A CROSS-CULTURAL TEST OF VROOM’S EXPECTANCY MOTIVATION FRAMEWORK: AN AUSTRALIAN AND A MALAYSIAN COMPANY IN THE BEAUTY CARE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT
This study assessed the relevance of Vroom’s expectancy motivational framework in a cross-cultural context. Differences in attitudes for task investment, preferences for work related achievements, and the reward potential of outcomes was assessed with Australians and Malaysians who were employed in similar work contexts of the beauty care industry. Reasons why the Australian employees reported significantly higher job motivation than the Malaysian respondents were identified by examining the three main components of expectancy, instrumentality and valence, of Vroom’s framework. The study findings are discussed in terms of the implications they have for the necessary organizational development with Australians and Malaysians who were employed in similar work contexts of the beauty care industry. Reasons why the Australian employees reported significantly higher job motivation than the Malaysian respondents were identified by examining the
three main components of expectancy, instrumentality and valence, of Vroom’s framework. The study findings are discussed in terms of the implications they have for the necessary organizational development of businesses in the competitive Asia-Pacific region.

INTRODUCTION

A feature of the aftermath of the South East Asia (SEA) currency meltdown has been the major concern for enterprise productivity. The widespread impact of the SEA currency crisis has spawned intense discussion and activity at the national and international level about how to establish management practices and arrangements that will provide effective employee motivation. Many commentators have noted that despite a massive reorientation of micro level business practices in the EEC, in Northern America, and in Japan in terms of the nature of managerial work, such as merit-based reward system, there is an intriguing absence of writings in the public domain, compared with the amount of Western business literature, that openly describes such organizational practices of domestic companies in the Asian business arena. Moreover, there are few published accounts of contemporary organizational practices in terms of motivational models for the area. As a consequence, this paradox has heightened enthusiasm how the SEA communities had previously gained the creativity, innovation and motivation of employees during a period of considerable downturn in economic growth in other world economies. In addition, gaining insights into employee motivational frameworks that will contribute to improving effectiveness of the current SEA organizations has brought new popularity to cross-cultural and cross-national research. The search for new models to explain employee motivation in foreign, local and multi-national corporations within the significant organizational activity of the SEA region has been intensified by the growing awareness among both scholars and business executives of the need for more substantial cross-cultural theories of work behavior and incentive systems.

The applicability and transferability of U.S. management theories, principles and motivational frameworks has been widely questioned. A formidable literature, which underpins relationships between motivation and performance, also promotes a well supported notion that work goals, values and motivational needs are shaped by national culture. This evidence suggests that people from different nations cannot be expected to exhibit similar behaviors or reactions to U.S. motivational frameworks unless the organizational contexts are reframed to account for cultural variations.

This proposition was examined by evaluating the expectancy or instrumentality—valence motivation theory in a cross-cultural setting. Expectancy theory
is arguably the most widely accepted theory of work and motivation in contemporary industrial society. According to expectancy theory a person's level of performance is determined by the amount of effort expended to achieve selected or chosen outcomes for which there is a level of reward preferences. Although a great deal of empirical research has been conducted in U.S. contexts, which endorse Western valued preferences, there has not been any serious attention to manipulate the conceptual framework or work related choice attributes in international or cross-national contexts that promote imperative Asian work relevant attributes.

The paper focuses upon a motivation system and the impact of culture in the important beauty care industry. In spite of the economic slowdown in the SEA nations, growth in personal care and cosmetics markets is shifting from Western North America to a more diversified customer base of the Asia-Pacific. Women in these Asian communities emancipate themselves by taking pride in looking attractive and presentable in the workplace. In fact, in Malaysia the beauty industry has emerged from being a dormant importer to a significant manufacturer and exporter of cosmetics and toiletries. Likewise, multi-national corporations make cosmetics and toiletries in Australia for the domestic market. These firms are being compelled by competitive market forces to increasingly address employee motivation issues within workplace procedures. However, the installation of culture—contingent incentive/motivational schemes are neither simple nor straightforward and the search for universally applicable principles continues.

This paper attempts to contribute to the development of an universalistic motivation framework. Elements for assessing Vroom’s expectancy motivation theory were adapted to be compatible with the dominant cultural properties of two Asia Pacific countries. Data of motivational features were obtained from employees of two institutions that provided cosmetics, beauty services as well as conducting research development of their products. One company was in Australia and the other was in Malaysia. It is contended in this paper that cultural dimensions influence the motivational attributes in work settings.

EASTERN AND WESTERN MOTIVATIONAL UNDERPINNINGS

The underpinning of Eastern and Western management practices are from two widely different sources. Much of the Eastern business culture is embedded in Confucian ideals, which is an Asian set of values that emphasise hierarchy of authority, hard work, thrift, collectivism and humility. To a lesser extent, but beginning to become more recognized and acknowledged as the basis for an insight into the nature of modern business practices is Sun Tzu’s Art of War. This document is the oldest military classic known in the Chinese literature. These
traditions have endured for over two thousand years, whereas Western management theory, which is an American invention, is less than 100 years of age. Some elaboration of the Eastern and Western perspectives will elucidate the forces which each set of assumptions will bring to a motivational framework.

**Eastern**

It is well recognised that people in different countries hold different values. According to Hofstede,\(^{(17)}\) values of the Asian community are distinctively different to those, generally, held by Western societies. In high power distance communities like Malaysia, people are considered unequal in status, and this translates into a strong respect for hierarchy and autocratic leadership.\(^{(18)}\) The influence of cultural values in the diverse racial and ethnic composition of Malaysia\(^{(19)}\) is likely to contribute to staff motivation through such factors as group affiliation, friends, and personal relationships among colleagues along with respect for authority and loyalty. Many of these values, which permeate all Malaysian work and business activities, are aligned with traditional Chinese customs.\(^{(20)}\) The majority of the respondents in the Malaysian sample were Chinese from Kuala Lumpur. Ethnic Chinese in Malaysia attach great importance to Confucian values such as the group focus, saving face and the *guanxi*, rather than individual rights and identity.\(^{(21)}\)

Confucianism is mainly concerned with the question of how to establish a harmonious hierarchical social order in the human—centred work.\(^{(22)}\) A strong belief of the Asian community is that individuals are not born as isolated entities, and for thousands of years it has been continuously taught and passed down by the Chinese people, that relationships, especially those within the family, are very important, and the individual is less important.\(^{(23)}\) Children learn to restrain themselves to overcome their individuality so as to maintain harmony in the family. This Confucian tendency has resulted in the cultivation of the Chinese into group-orientated\(^{(24)}\) and socially dependent beings.\(^{(25)}\) The Chinese Malaysians believe people are not primarily individuals, but rather members of a family, and should, therefore, interact with others.\(^{(26)}\) In the Confucian system, man is a relation-orientated being who has an inherent interest in creating his *guanxi* of human relations.

*Guanxi* provides the lubricant for Chinese to get through life.\(^{(27)}\) People depend on their *guanxi*, their personal relationships, and particularly their contacts with those in power, to get things done. Grasping the concepts of the *guanxi* is the key to understanding Chinese social behavioral patterns and their business dynamics. *Guanxi* refers to the special relationship between two people with implications of the continual exchange of favours. The two parties involved in this relationship
can assume that each is consciously committed to each other and the person who
fails to observe the rule of equity and refuses to return favour for favour, loses
face and looks untrustworthy. *Guanxi* binds people through exchange of favours
rather than through expressions of sympathy and friendship, and the relationship
is more utilitarian than emotional.\(^{(28)}\) In the business world *guanxi* plays an
extremely important role. Most family businesses are small and hence, are heavily
dependent on business opportunities provided by their *guanxi* network.\(^{(29)}\) Mil-
lions or Chinese firms are bound by the *guanxi* into an enormous web in which
each firm can excel. The Chinese view this business world as a war zone, and this
in turn decides survival or destruction, success of failure.\(^{(30)}\)

It has been reported that Asians consider the market place a battle field.
Military strategies like Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* are used to help guide the daily
running of business activities.\(^{(31)}\) The Chinese treat business competition as life
and death warfare as it directly influences the survival and well being of the family.
In addition to attaching great importance to such classical military strategies, even
principles behind them are applied to daily life settings.

There are three key principles that can be learned from Sun Tzu’s *Art of
War*. Firstly, Sun Tzu’s strategic ideas can contribute to business competitiveness
as emphasis is placed on the importance of moral influence within an organization
where a successful manager should be able to mobilise subordinates to work with
one heart.\(^{(32)}\) It is pertinent that many of the more reputable Japanese and North
American business schools contain within their curriculum elements of Sun Tzu’s
philosophy. Secondly, the importance of a broadly defined generalship for military
leaders as opposed to merely using their technical background is emphasised. For
example, in Asian businesses, a manager’s general qualities are often viewed as
much more important than his or her technical qualifications. Lastly, according to
Sun Tzu’s views on relativism, there is no absolute superiority and inferiority in
competition. The most important thing to know is where one’s competitive edge
lies, and when, where and how one should engage in competition.\(^{(33)}\)

Confucian ideals and Sun Tzu’s way of thinking are embedded in the work
behaviors, incentive frameworks and motivational assumptions of a great deal of
SEA employees. The teachings of Confucius, who lived nearly two and one half
thousand years ago, serve as practical rules for the Chinese, as a guide to get
through life.\(^{(34)}\) The influence of Sun Tzu extends well into the business prac-
tices of Japanese and Chinese organizations of the SEA region. An example
of these influences is demonstrated by research findings\(^{(35)}\) that show relative
less importance is attached to achievement motivation and self actualisation in
managerial evaluative criteria by ethnic Chinese managers than their Western
counterparts. The intention of this study is to determine how these rich traditional
Eastern values can be identified in Vroom’s\(^{(36)}\) Western contemporary motiva-
tional framework.
Western

One of the most prominent Western values is individualism. Individualism seems to equate best to the Western culture, and according to Hofstede Australia ranks number two on the individualism index, after the U.S. Individualism relates to societies where ties between individuals are loose and everyone is expected to look after his or her own interests. Individualism encourages independence, the promotion of competition and elitism, a low sense of belonging, and individual merit as a base for promotion. On the other end of this dipolar scale, is collectivism. As already presented, collectivism emphasises that the group welfare is more important than personal interest. It is presumed that employees in an individualistic society are likely to value independence, freedom, autonomy and personal challenge that translates in the work setting as a sense of achievement, recognition and self worth.

Not unexpectedly most of the significant motivational theories that have emanated from North America promote the feature of individualism. For example, Maslow formulated the widely taught five hierarchical level framework of human needs where the highest motive of this hierarchy is self actualisation. Although Alderfer simplified the framework to three levels, even in his system, the creative potential of the individual is the apex of the model. In addition, McClelland, a Harvard University psychologist, distinguished three types of motive: achievement, affiliation and power. The achievement motive has attracted the greatest amount of interest in the USA and Anglo countries. One of the most popular motivational frameworks was developed by Herzberg and colleagues. When these researchers presented the world with the concept of job enrichment they proposed that motivators are individual elements of work in terms of intrinsic factors of achievement, recognition and advancement. It might be argued that the only motivational theory that was developed specifically for assessing incentives in work settings, is Vroom’s expectancy theory.

Expectancy theory is a complex framework that is based on hedonism. The theory proposes that a person’s beliefs about expectancies, instrumentalities and valences interact psychologically to create a motivational force so as to cause people to act in ways to bring pleasure or to avoid pain. It is posited that motivation is a function of the expectancy or probability that self effort will achieve a certain level of performance, and that level of performance will be instrumental in their receiving rewards or outcomes for which they have a certain valence. These critical factors can be expressed in the formulation:

\[ \text{Motivation} = E \times I \times V \]

where,

- \(E\) = Expectancy
- \(I\) = Instrumentality, and
- \(V\) = Valence
Alternatively, the formulation can be expressed as

\[ \text{Motivation} = [E \to P] \Sigma [(P \to 0)(v)] \]

In the given formulation, motivation is presented as a multiplicative composition of three elements. The first is expectancy. Expectancy \([E \to P]\) refers to a person’s perceptions of the probability that effort will lead to performance. The second element is instrumentality. Instrumentality \((P \to 0)\) refers to a person’s perception of the probability that certain outcomes, positive or negative, will be attached to that performance. The third element is valence \((v)\). Valence refers to a person’s perception of the value of specific outcomes; that is how much the person likes or dislikes receiving these outcomes. Valence is anticipated satisfaction. Hence, the motivation to engage in a certain activity will be high only when individuals expect that their efforts will lead to high performance, which in turn will yield outcomes for which they hold a high valence.

On the basis of the arguments that have been presented the following four hypotheses are suggested.

**H1** The Malaysian beauty care employees who articulate values for social relationships, workplace harmony, and the achievement of collective goals can be expected to express that an increase in personal effort is unlikely to have a direct, positive effect on performance constructs.

**H2** Australian beauty care workers, who are embedded in work climates that place importance on task as well as individual attributes of self esteem, assertiveness and achievement can be expected to perceive that an increase in personal effort is likely to have a direct positive effect on performance constructs.

**H3** The level of instrumentality perceived by Australian and Malaysian beauty care workers will be a consequence of their beliefs that their performance will lead to a particular attractive outcome. Australian respondents are more likely to express higher instrumentalities for outcomes that are associated with the more valued dimensions of individualism, the importance of the task, autonomy, but less importance for hierarchy. Conversely, Malaysian beauty care workers will have higher preferences for instrumentalities that are related to social relationships, group collectively and hierarchy.

**H4** The Malaysian beauty care workers, who generally hold values of a “We” orientation, face, modesty, and harmony will express higher valence scores for group dimensions and personal learning (to preserve group qualities). Conversely, the Australian study respondents, who are likely to have typical Western values of the “I” orientation, self esteem and achievement will express higher valence scores for autonomy, accomplishment, freedom and personal satisfaction.

Employees value different kinds of outcomes. This condition can be integrated into the motivational framework by examining a variety of factors within
the mindset of each employee. For instance, the instrument which has been popularly employed to assess expectancy motivation theory can be shaped to capture both the individualistic properties as well as the dimensions of collectivism. On the one hand the expectancy theory has been credited with features of a most quantifiable, elegant and precise theory of work motivation that has diverse applications. On the other hand the theory has been criticised for its complexity and somewhat unrealistic assumptions that individuals hold perfect information and are rational at the time of decision making. However, Vroom’s theory has been widely endorsed and tested in a variety of settings, but usually in Western cultures. Nevertheless, a suggestion has been advanced by Townsend and Wrathall that the theory is likely to be culturally transferable. Given these several features Vroom’s expectancy theory was employed in this study to assess its potential value as a managerial technique for diagnosing the motivational level of employees in two culturally diverse beauty care study sites.

METHOD

Respondents and Site

The subjects chosen for this study were Australians and Malaysians who were working for two beauty care firms. These employees included researchers, chemists, laboratory assistants, administrative staff, as well as beauty advisers, make up artists and teachers. The researchers, chemists and laboratory assistants were mainly engaged in the development and invention of new product lines. Sales, recruitment, training and development of staff, accounts and general daily running of the enterprise was conducted by the administrative staff. The service providers (i.e., facials, massages, make up) was undertaken by the aestheticians who were instructed by the teaching personnel. The Australian and Malaysian employees were chosen as a convenience sample to assess the motivation level of workers in a common industry in a cross-cultural context.

Procedure

The managements of the two beauty firms were approached to discuss with them the perceived importance and potential benefits from the study. Both companies expressed considerable interest in the proposal as they were intending to expand their businesses and they felt the information from the study could help them to develop work settings that would enhance staff motivation. Based on these
discussions, and advice from the researchers, the areas to be examined were de-
cided, jointly.

To examine the key areas of the investigative framework a questionnaire was designed. In this paper the demographic and motivational assessing elements of the questionnaire are presented. The details of the instruments will be provided, later. A preliminary questionnaire was tested with 30 Malaysian and Australian students at the researchers’ university. Some adjustments were made to a few of the items to clarify the meaning of the questions. Although the sample size was small the results of some tests provided confidence to administer the questionnaire at the two study sites. The second author visited the two study sites (Sydney, in Australia; Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia) and administered the questionnaires. Accompanying each questionnaire was a letter of confidentiality. Details about the purpose of the study were explained before the potential respondents were invited to complete their questionnaires. A total of 75 Australians and 71 Malaysians were the study respondents.

Measurement

Two main types of data were measured. First, demographic details of the respondents were collected. The gender, age, level of formal education and period of tenure of the respondents was established. Second, the motivational intensity of each employee was assessed. Nadler and Lawler(46) developed an individualistic focussed expectancy motivation scale which was appropriate for this study by the addition of collective orientated items. Their instrument, which is a multipli-
cative composite scale has three elements: 1) expectancy, 2) instrumentality, and 3) valence.

Determination of a respondent’s motivation score is obtained by estimating the products and averages of the three elements. The expectancy (E→P) component was measured with four items and an average score was obtained. Instrumentality (P→0), was assessed with 15 items. Seven of them estimate the respondent’s intrinsic orientation. These items measure features of achievement, growth, accomplishment and similar esteem type constructs. The remaining eight items measure the extrinsic factors, such as job security, promotion, pay, relations with co-workers and the like. The valence component, the third element of the scale, measures the extent to which the respondent likes or dislikes receiving these outcomes. Each item of the instrumentality element is paired with a similar element of the valence sub-scale. A product is obtained for each pair, and then an average score is obtained for the 15 pairs. The product of this average (pairs) score with the average expectancy score indicates the level of motivation. All items were assessed with seven point Likert scales.
Analysis

Four main types of analyses were undertaken. First, after the accuracy of the questionnaire data were confirmed, frequency tables of the demographic data were constructed to compare the two sets of respondents. Second, the robustness of the perceptual data were assessed with reliability estimates and factor analyses that established the composition of the expectancy, instrumentality and valence constructs. Third, the mean scores of these variables, of the two study sites, were ranked and their differences tested for significance. Last, the variable mean scores of the Australian and Malaysian data were contrasted with *T*-tests. The reliability estimates and factor analyses were undertaken with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences sub-routines. All of the other analyses were conducted with Statistical Analysis Software.

Multivariate factor analysis evaluated the construct validity of the instrument that was employed to assess the motivation scores. The analysis confirmed the unidimensionality of the four item expectancy scale. It was found that both the instrumentality scale (15 items), and the valence scale (15 items), each had three sub factors. These were labelled *internal*, *group* and *external* to reflect the individualistic, collectivistic and contextual elements. The factor analyses are not presented in this paper, but they may be acquired from the first author on request. However, the specific questionnaire items of these three sub factors are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

RESULTS

The demographic data of Table 1 provide a profile of the two beauty care companies. The higher percentage of females is expected given that beauty care organizations have traditionally been dominated by that gender. In this study the higher number of males in the Malaysian sample was due to the fact that a large portion of the respondents came from the administrative and management sections in which the jobs were mainly held by males. In addition, the majority of respondents for the Malaysian company were of Chinese ethnic origin, while the Australian sample was mainly Caucasians. Both companies had similar proportions of workers less than 29 years of age, but the age profile of the Malaysian beauty care company reflects the higher number of more youthful workers who are entering the industry workforce without obtaining a trade or vocational qualification. In contrast, many of the Australian respondents had undertaken appropriately recognised trade courses. Nevertheless, a higher percentage of the Malaysians possess university qualifications, as education is fast becoming an important community issue that is widely promoted in the Malaysian press. The higher percentage of Malaysian participants who had worked for less than two years may be due to the
low unemployment rate and high job mobility in the region. In contrast, the high continuing unemployment rate in Australia is a factor that may encourage people to keep their job for longer periods. Overall, the data indicate that a number of demographic similarities exist in the two examined institutions, and that the differences are explained by local conditions.

In Table 2 is presented the means scores for expectancy as well as the T-test comparison results for the two study sites. It is clearly demonstrated that the Australian workers believed that working hard would lead to higher productivity, a job well done, good job performance, and with these outcomes, a feeling of personal satisfaction. The Malaysians, on the other hand, reported substantially lower expectations of achieving these ends. The results provide strong inference that the Australian workers believed that the self could achieve, while the Malaysian respondents held a perspective that performance was less a function of the individual and more an achievement of the group. These findings demonstrate strong support for hypothesis H1 and hypothesis H2.

In Table 3 is shown the mean scores, and results for the T-test comparisons for the assessed instrumentalities. In addition, the first five rankings of the means are shown for convenience. Only three of the means (autonomy, freedom and friendliness of colleagues) were significantly different for the two study sites. The
### Table 2. Means for Expectancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Australia Means</th>
<th>Malaysia Means</th>
<th>T-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High productivity</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing job well</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good job performance</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>0.0008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>0.0070</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXPECTANCY</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
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### Table 3. Means and Ranking for Instrumentalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Australian Means</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Malaysian Means</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>T-test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXTERNAL INSTRUMENTALITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.282</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>0.413</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.723</td>
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<td>INTERNAL INSTRUMENTALITY</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn new things</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>0.265</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>5.69</td>
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<td>5.72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability development</td>
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<td>Achievement</td>
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<td>5.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>0.022</td>
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<tr>
<td>GROUP INSTRUMENTALITY</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relations</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>0.190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendliness of colleagues</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>0.019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proper resources</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>0.444</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>0.543</td>
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<td>Physical conditions</td>
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<td>4.83</td>
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<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNAL INSTRUMENTALITY</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>0.142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP INSTRUMENTALITY</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rankings are significantly different at p<0.05 level.
relevance of this observation is that the Australian respondents held expectations that they would be likely to attain these job relevant dimensions (i.e., autonomy, freedom, friendliness of colleagues) if they performed well, whereas the Malaysians, who had substantially lower scores, believed there was considerably less likelihood of them achieving these same outcomes when they performed well. Interestingly, the Malaysian respondents did not perceive a relatively higher group instrumentality.

The non-significantly different mean scores illustrate that for most of the assessed items both the Australian and Malaysian respondents held similar beliefs about the outcomes they would receive. The first three item mean rankings (salary, promotion, personal satisfaction) confirm that the participants of both sites believed these were the most likely outcomes to be received from good performance. These findings provide some support for hypothesis H3, while at the same time illustrate the significance of installing job designs that match the community value systems. A most important inference from the data of Table 3 is that similar reward systems had been installed in both work settings. This is reinforced by the non-significant differences for the sub-factors of external instrumentality, internal instrumentality, and group instrumentality, which had reliabilities of 0.87, 0.93 and 0.95; respectively. However, the impact of these data of Table 3 is exposed when examined in conjunction with the valence.

In Table 4 is presented the valence means, the T-test comparison results between the two study sites, and the first five rankings of these means. Four of the item means were significantly different. The Australian respondents had substantially greater scores for autonomy and personal satisfaction, while the Malaysians held significantly stronger preferences for interpersonal relations, and friendliness of colleagues. Broadly, these contrasts reflect that the Australians held more individualistic orientations while the Malaysians were more sympathetic toward collective type dimensions in the workplace. These findings are consistent with the relevant theoretical underpinnings and provide reasonable support for hypothesis H4. The first five rankings, which have been shown for convenience, illustrate the substantial variation in the valence mean scores within each respondent set. For instance, the Malaysians had the greatest anticipated satisfaction first for salary, and second interpersonal relations. In contrast, the Australians had first and second priority valence scores for autonomy, and personal satisfaction; respectively.

The Australians held an overall greater preference for both individualistic attributes and external factors, whereas the Malaysians viewed the collectivistic dimensions as being more important as demonstrated by the significant differences in the mean comparisons T-test results for the sub-factors (variables) of external valence, and group valence. Confidence in these findings is given by the reliability estimates for external valence, internal valence, and group valence which were 0.81, 0.92, and 0.92; respectively. Knowledge about the expectancy
beliefs, instrumentality values, and valence scores, enables an understanding about the computed motivation scores of the study participants.

In Table 5 is presented the motivational scores of the two sets of respondents. The motivational scores clearly show that the Australian workers were substantially more motivated, not only in each of the three sub-dimensions, but

### Table 4. Means for Ranking and Valences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Australian Means</th>
<th>Malaysian Means</th>
<th>T-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL VALENCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNAL VALENCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn new things</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability development</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Resources</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP VALENCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relations</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness of colleagues</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical conditions</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rankings are significantly different at p <0.05 level.

### Table 5. Means for Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Australia Means</th>
<th>Malaysia Means</th>
<th>T-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Motivation</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Motivation</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Motivation</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>0.0035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIVATION</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
overall. These sub-dimensions of *external motivation*, *internal motivation*, and *group motivation* were obtained by the multiplicative product of the respective components.

For instance, *external motivation* was the multiplicative product of *expectancy* by *external instrumentality* by *external valence*, and computed not to exceed a score of seven. *Internal motivation* and *group motivation* were similarly determined. The average summation of *external*, *internal* and *group motivation* provided the construct of motivation. Given the findings for *expectancy* and that the Australians perceived that they would achieve desirable outcomes or desirable rewards (i.e., instrumentalities) more often than their Malaysian counterparts, the motivation scores are to be expected.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study provide two overriding conclusions. First, that Vroom’s expectancy theory, which was initially conceptualised for Western work settings, has wider applications. The findings of this study reveal that Vroom’s framework has the potential to help others better understand employee motivation in a diversity of work settings. This is extremely important given the current popular focus on cross-cultural investigations. A second important conclusion was that the Nadler and Lawler instrument was shown to be a suitable diagnostic tool for assessing the extent of employee work motivation in two culturally different sites. This observation provides encouragement for extending the usage of this instrument to other countries, with a caveat that the scale items incorporate important societal features.

The more specific study observations were in terms of employee motivation, which in turn can have wider ramifications. It was demonstrated that the Australian workers had more individualistic orientations than the Malaysian beauty care employees who held a greater preference for collective dimensions of the workplace. This was not an unexpected finding given the seminal work of Hofstede, and the later contributions of Bond and colleagues. A finding that the Australian beauty care workers reported substantially higher levels of job motivation than the Malaysian respondents, who were employed in the same industry, is tenable with the additional knowledge about the motivational components that contributed to this state. For instance, the Malaysian worker’s expectancy scores were lower, because their achievements were group reliant rather than individualistically centred; the Malaysian instrumentality scores revealed these employees believed that they would obtain the nominated outcomes; and finally, these item outcomes were seldom the desired rewards for which they held high valence. Abdullah has contended that Malaysian management has been exposed to a number of “foreign” theories, but they have not been harmonized with Malaysian value.
systems. It is clear from the results of this study that both work settings had similar reward system, but in one (Australia), the item outcomes were more attainable and often prized. As a consequence, the findings of this study demonstrate how a convergence approach to job designs can have serious implications for organizational well being.

An important feature of the Malaysian work setting was the impact of the installed job design. The business owner, who had attended a Western business school, modified the work arrangements to align them with Western human resource management practices in an endeavour to improve the business competitiveness and effectiveness. However, the participant responses of this organization have exposed that this organizational development programme was not aligned sufficiently close to the core work assumptions and beliefs of the employees. The evidence of this study is that the transference of foreign management/business theories, styles and practices into an organization, are more likely to succeed if they harmonize with the values of the local workforce.

A dominant challenge for businesses operating in the market place of the SEA region is how to obtain a competitive advantage. Many companies are coming to the realization, albeit slowly in many instances, that they will have to employ strategies, structures and practices that are remarkably different to those which have served so well in the past. This organizational renaissance, which is being undertaken to improve organizational effectiveness by making the entity more adaptive and flexible to environmental threats and opportunities, is yet to be fully conceptualized and specified. On the one hand there is the convergence argument that the common exposure to education, technology and business operations of the more successful Western organizations may lead to the adoption of Western business practices. While on the other hand there is the divergence perspective that indigenous cultural forces are sufficiently powerful to have an influence on the transformation process and outcome. Whatever view prevails (or a combination of them), a different assemblage of mindsets, skills and competencies will be acquired in the prosperous “new look” organizations. These features that will be exhibited at both the macro and micro levels of the entity, must seriously consider the integration of the company culture with the cultural baggage (values and beliefs) that employees bring to their place of employment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study contribute to conceptualizing a cross-cultural framework for understanding the process of employee motivation. This is of particular relevance to the Asia Pacific which is a pot-puri of indigenous, overseas Chinese, and international organizations that bring to this economic landscape a wide diversity of business practices. For instance, several commentators have re-
marked that the modern Chinese conglomerates are over centralized, that their management practices are too ad hoc or inappropriate for the scale of their businesses, and the reward systems are often a feature of the whims of the owner/Chief Executive Officer. On the other hand many of the Western multinational corporations, which were players in the organizational renaissance of the 1980s, have revolutionized their strategies, structures and reward/incentive systems to encourage employees to become self responsible in return for autonomy and empowerment. In short, it has been a natural tendency for these stereotyped institutions to bring to this market arena, those organizational practices which are believed will favour the entity with a competitive advantage. As a consequence, Japanese and Western institutions are likely to exhibit attributes of assertive behaviour, frank and direct feedback, a focus on information rather than feelings, and the fostering of self achievement motivation. These distinctive features, however, may not be effective in Asian cultures that value cooperation, spirituality, harmonious relationships and respect for elders. The evidence of this study is that foreign Western management practices had not been sufficiently localized or integrated with the indigenous Malaysian culture of the examined beauty care organization. Conversely, in the Australian company, where there was greater compatibility with the local attitudes, personal beliefs and assumptions, significantly higher levels of job motivation were recorded. A strong inference of the study results is that foreign based management practices, that are not underpinned with local workplace values, are less likely to fully harness the motivational potential of employees.

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