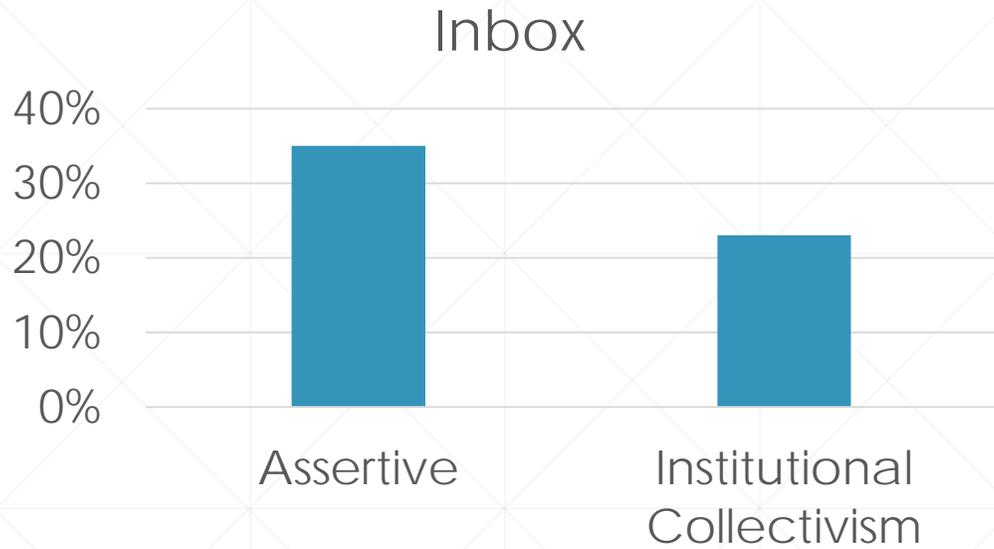
Organizational Culture (GLOBE)

- 6) **In-group collectivism:** To what extent do individuals in this organization express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in the organization?
- 7) **Performance Orientation:** To what extent do the top level managers encourage and reward employees based on excellence and improvement in performance at work?
- 8) **Power Distance:** To what extent do people at the lowest levels in the organization have power to affect the organization?
- 9) **Uncertainty Avoidance:** To what extent does the organization emphasize maintaining rigid social norms and bureaucratic practices?

Use of Exercises

- **Assertive:** 35% MORE likely to use an *inbox*
- **Future Orientation:** 28% MORE likely to use a *leaderless group discussion*
- **Humane Orientation:** 21% MORE likely to use a *case study*
- **In-group collectivism:** 20% MORE likely to use a *leaderless group discussion*
 - 18% LESS likely to use an *oral presentation*
- **Institutional collectivism:** 27% MORE likely to use a *case study*
 - 23% MORE likely to use an *inbox*
 - 30% MORE likely to use an *oral presentation*
- **Power distance:** 22% LESS likely to use a *case study*

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.



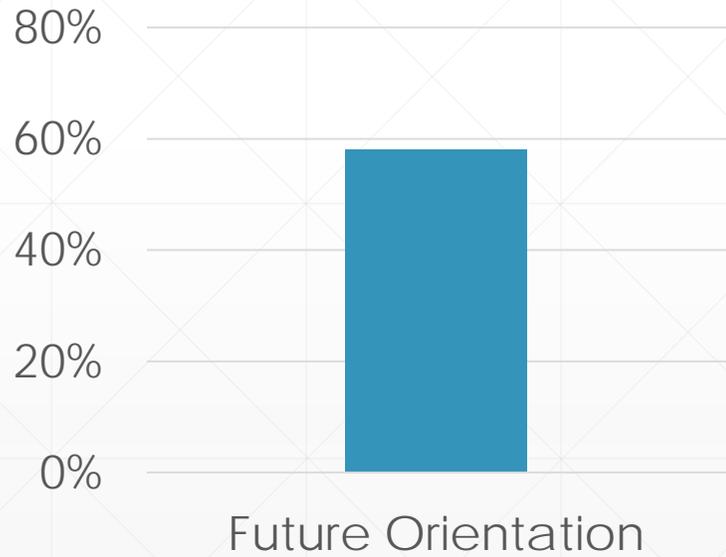
*Odds Ratios presented

Use of Alternative Assessments

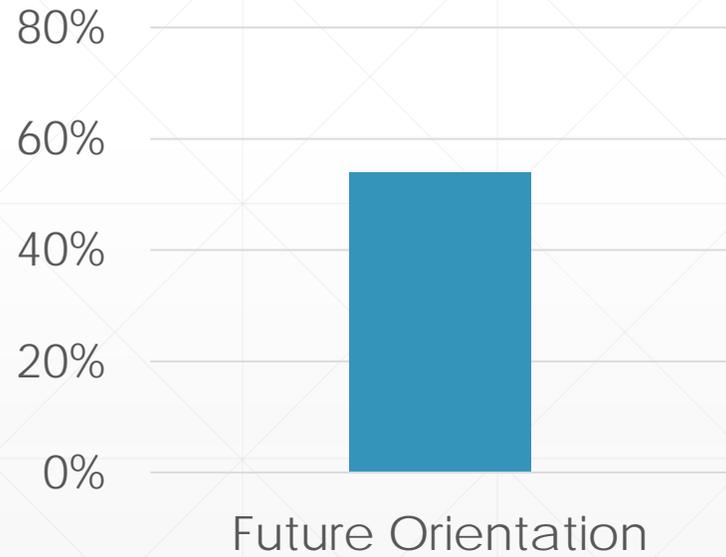
- **Assertive:** 72% MORE likely to use a *knowledge test*
- **Future Orientation:** 54% MORE likely to use a *cognitive ability test*
 - 58% MORE likely to use a *background interview*
- **In-group collectivism:** 27% MORE likely to use a *personality test*
- **Performance Orientation:** 45% LESS likely to use a *knowledge test*
- **Uncertainty Avoidance:** 47% MORE likely to use a *knowledge test*

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Cognitive Ability Test



Background Interview

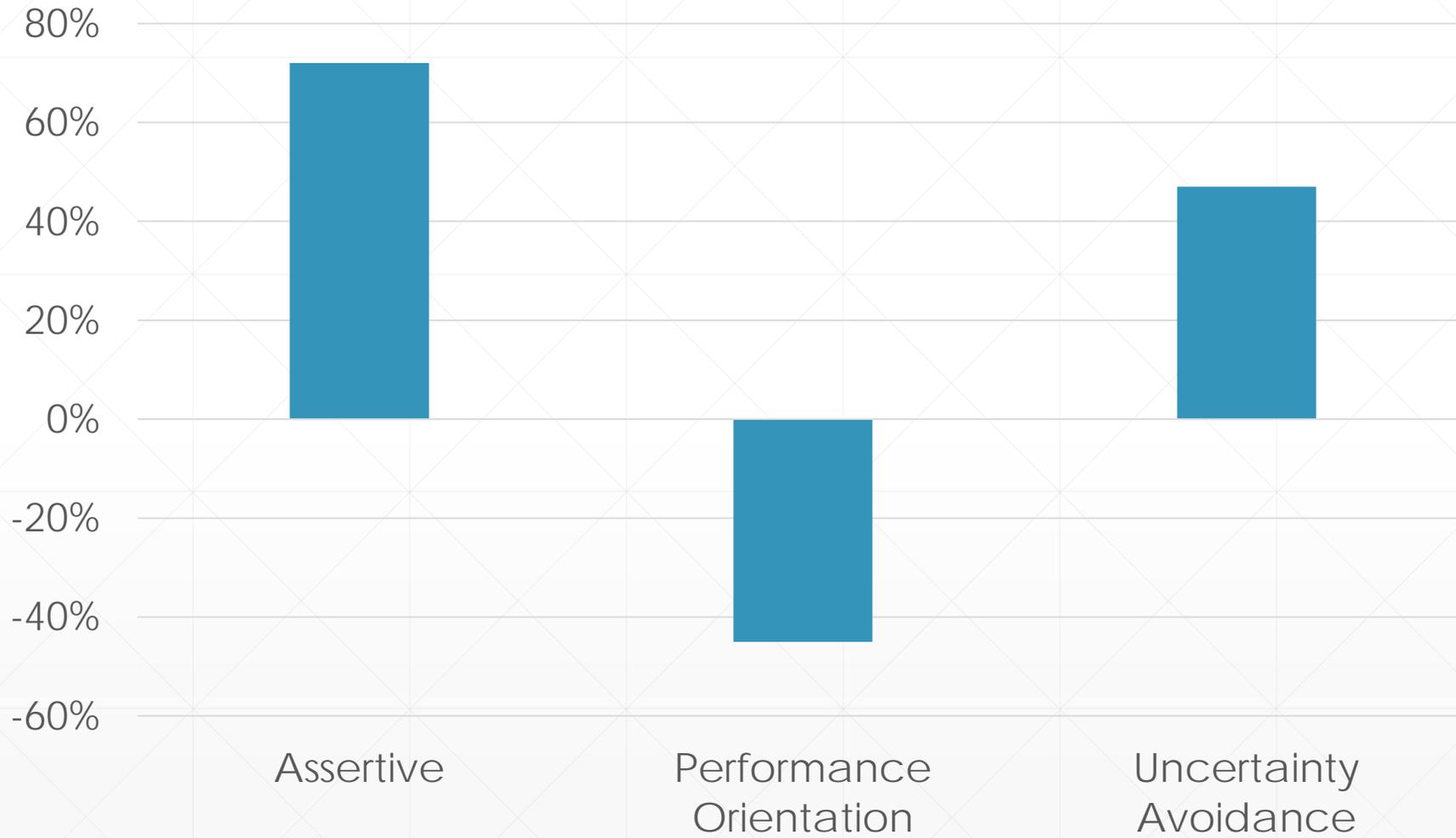


Personality Test



*Odds Ratios presented

Knowledge Test

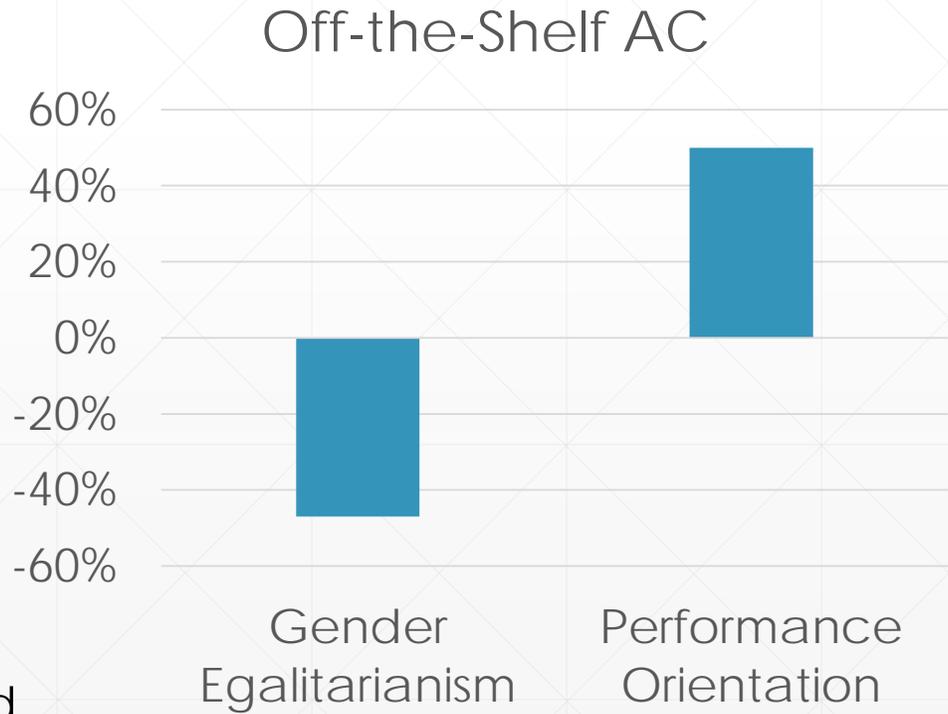
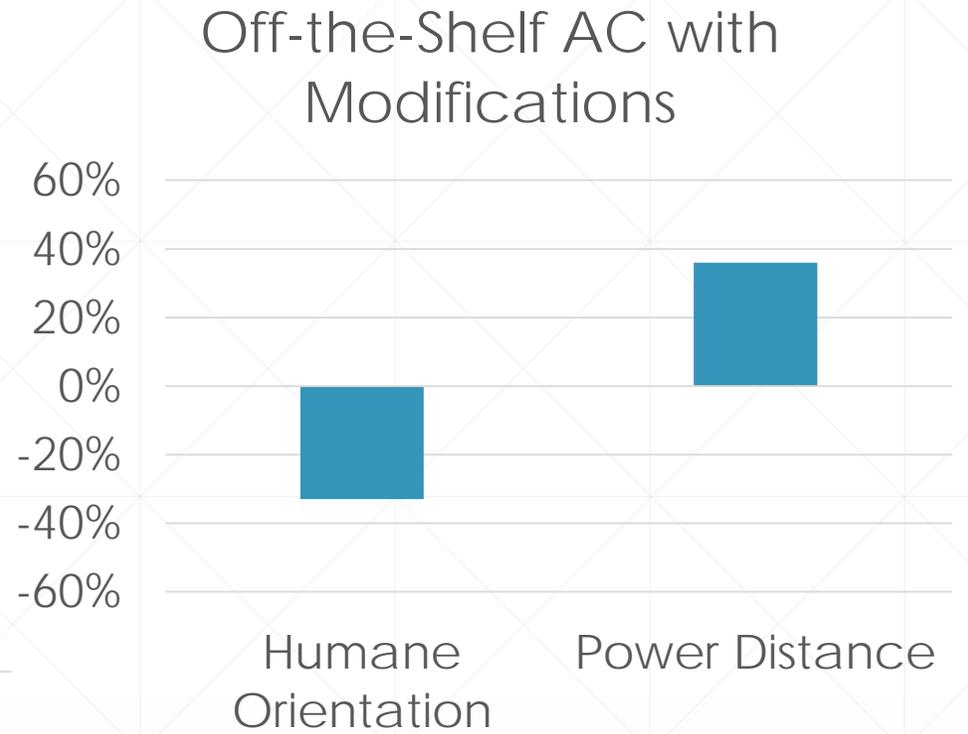
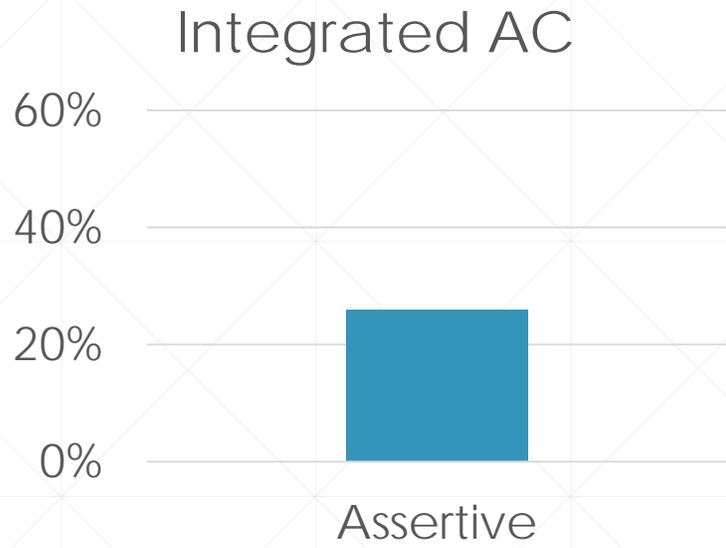


*Odds Ratios presented

Design

- **Assertive:** 26% MORE likely to use an *integrated AC*
- **Gender Egalitarianism:** 47% LESS likely to use *Off-the-Shelf ACs*
- **Humane Orientation:** 33% LESS likely to use *Off-the-Shelf ACs with Modifications*
- **Performance Orientation:** 50% MORE likely to use *Off-the-Shelf ACs*
- **Power Distance:** 36% MORE likely to use *Off-the-Shelf ACs with Modifications*

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.



*Odds Ratios presented

Cultural Adaptations

- **Future Orientation:** 49% MORE likely to adapt the *type of exercise*
 - They also tended to make more cultural adaptations
- **Performance Orientation:** 52% MORE likely to incorporate *local examples* into their exercises

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Which Contexts?

National Region – 15 Regions determined based on similarities in Hofstede's cultural dimensions

1. Switzerland & Germany
2. Netherlands & Sweden
3. United States
4. Russia, Romania, & the Ukraine
5. Belgium & France
6. Japan
7. United Arab Emirates
8. Kenya
9. Turkey
10. Hungary & Italy
11. Brazil
12. India
13. South Africa
14. Australia & New Zealand
15. United Kingdom

Use of Exercises

Compared to all other cultural regions...

- **Netherlands & Sweden** – use *inbox* and *role plays* LESS frequently
- **Russia, Romania, & Ukraine** – use *case studies* MORE frequently
- **Belgium & France** – use *case studies* MORE frequently
- **The UAE** – uses *oral presentations* MORE frequently
- **India** - uses *case studies* LESS frequently
- **The UK** - uses *leaderless group discussions* LESS frequently

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Use of Alternative Assessments

Compared to all other cultural regions...

- **Russia, Romania, & Ukraine** – use *personality tests* MORE frequently
- **Japan** – uses *personality tests* LESS frequently
- **Hungary & Italy** – use *cognitive ability tests* and *background interviews* MORE frequently
- **Brazil** – uses *knowledge* and *personality tests* MORE frequently
- **India** - uses *personality tests* LESS frequently
- **South Africa** - uses *personality tests* MORE frequently

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Design

Compared to all other cultural regions...

- **Belgium & France** – MORE frequently use *Off-the-Shelf ACs with Modifications*
- **Japan** – MORE frequently use ACs designed by *external HR/IO* associates
- **The UAE** – MORE frequently uses *integrated ACs*
- **South Africa** –MORE frequently use *Off-the-Shelf ACs with modifications*
- **Australia & New Zealand** – MORE frequently use *Off-the-Shelf ACs*
- **The UK** - LESS frequently use *Off-the-Shelf ACs*

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Cultural Adaptations

Compared to all other cultural regions...

- **The UAE** – MORE frequently incorporates *local examples*
 - They also tend to make a *larger number of cultural adaptations*
- **Brazil** – MORE frequently adapts the *type* and *content of its exercises*
 - They also tend to make a *larger number of cultural adaptations*
- **South Africa** – MORE frequently incorporates *local examples*
- **Australia & New Zealand** – LESS frequently incorporate *local examples*

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Which Contexts?

National Culture (Hofstede, 1980)

- 1) **Power Distance:** The degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally
- 2) **Individualism (versus Collectivism):** A preferences for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families.
- 3) **Masculinity (versus Femininity):** A preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.
- 4) **Uncertainty Avoidance:** The degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity (Should we try to control for the future or just let it happen?)

Use of Exercises

- **Power Distance:** MORE likely to use *role plays*
- **Individualism:** MORE likely to use *case studies*
- **Masculinity:** MORE likely to use *oral presentations* and *role plays*
- **Uncertainty Avoidance:** MORE likely to use *case studies* and *leaderless group discussions*

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Use of Alternative Assessments

- **Power Distance:** LESS likely to use *Off-the-Shelf ACs*
- **Individualism:** MORE likely to use ACs designed by *external HR/IOs*

*Only statistically significant findings at $p < .10$ reported.

Cultural Adaptations

- **Power Distance:** MORE likely to adapt the *content of the exercises*
 - They also tend to make a larger number of cultural adaptations
- **Masculinity:** MORE likely to adapt the *content of the exercises*
 - They also tend to make a larger number of cultural adaptations

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Take-Aways

- Context Matters: The cultural context likely shapes AC Simulation features
- AC Simulation features systematically differ by organizational culture, cultural region, and national culture

Remaining Questions

- Are these differences in AC simulation features intentional or unintentional?
- Are there other AC practices related to cultural context?
- Which cultural frame is most meaningful for AC practice (GLOBE vs. Region vs. Hofstede)?
- What types of cultural adaptations are being made and why?
- Should there be more adaptation to the cultural context?
- Are there other reasons that adaptations are being made to ACs beyond culture?