



# **Tigers and Dragons: Profiling High Performance Asian Firms**

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# Tigers and Dragons: Profiling High Performance Asian Firms

*Rohit Deshpandé and John U. Farley*

The emergence of several Asian “Tiger” economies during the last decade has spawned considerable interest in developing international models for management and marketing. But differences in language, cultural and economic history, and political orientation significantly complicate crosscultural comparisons and weaken the applicability of global generalizations. For the most part, the prevailing theories have originated in the West, which poses particular difficulty for scholars interested in Asia. Not only do these theories often fail to generalize well across divergent national cultures, they have also met with resistance from many Asian scholars who believe in a distinct Asian business model.

## **Study**

In this report, authors Deshpandé and Farley attempt to uncover the limits of both international and more regional, crosscultural comparisons. They do so by examining the way four key organizational factors—innovation, market orientation, organizational culture, and organizational climate—affect business performance. Their work extends an earlier MSI-supported study, conducted by Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster on five industrial countries, by focusing exclusively on business-to-business firms from cities in six Asian countries—Hong Kong, India, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, and China.

The results reveal that the difficulties experienced in generating and applying international management models have less to do with a reflexive “not invented here” reaction than they do with the important influence of national cultural differences on choices about organizational structure and management.

## **Findings and Implications**

This study of firms from six Asian countries confirms that what is true for firms in industrial countries is true for Asian firms as well in two significant ways.

On the one hand, the authors find that differences in organizational culture correspond to specific differences in national culture. Firms based in countries just emerging from central planning into a form of market socialism, for instance, tend to be more bureaucratic, while those with stronger private sectors tend to be more entrepreneurial.

Because of the great diversity of national cultures, history, demographics, industry structure, savings rates, and per capita incomes and economic growth in China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, India, and Japan, such differences are more pronounced among the Asian firms of this study than they were among the firms from the industrialized countries of the earlier one.

On the other hand, the impact the four organizational factors have on firm performance are generally the same regardless of national differences. Specifically, more competitive and entrepreneurial firms consistently perform better than do more bureaucratic and consensual ones.

Despite these similar conclusions, the study finds significant differences in Asian firms as well. Specifically, they find that while the earlier report identifies the importance of innovation for firms in industrialized countries, their study finds that market orientation is more central to the high performance of Asian firms.

Finally, this study suggests that just as there is no single management model that can be applied unilaterally across cultures, there is no unified Asian style of management. Market orientation, innovation, organizational climate, and organizational culture all affect firm performance in predictable ways.

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# Contents

Introduction .....	3
Background .....	5
Theoretical Basis for the Organizational Comparisons .....	5
Asian Scholars and “Asian Management” .....	6
The Six Asian Samples—A Picture of Diversity.....	7
Hypotheses .....	9
Method .....	11
Samples .....	11
Measurements.....	11
Reliability .....	12
Results .....	13
Asia, Inc.? .....	14
Differences in Factors Affecting Performance .....	16
Discussion .....	19
Notes.....	23
References.....	25
Tables	
Table 1. Key Characteristics of Six Asian Countries.....	8
Table 2. Sources, Content, and Reliability of Scales .....	12
Table 3a. Mean Values by Country for Independent Variables.....	13
Table 3b. Country Means of Scores of Explanatory Variables .....	14
Table 4. Country Profiles.....	14
Table 5. Analysis of Variance of Sample-Specific Regression Analysis of Performance .....	16
Table 6. Regressions Linking Performance to Independent Variables.....	17

# Introduction

The emergence of Asian so-called “Tiger” economies during the last decade has prompted considerable interest in crosscultural testing and truly international generalization of hypotheses about management in general and marketing in particular (Winer 1998; Aharoni and Burton 1994; *Management Science* 1994). But theories developed in the industrialized West may or may not generalize well across various divergent national cultures to develop a truly comparative, crossinstitutional body of knowledge (Newman and Nollen 1996; Koza and Thoenig 1995). Even if a theory generalizes qualitatively, model parameters applying that theory crossnationally may have systematically different values in different settings. Further, crosscultural comparisons are seldom straightforward replications of an original study, as language and other considerations may affect how a theory relates to local culture (Douglas and Craig 2000).

More specifically, national culture differences may affect determinants of business performance in one or both of two ways that are often confused in discussions of cultural specificity (Farley and Lehmann 1994; Hofstede 1994):

1. The most visible differences between national cultures are in average measures, which reflect the fact that culture-defining factors are no doubt present to a greater or lesser degree in different national cultures (Kotha, Dunbar, and Bird 1995; Johansson and Yip 1994; Schneider and de Meyer 1991).
2. However, subtle potential cultural differences may have major implications for strategic management. A particular factor may have differential effects on performance across countries and/or cultures (Roth and Ricks 1994). For example, the innovativeness of a firm might be the strongest predictor of business performance across all countries but may still have a stronger effect in one country than another. Such subtle differences are important because strategies for innovation may thus need to be set at different investment levels in different countries. In crossnational performance models, unsurprisingly, culture-specific differences in means are far more common than differences in slopes relating these same factors to performance (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000).

The empirical study reported here examines how marketing-related organizational factors relate to corporate performance of representative samples of Chinese, Hong Kong, Indian, Japanese, Thai, and Vietnamese firms that compete in business-to-business markets. This paper extends the Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (2000) results for firms in five industrial countries (which themselves have considerably different national cultures) to a set of quite different Asian settings. We discuss a conceptual framework for the study and then describe the research design, sample, and results.

# Background

## Theoretical Basis for the Organizational Comparisons<sup>1</sup>

We use a framework for comparison in which firms that perform well are hypothesized to share the following characteristics (while the model was based generally on Western theoretical elements, the first empirical application was in Japan (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 1993)):

1. A greater degree of market orientation so that the customer is placed first in the set of stakeholders with which the firm deals;
2. Organizational cultures and climates with above-average external orientation—to markets and to external sources of ideas—for that society; and
3. Innovativeness, particularly in regard to developing and launching new products and services.

By implication, there should be a positive relationship between each of the four characteristics and appropriate measures of business performance.

The four elements described above are drawn from different disciplines, and each has a distinct history in terms of theory and measurement:

*Market Orientation.* The concept of market orientation is central to the management philosophy based on the marketing concept (Drucker 1954; Levitt 1960; Webster 1988). Market orientation is the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interests first, presumably leading to improved performance through the creation of additional value for the customer (Deshpandé 1999). Testing of this assumption generally has produced positive results (Narver and Slater 1998; Deshpandé and Farley 1998). Deshpandé and Farley (1998) also integrated three different but related approaches that had been developed to measure market orientation (Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar 1993; Narver and Slater 1990; Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 1993). The three approaches produce highly correlated results when used on the same subjects, and the scales are highly reliable in applications in both industrial and industrializing countries (Deshpandé and Farley 1999a).

*Organizational Innovativeness.* One of Peter Drucker's most-cited passages (1954) says, "There is only one valid definition of business purpose: to create a customer. . . . It is the customer who determines what the business is, . . . . [b]ecause it is [the] purpose [of business] to create a customer, and business enterprise has two—and only these two—basic functions: marketing and innovation" (p. 34). Economists have established the aggregate importance of organizational innovation (Mansfield et al. 1997). Organizational structure and strategy have been linked to performance through innovation (Capon, Farley, Hulbert, and Lehmann 1992; Gronhaug and Kaufmann 1988).

*Organizational culture* and *organizational climate* are closely related; Schneider and Rentsch (1988), for example, define culture as “why things happen” and climate as “what happens” in an organization.

*Organizational culture* is the pattern of shared values and beliefs that helps individuals understand organizational functioning and thus provides them with behavioral norms (Weick 1985; Deshpandé and Webster 1989). We use a four-part classification of culture developed from work by Quinn 1988; Quinn and McGrath 1985; Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1983; Campbell 1977; Cameron and Freeman 1991.

Competitive Culture	Characterized by an emphasis on competitive advantage and market superiority
Entrepreneurial Culture	Emphasizing innovation and risk-taking
Bureaucratic Culture	Characterized by regulations and formal structures
Consensual Culture	Emphasizing loyalty, tradition, and internal maintenance

In practice, actual organizations turn out to be a mixture of these four organizational types, but there is generally a difference in relative emphasis within different firms. Companies with an emphasis on more open cultures (competitive and entrepreneurial) are presumed to perform better than those with more closed cultures (bureaucratic and consensual). Since the overall nature of organizational culture profiles are likely to be tied to national culture (Hofstede 1980, 1991, 1994), the relevant comparisons are among firms within populations (for example, countries) rather than for all firms.

*Organizational climate* is an enduring quality of the internal environment of the firm experienced by its members and can be described in terms of specific attributes of an organization (Tagiuri and Litwin 1968). It has a long and distinguished history in organization research and in popular books on firm performance. Climates that encourage innovativeness, communication, participation, decentralization, friendliness, and trust have been related to better performance (Capon et al. 1991; Capon, Farley, and Hoenig 1997).

### **Asian Scholars and “Asian Management”**

Among Asian scholars, there is some debate regarding what they view as a “Western management model” espoused by Western management experts and Western business schools. The tension generally is reflected in discussions of a distinct “Asian business model” and characterized by such expressions as “informed by the West but gaining thoroughly Asian insights” (Craimer 1998, p. 68). Such Asian insights are an interesting combination of the old and the new. Clearly most important among the old is the emphasis on *The Art of War*, a work two and a half millennia old and attributed to Sun Tsu that focuses on strategy. This work has contributed a strong Asian flavor, a strong historical notion, and a strong military metaphor to the study of strategy in both the East and West. One shared characteristic of the newer work is a focus on greater internationalization. For example, Ohmae (1999) focuses on the strategic implications of globalization, and Tse,

Gorn, and Lee (1988) add a discussion of ethical issues to strategies for cross-cultural marketing. But there is also considerable diversity among these and other Asian approaches to organizational research. For example, Vietnamese scholars such as Dong (1996) and Chinese scholars such as Zhang and Zhan (1996) often focus on Confucian values and their effect on current developments (Kan 1999). Meanwhile, Japanese scholars such as Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) base their assessment of business practices on the tacit and wholeness of knowledge in a more Buddhist framework. However, it appears that no unified Asian model has yet been formulated.

Much of this discussion regarding Asian business models is conceptual in nature since empirical work focusing on an Asian management model is somewhat limited, and also tends to use Western measurement technology (for example, Pearson and Ertrekin 1998; Davies and Walters 1999; Ralston et al. 1997) to calibrate Eastern aspects of management.

### **The Six Asian Samples—A Picture of Diversity**

This study involves samples of firms located in major industrial cities in China (Shanghai), Hong Kong, India (Bombay), Japan (Tokyo), Thailand (Bangkok), and Vietnam (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City). While the five industrial countries compared by Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (2000) had widely varying national cultures, they were all large basically market economies with per capita income levels among the top 10 worldwide. By comparison, the Asian sample here is quite diverse. In addition to the many obvious differences in national cultures and history, these countries also are quite different from each other in terms of demographics, industry structure, savings rates, and per capita incomes and economic growth over the past decade (Table 1). (The figures on such matters as savings and economic structure should be viewed as relative measures of magnitude rather than as absolute value). Table 1 also shows the scores that four of the Asian settings received on three of Hofstede's indexes (1980, 1994) (China and Vietnam were not included in Hofstede's work). All four Asian settings are below the median in Hofstede's global sample on Individualism, but there is a broad intra-country range in both Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance.

**Table 1. Key Characteristics of Six Asian Countries**

Country	Japan	Hong Kong	Thailand	India	China	Vietnam
Sample Size	43	147	100	29	100	127
Location of Sample	Tokyo	Hong Kong	Bangkok	Bombay	Shanghai	Hanoi/ Ho Chi Minh City
<b>Country's Population and Education</b>						
Number (millions in 1998)	126	7	61	979	1,238	76
Average Growth 1997-1998	0.3%	2.4%	1.1%	1.9%	1.0%	1.7%
Urban Population (%)	79%	95%	21%	28%	33%	24%
Literacy (%)	100%	92%	95%	53%	83%	83%
<b>Recent Economic System</b>						
	Market	Market	Market	Heavy government controls	Central planning emerging to market socialism	Central planning emerging to market socialism
<b>GNP</b>						
Per Capita (1998 US\$)	\$32,380	\$23,670	\$2200	\$430	\$750	\$330
Per Capita Growth (average 1988-1998)	1.8%	2.7%	6.9%	3.8%	8.8%	7.9%
Structure (1% in 1998)						
Industry	28.1%	14.7%	41.2%	26.1%	11.4%	31.5%
Services	56%	85.2%	47.7%	46.4%	23.5%	35.3%
National Savings (% of 1998 GNP)	32.4%	NA	40.6%	21.9%	41.4%	5.1%
<b>National Culture as Reflected in Rank of 39 Countries in Hofstede (1980, 1994) Scores</b>						
Uncertainty Avoidance (stresses preference for structured situation)	4	36	21	33	NA	NA
Power Distance (inequality is viewed as normal)	21	7	13	4	NA	NA
Individualism (stresses acting as an individual rather than as a group)	23	32	35	22	NA	NA
NA—Not available						
Source: World Bank, 1999						

In addition, the specific business environment in each country is quite different. China and Vietnam are emerging from central planning into a form of market socialism. Hong Kong, of course, is now part of China—albeit with a very special status. However, in terms of the organizational factors under study here and in terms of the personal values of the managers, Hong Kong firms have been shown (unsurprisingly, given its history over the past century) to differ from firms in six other Chinese cities (Deshpandé and Farley 2001). India has had a system of state industries and rigid controls of the private sector for half a century. It is not clear that firms in centrally planned economies are rewarded for either superior market orientation or innovation. It is also not evident that an externally oriented organizational culture serves a firm well in a highly bureaucratic, controlled centrally planned economy (Kan 1999).

# Hypotheses<sup>2</sup>

We have two sets of hypotheses. The first set arises from the discussion of cultural diversity in our sample:

H<sub>1a</sub>: There will be significant differences over the six Asian settings in Organizational Culture, Organizational Climate, Organizational Innovativeness, and Market Orientation.

Relatedly, Farley and Lehmann (1994) point out that there is no necessary relationship between inter-country mean differences and differences in performance responsiveness (slopes) to those same factors. For example, Bowman, Farley, and Schmittlein (2000) find independence of country mean differences and slope differences in a four-country study of foreign exchange markets. Hence:

H<sub>1b</sub>: There will be no significant difference across countries in how Organizational Culture, Organizational Climate, Organizational Innovativeness, or Market Orientation affect business Performance.

Acceptance of H<sub>1b</sub>, a statistical null hypothesis, would imply a similar response over countries of Performance to organizational factors. Both hypotheses 1a and 1b were accepted for the five highly industrialized countries studied by Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (2000).

The second set of four hypotheses involves how the organizational factors affect Performance. We expect qualitatively similar results across the six settings examined here for the specific impacts of Organizational Culture, Organizational Climate, Organizational Innovativeness, and Market Orientation on Performance. The country-specific differences, if any, are structured to be increments (positive or negative) added to an average effect for the entire sample.

H<sub>2a</sub>: Competitive cultures will be most strongly associated with better business Performance, followed by Entrepreneurial cultures; Bureaucratic and Consensual cultures will be associated with poorer business Performance.

Testing of this hypothesis is extended to Organizational Climate.

H<sub>2b</sub>: More participative Organizational Climate will be associated with better business Performance.

Also, the growing evidence on the importance of innovation supports:

H<sub>2c</sub>: Organizational Innovativeness will be associated with better business Performance.

The final hypothesis focuses on the core concept of marketing.

H<sub>2d</sub>: Market Orientation is positively related to better business Performance.

Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (2000) confirmed the first three hypotheses in their study of five industrial countries, but they did not find a significant effect of Market Orientation on Performance (Hypothesis 2d).

# Method

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with a representative sample of senior managers from companies headquartered in each of the six settings. The interviews were carried out, as they were in all of the countries in our other studies, by personnel experienced in business-to-business contexts from major market research firms. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity for both themselves and their companies, and were offered a report of the results as an incentive to participate in the study.

## **Samples**

In India, Hong Kong, Japan, and Thailand, the basic sample of companies was randomly drawn from stock market listings. Because of the importance of large privately held firms in India and Thailand, the publicly traded samples were augmented with a group of privately held firms, also chosen randomly from lists maintained by the research firms. These privately held companies comprised one-third of the final samples. Because the very new stock markets do not provide adequate sampling frames, the samples in Vietnam and China were drawn randomly from lists of industrial firms maintained by the research firms, which have been assembled from industrial directories and public documents. Both the Vietnamese and Chinese samples include state-owned enterprises and newer types of firms such as joint ventures now permitted by economic reforms (Du and Clarke 1998). All interviews were carried out in a major industrial city.

## **Measurements**

Performance and the seven organizational variables (Organizational Culture [i.e., Competitive, Entrepreneurial, Bureaucratic, or Consensual], Organizational Climate, Organizational Innovativeness, Market Orientation) were measured with scales developed elsewhere but used in seven countries including two industrializing countries, India (Deshpandé and Farley 1999b) and Vietnam (Deshpandé and Farley 1999a). The sources and content of the eight scales are shown in Table 2, and the full scales are in Deshpandé and Farley 2000b.

**Table 2. Sources, Content, and Reliability of Scales**

Concepts	Number of Items	Scale Content	Reliability (Cronbach $\alpha$ )		
			Five Other Asian Settings	Japan <sup>1</sup>	Five Industrial Countries <sup>2</sup>
<b>Organizational Culture*</b>					
Consensual	4	Personal atmosphere, mentor-style leadership, loyalty and tradition, cohesion, and morale	.62	.65	.68
Bureaucratic	4	Formalization, coordinator-style leadership, presence of rules and policies, stability	.57	.71	.60
Entrepreneurial	4	Entrepreneurial dynamism, risk-taking, leadership, innovation, emphasizes growth	.44	.66	.78
Competitive	4	Production oriented, goal-oriented leadership, task accomplishment, competitiveness (Source: Cameron and Freeman 1991; Quinn 1988)	.51	.82	.65
<b>Innovativeness</b>	5	Being first to market, avoiding late entry and stable markets, being at cutting edge of technology (Source: Capon, Farley, Hulbert, and Lehmann 1992)	.57	.85	.62
<b>Organizational Climate</b>	5	Communication, trust, participation, friendliness, self-management (Source: Capon, Farley, and Hulbert 1988)	.70	.78	.69
<b>Market Orientation</b>	9	Customer service, good market information, knowledge of competitors, customer value, customer focus, product differentiation, putting customer first, best products, primary business is serving customer (Source: Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 1993)	.71	.76	.71
<b>Performance</b>	4	Profits, size, growth, share (Source: Buzzell and Gale 1987; Kotabe et al. 1991)	.78	.80	.78

\*Constant-sum scale with sum of all four items equal to 400 for all respondents

<sup>1</sup> Source: Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 1993

<sup>2</sup> Source: Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000

## Reliability

The first applications were in the industrial world, where pairs (dyads) of managers were used in all samples to allow analysis of inter-rater reliabilities within firms as well as conventional intra-scale reliabilities measured in terms of Cronbach  $\alpha$ 's. An acceptable level of reliability was found, where the conventional floor level of .6 (out of 1.0) was met (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000). A study in India (Deshpandé and Farley 1999b) used this same sampling methodology and produced the same patterns of reliability and within-firm inter-rater correlations. As the research program moved beyond the industrial world, the question of whether the measurement methods were adequate became increasingly important, especially because the methodology was simplified somewhat. We later showed that measures of both Market Orientation and Performance are highly reliable in a broad range of applications (Deshpandé and Farley 1999a). The somewhat lower levels of scale reliabilities for Organizational Culture are within a general range acceptable for exploratory research of the type represented in this paper (Nunnally 1967), but they indicate that further research is needed on methodologies to measure Organizational Culture globally.

# Results

The results of the overall tests of mean equality (Table 3a) show that Consensual and Bureaucratic elements of Organizational Cultures are greater than the Entrepreneurial and Competitive elements.

**Table 3a. Mean Values by Country for Independent Variables**

	All	Japan	Hong Kong	Thailand	India	China	Vietnam	Test for mean equality <sup>1</sup> (P=)	Industry as covariate (P=)	Industry-country interaction (P=)
<b>Organizational Culture</b>										
Consensual	101.8	116.7(+)	102.7	108.9(+)	91.6(-)	93.0(-)	97.6(-)	.00	.42	.16
Bureaucratic	105.3	99.9	102.8	100.4	89.7(-)	110.8(+)	113.7(+)	.00	.74	.68
Entrepreneurial	97.8	77.6(-)	96.5	91.8(-)	124.1(+)	108.5(+)	99.4	.00	.42	.25
Competitive	95.1	105.8(+)	97.9	99.0	94.6	87.6(-)	89.6(-)	.00	.07	.03
<b>Organizational Climate</b>	28.4	27.2(-)	27.9	29.5(+)	28.9	30.6(+)	27.9(-)	.00	.43	.50
<b>Innovativeness</b>	16.2	17.8(+)	15.0(-)	13.9(-)	17.7(+)	17.7(+)	16.2	.00	.26	.41
<b>Market Orientation</b>	35.4	32.5(-)	34.5(-)	36.0(+)	36.0	37.3(+)	35.2	.00	.17	.77

(+) Significantly above the mean

(-) Significantly below the mean

<sup>1</sup> Overall significantly different over countries based on multivariate analysis of variance

There is, however, considerable heterogeneity which we will discuss in the next section. This heterogeneity is reflected in the fact that all seven measures are different over the six samples at a high degree of statistical significance. These differences are not the result of industry differences or of country-industry interactions, both of which have a pattern of insignificance (note that Table 3b provides comparative statistics on these variables from earlier research).

**Table 3b. Country Means of Scores of Explanatory Variables<sup>1</sup>**

	Japan	U.S.	France	England	Germany	Mean
<b>Organizational Culture Types<sup>2</sup></b>						
Bureaucratic*	99.9	80.3	99.1	76.8	83.2	89.6
Competitive*	103.3	112.5	93.7	116.3	89.4	104.4
Entrepreneurial*	77.6	105.8	128.3	99.1	131.1	100.3
Consensual*	119.3	101.4	78.9	107.6	96.2	105.8
<b>Organizational Climate</b>	27.2	26.9	26.3	26.7	26.4	26.8
<b>Innovativeness</b>	17.5	18.4	16.3	17.5	18.2	17.0
<b>Market Orientation<sup>3</sup></b>						
Measured at Supplier*	32.5	34.8	32.1	33.1	36.9	34.3
Measured at Customer*	32.1	32.1	29.9	29.7	33.5	31.7

<sup>1</sup> Significantly different as a group in MANOVA

<sup>2</sup> Significantly different over countries ( $p < .01$ ) and significantly different over culture types ( $p < .01$ ) as a group in MANOVA

<sup>3</sup> Significantly different over countries in both measures ( $p = .01$ ) and significantly different between customer and supplier measure ( $p = .03$ )

\* Item significantly different over countries

(Source: Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000)

### Asia Inc.?

The profiles of the individual countries (Table 4, which shows the values which are significantly different from the overall average) indicate across-country heterogeneity rather than a homogenous “Asian” style of management.

**Table 4. Country Profiles**

(Country means significantly above or below the overall average in Table 3a)

	Japan	Hong Kong	Thailand	India	China	Vietnam
<b>Organizational Culture</b>						
Consensual	Highest		High		Lowest	Low
Bureaucratic				Lowest	High	Highest
Competitive	Highest				Lowest	Low
Entrepreneurial	Lowest		Low	Highest	High	
<b>Organizational Climate</b>	Low	Lowest	High		Highest	Low
<b>Innovativeness</b>	Highest	Low	Lowest	High	High	
<b>Market Orientation</b>	Lowest	Low	High		Highest	

Japanese firms (probably the most studied in terms of management through the successful decades of the 1970s and 1980s) and Chinese firms (probably the furthest ahead among the economies emerging from central economic planning) have the sharpest profiles in terms of extreme values. Japanese organizational cultures reflect the highly consensual nature of Japanese national culture. These are also distinctly nonentrepreneurial organizational cultures. This pattern may indicate diffi-

culties in the longer run in developing markets both domestically and abroad. Chinese firms in Shanghai, by contrast, reflect relatively entrepreneurial cultures, open organizational climates, and a relatively high degree of market orientation. If current changes in Chinese management and organizational forms are successful in reducing the bureaucratic legacy of central planning and in focusing more on market competition, Chinese firms such as these (including many well-run state-owned enterprises) may be well positioned for a more market-oriented economy.

India and Vietnam constitute another interesting pair for comparison, as both emerge from systems of centralized control of some (India) or all (Vietnam) important industries. India's highly vibrant private sector seems well positioned for an entrepreneurial outburst. Vietnamese firms, in contrast to the Chinese firms, which are emerging from a similar structure, appear to face a more serious set of managerial problems as they move towards a more market-driven structure. (This pattern is shared by both state-owned enterprises and Vietnamese versions of joint ventures and private firms (Deshpandé and Farley 2000a).

Hong Kong and Thailand are quite different from the others. Hong Kong has attained a high level of economic success, but its firms have not developed a clear profile of organizational culture—in fact, it is the only sample of firms in which the hypothesis of equal values for all measures of organizational cultures is not rejected. This may indicate a sort of averaging of the national cultures which have influenced Hong Kong in the last century, as illustrated in a speech by Tung Chee-hwa, the first Chinese to run Hong Kong since the colony was ceded to Britain in 1842:

At this significant juncture in our history it is appropriate for us to ask ourselves who are we, what are the values we stand for and what is the social fabric that ties us together? We understand instinctively Chinese values such as humbleness, patience, persistence and hard work. Yet we also appreciate those Western traits such as creativity, aggressiveness and directness that often gets things done. (*New York Times* 1996, p. 2)

Organizational Climate, Innovativeness, and Market Orientation measures are all below average in Hong Kong. Thailand, an industrializing country with a market-oriented economy, reflects a strong Buddhist tradition with an above-average Consensual Organizational Culture but a more modern participative Organizational Climate. Low values of Innovativeness and Entrepreneurial Culture probably reflect Thailand's path as a center of foreign investment for low-cost manufacturing. The Asian economic crisis, triggered in Thailand, has tended to reduce the consensual nature of Thai management (Deshpandé and Farley 2000c).

The clear differences among these six Asian samples indicate that there is great heterogeneity among them—a degree of heterogeneity at least comparable to and probably greater than that found in industrial countries in Asia, North America, and Europe reported in Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (2000).

## Differences in Factors Affecting Performance

The ultimate goal of the study reported here is to assess how the different organizational factors affect business Performance. We examine the overall (or average) effects of the set of predictors of Performance and simultaneously identify specific differences (if any) of effects in particular countries.

**Table 5. Analysis of Variance of Sample-Specific Regression Analysis of Performance**

	Degrees of Freedom	F Ratio	Significance
<b>Full Model Including</b>			
<b>Main Effects and Slope Differences</b>	36	3.25	.01
<b>Main Effects Constrained to Be Equal</b>	6	11.16	.01
Organizational Culture	3	2.62	.05
Market Orientation	1	19.70	.01
Innovativeness	1	12.46	.01
Organizational Climate	1	2.56	NS
<b>Country-Specific Slopes Differences (All)</b>	30	1.39	NS
<b>Sample-Specific Slope Differences</b>			
Japan	6	1.59	NS
Hong Kong	6	2.47	.05
Thailand	6	1.30	NS
India	6	1.83	NS
China	6	.73	NS
Vietnam	6	1.11	NS
<b>Industry (Covariate)</b>	7	1.40	NS

As Table 5 shows, analysis of variance of elements (in a regression including main effects and sample specific slopes) is significant overall at  $\alpha = .05$ . However, while the main effects (e.g., coefficients constrained to be equal for all samples) are significant ( $\alpha = .01$ ), the country-specific slope increments are not significantly different from zero when viewed as a group. Further sub-analysis of individual samples indicates that only Hong Kong is marginally significant—a pattern which repeats a result found in an in-depth study of seven Chinese cities (Deshpandé and Farley 2001).

A regression pooling results by eliminating the nonsignificant country-specific slope increments (Table 6) shows an overall pattern of consistency with the hypotheses.

**Table 6. Regressions Linking Performance to Independent Variables**

Variables	Beta Coefficients for Pooled Model		
	Six Asian Samples		Five Industrial Countries <sup>1</sup>
	Core Model	Hong Kong Increments	
<b>Organizational Culture</b>			
Consensual	-.21**	.02	-.28*
Bureaucractic	-.15*	.01	-.15
Entrepreneurial	.12*	.00	.08
Competitive	.14*	-.03	.21*
<b>Organizational Climate</b>	.04	-.03	.16*
<b>Innovativeness</b>	.17**	-.12	.28**
<b>Market Orientation</b>	.17**	.09*	.09
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>		.17**	.20**

<sup>1</sup> Source: Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000.

\*Significant at  $\alpha = .05$ .

\*\*Significant at  $\alpha = .01$ .

All signs of the main effects are as predicted by hypotheses 2a-2d with only Organizational Climate insignificant. Closed organizational cultures (Consensual and Bureaucratic in that order) detract from Performance, while more open cultures (Entrepreneurial and Competitive) contribute to higher performance. Innovativeness and Market Orientation each contribute about equally to Performance. The significant Hong Kong increments show, in effect, absence of an effect on Performance of Innovativeness and a much higher-than-average effect of Market Orientation (low in Hong Kong as shown in Table 4).

Comparing the results to those samples similarly from five industrial countries (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000 and right column in Table 6) shows a pattern of signs which is qualitatively similar, and the R<sup>2</sup>s (goodness of fit) are not significantly different. However, the relative importance of the factors are different in three regards. First, participative, open organizational climates contribute less to Asian business Performance. Second, Innovativeness, while significant, is less important in Asia than in the West. Third, Market Orientation is much more important in Asia.

# Discussion

There is a natural skepticism associated with the transfer of managerial practices from one cultural setting to another. It is based on far more than a reflexive “not invented here” reaction. There is good reason to think that various ideas “fit” better with some cultures than others; furthermore, the ideas are likely to originate and to be tried in culturally compatible settings. Asian scholars in particular hold strongly to the position that an Asian model of management is different from a Western one. Japanese managers rightly bristle at the advice to be less clan-oriented and consensual while Americans likewise bristle at the criticism of their individualistic culture. Both say, correctly, that the differences in management models reflect deep-seated features of their cultures. In settings where managers are emerging from decades of central planning, it may be natural to view their situation as “different” from the situations faced by managers accustomed to open markets. In an intellectual environment in which basic thought regarding management models is “It’s different here,” it is important to be able to assess which advice is transferable and which is not.

We have found it useful to divide the question of generalizability over cultures into:

1. Differences in averages for measures such as Organizational Culture and Market Orientation. These differences are often significant and highly visible to both students of organizations and to managers. These differences also tend to relate to differences in national cultures. It is probably this aspect of difference that draws the attention of Asian scholars of management.
2. Differences in the responsiveness of a performance measure to differences within cultures. These differences are subtle and have been found to be small, at least relative to the differences in the corresponding means (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000; Bowman, Farley, and Schmittlein 2000).

The above general pattern obtains in the business-to-business companies in the six Asian settings under study here involving measures of Organizational Culture, Organizational Climate, Market Orientation, and Innovativeness.

Like the earlier study (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000), this study found a pattern of significant differences over samples in the mean measures that can be related to elements of national cultures. For example, the Japanese and Thai firms showed the expected tendency to Consensual organizational cultures. Chinese and Vietnamese firms, emerging from central planning into some form of market socialism, tended (probably for historical reasons) to be Bureaucratic. Indian firms tended to be Entrepreneurial. Hong Kong firms were about average in terms of the four Organizational Culture types, perhaps reflecting mixed Chinese and Western influences during the past century.

However, the responsiveness within country of Performance to the factors under study was generally similar. This homogeneity of response is all the more remarkable given the diversity of the samples in many important aspects. More Competitive and Entrepreneurial firms perform better and more Consensual and Bureaucratic firms perform worse than their national peers. Similarly, more market-oriented and innovative firms perform better. Japanese results provide a useful bridge between the more homogeneous industrial country samples and the more diverse Asian samples. In both cases, Japanese organizational cultures were the most Consensual and least Entrepreneurial. In neither case were Japanese response coefficients different from the overall averages. It is also useful to note that the empirical procedures were developed and first tested in Japan. Only in Hong Kong is the response marginally different quantitatively though the same qualitatively, i.e., there, Market Orientation is more effective and Innovativeness has little effect on Performance. These results did not vary for the different industries in which the firms competed.

Despite the qualitative similarity in results for both the highly industrialized economies (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2000) and the Asian economies under study here, there were important quantitative differences. In particular, Market Orientation had a larger effect on Performance in Asia, while Innovativeness had a larger effect in the more industrialized nations. It appears that investment in the more contemporary aspects of marketing, which is relatively new to Asian management regardless of economic history, has a particularly high payoff at this point of history. There is some evidence that these conclusions generalize to other parts of China (Deshpandé and Farley 2001), and that they can survive major shocks like the Asian economic crisis, at least in Thailand (Deshpandé and Farley 2000c). Specific industry contexts do not appear to qualify these conclusions as industry type is an insignificant covariate in the analysis.

We should note a number of important caveats. First, the analysis is relevant only in the general neighborhood of the actual observations for each country. It is not appropriate to take conclusions to the limits implied by a hypothetical “pure” type of Organizational Culture. The discussion of Organizational Culture can only be in the context of the particular national culture. Related to this limitation is that national culture is exogenous and fixed over a fairly long period.

Second, all of the data were collected in major industrial cities in order to make the contexts as comparable as possible. However, more research is needed to establish the breadth of representativeness of the results. In one case (China), expansion to a sample of six other cities produced similar results (Deshpandé and Farley 2001).

Further, this analysis focuses on how specific organizational factors affect corporate performance. This is obviously only one element of the complex set of factors affecting performance, although it is an important and under-researched one (Capon, Farley, and Hoenig 1997).

Finally, the study focuses on a relatively modest sample of business-to-business relationships of locally-based firms with domestic customers in single cities. A broader set of business types and customer types is required in order to generalize these results further.

# Notes

1. This section is adapted from Deshpandé and Farley (1999a).
2. This section is adapted from Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (2000).

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