

## **Statement of Research Interests**

I currently have two lines of research. The first line of research concerns the impact of culture on work behavior and the second involves rater agreement in performance appraisal. In the following sections I will provide more information regarding my specific interests in these areas.

### **Culture and Work Behavior**

In today's global community, it is becoming increasingly important to understand the role culture plays in the success or failure of organizational interventions and the ultimate survival of organizations. One of my interests in this area is the impact of culture on productivity interventions. All things being equal, the organization with the greatest productivity growth is the organization that is most likely to survive. Furthermore, there is evidence that the success of a productivity intervention may depend on the fit between the intervention and the country in which it is implemented.

As part of my dissertation, I collaborated with researchers and consultants in the USA, Europe, and Australia to develop an international database containing information on the Productivity Measurement and Enhancement System (ProMES). ProMES is a feedback intervention that attempts to improve productivity by providing employees with the information to develop better work strategies and by increasing the motivating potential of the work environment. ProMES had been successfully used with many types of organizations in a number of countries, but it was impossible to identify the factors that contributed to its success without looking across a number of different projects. As such, the idea for the database was to collect information from as many ProMES projects as possible. The incentive for contributing information to the database was contributors could include variables that were related to their research interests into the data collection instrument; contributors would then have access to the database for their own research. After meeting with a number of researchers and consultants the resulting instrument grew to 45 pages! As a result, the database contains information on many job-related, psychological, and organizational characteristics, as well as descriptions of the ProMES development process and resulting system, and productivity data. The database currently contains data on 115 organizational units from seven different countries: Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Hungary, and the United States, and is continuing to grow every year. Since coming to Western Kentucky University, I have published one paper (Paquin, Roch, & Sanchez-Ku, in press) based on information contained in the database concerning the impact of collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance on the impact of productivity interventions. I have a second manuscript examining the specific qualities of feedback that is near completion. As I continue to collect information for the database, I will be able to answer more questions concerning the impact of culture (and other variables) on the success of organizational interventions

(e.g., cross-cultural differences in the perception of performing at the minimum expected level of performance).

A second interest of mine in the area of cross-cultural psychology involves the measurement of cultural variables related to work. The Peace Corps has a reputation for providing excellent cultural training to their volunteers once they arrive in the country in which they will be serving. During my training as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Kingdom of Tonga, I realized that there was no empirical information regarding many important cultural variables (e.g., collectivism, power distance, etc.) for Tonga. After speaking with the trainers and other Peace Corps administrators, I decided to collect that information myself. To that end, I contacted researchers involved with Project GLOBE to see if I could use their instruments. Project GLOBE is a world-wide research endeavor designed to examine the relationship between culture, societal, organizational, and leadership effectiveness. To date, they have published the results of projects involving 62 different countries. After consulting with them, I became aware of the fact that there were virtually no related empirical studies conducted in many of the South Pacific island countries. The result was that I became a member of the Project GLOBE research project and, in collaboration with Dr. R. D. Pathak from the University of the South Pacific and Dr. Reinout DeVries from (at that time) the University of Amsterdam, began collecting data in Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. In line with the goals of Project GLOBE, we collected data on organizational culture and leader perceptions, in addition to the societal values in which I was originally interested. Data collection continued during my first two years at Western Kentucky University. My collaborators and I are currently working on several papers concerning culture and leadership in the South Pacific. I have plans to collect additional information in these countries in the near future as there have been a number of recent changes in leadership in several of these countries since we completed data collection and, I believe, that a pre-post comparison would be extremely interesting.

A more recent interest has been cross-cultural differences in the dynamics and results of incivility in the workplace. Last spring, I served on several thesis committees for projects involving incivility in the workplace. During this same time I was reading a lot of material about Japan to prepare my study abroad courses. The convergence of these two activities resulted in two conclusions. First, the dynamics of workplace incivility appear to be considerably different in Japan than they are in the United States. Second, although the study of incivility was gaining interest in the journals, cross-cultural comparisons had not been examined. As such, Dr. Miner-Rubino and I decided to explore cross-cultural aspects of incivility, and began to identify collaborators and research grants. At this point, we plan on conducting the initial study in Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States and have identified the necessary collaborators for these countries. Researchers from several other countries have also expressed interest in the project. These countries may be added to the initial project, but most likely will be included in a subsequent grant.

My interest in cross-cultural research has also spawned several psychometric projects because the translation of instruments into different languages is an extremely difficult task. There are many articles discussing this issue, but one gap in this literature concerns the anchors used in graphic rating scales. To address this issue I replicated a study done with English anchors (Bass, Cascio, & O'Connor, 1974) and collected data with German anchors in Germany. I will be presenting the results of this paper (Paquin, Bruni, Sandow, & Alexander, 2007) at the X<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Psychology in Prague this summer. It is possible that I may continue this line of research with other languages in the future.

#### Rater Agreement:

The use of 360-degree feedback is quite common in organizational performance reviews. In spite of its popularity, however, there are a number of concerns regarding the practice. One concern is the lack of agreement typically shown across raters of the same target. Dr. Roch (SUNY-Albany) and I are attempting to shed light on this issue by examining the relationship between item specificity and rater agreement. Based on past research, one could argue that raters would be more likely to agree on items regarding specific behavior than on those items representing behavior that is more open to interpretation. An initial study conducted by us, however, demonstrated the exact opposite. To determine if our original study was a fluke, we replicated the study as part of a thesis conducted here at Western Kentucky University by Traxler Littlejohn. The results essentially remained the same. A manuscript (Roch, Paquin, & Littlejohn) concerning the results of these two projects is currently under review (revise and resubmit) for publication in *Organizational Research Methods*. We have plans to begin several follow-up studies to further explore this issue.