

The Globalization of Industrial-Organizational Psychology: A Comparative Analysis

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Globalization, of course, has become a buzzword in management jargon, and one does not need to look far to find exhortations about the internationalization of management practice in the business press (Walker, 2007). Since research trends do not always follow practice, we sought to determine whether industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology research is becoming more international as judged by the affiliations of those who publish in the top journals. In this article, we report the results of this study, and then offer a few comments about the meaning of the trends and their implications for future I-O research.

Our analysis comprised the 5,273 articles (book reviews were excluded) published in four journals from 1980 to 2006. Based on Zickar and Highhouse (2001) and the Social Science Citation Impact (SSCI), we chose the top four journals in industrial-organizational psychology (the first two are published in the U.S.; the second two are published in the U.K.): *Journal of Applied Psychology* (JAP; n=2,526), *Personnel Psychology* (PPsych; n=833), *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (JOB; n=1,115), and *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (JOOP; n=799). The 2005 SSCI impact factors for these journals are: JAP=2.89; PPsych=2.09; JOB=1.39; and JOOP=1.26.

For each article, we coded the national institutional affiliation of the authors, up to and including the fourth country that was associated with the authors listed. Coding was performed such that each country was listed only once (i.e., a nation could be represented only once per article). Researchers in 38 different nations published articles in one or more of the journals in the 26-year timeframe. Collapsed across articles and time (n=5,273), 74.9% of the articles included researchers in the U.S., followed by the United Kingdom=9.2%, Canada=6.9%, Australia=4.0%, Israel=3.8%, the Netherlands=3.1%, China=3.1%, Germany=1.3%, and Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland)=1.1%. To ease interpretation, in subsequent analyses, we grouped these nations into five sets: (1) U.S.; (2) British Monarchy nations (United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada); (3) Continental Europe; (4) Asia; and (5) Middle East/Africa. Russia was included in the Continental European set, and Turkey was included in the Middle East/Africa set. Only one of the 5,273 articles, included researchers in South America (Peru), it was excluded from further analysis.

As shown in Figure 1, American dominance in these four journals is declining over time. For example, whereas 83% of articles in JAP

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were published by American authors in the 1980's, this figure has declined to 73% in this decade (2000-2006). The only journal for which this was not the case, was JOB, where the percentages are relatively stable over time. If articles published by U.S. researchers are declining over time, what region(s) is responsible for the increase? Figure 2

provides the time trends for the four non-U.S. regions. As the figure shows, three areas have shown an increase over time, with the increases in Continental Europe and Asia being particularly striking.

Percent of Total Articles Published by U.S. Researchers

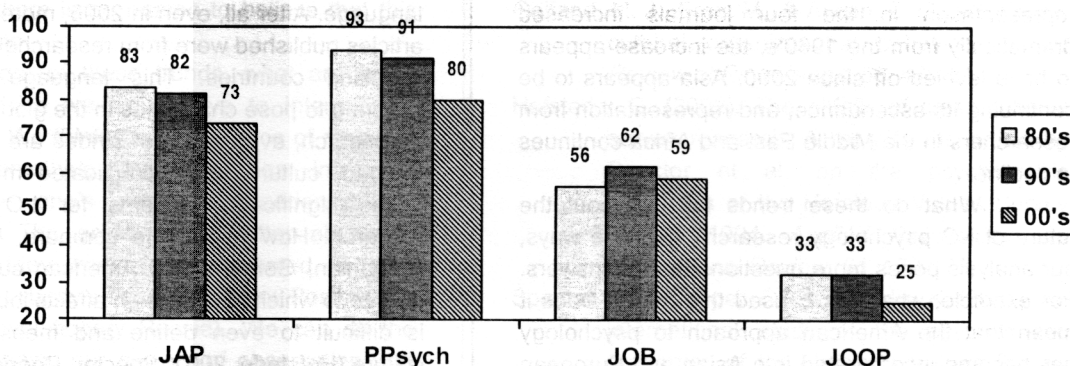


Figure 1: American Presence in I-O Journals

- JAP *Journal of Applied Psychology*
- PPsych *Personnel Psychology*
- JOB *Journal of Organizational Behavior*
- JOOP *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*

Percent of Articles Published

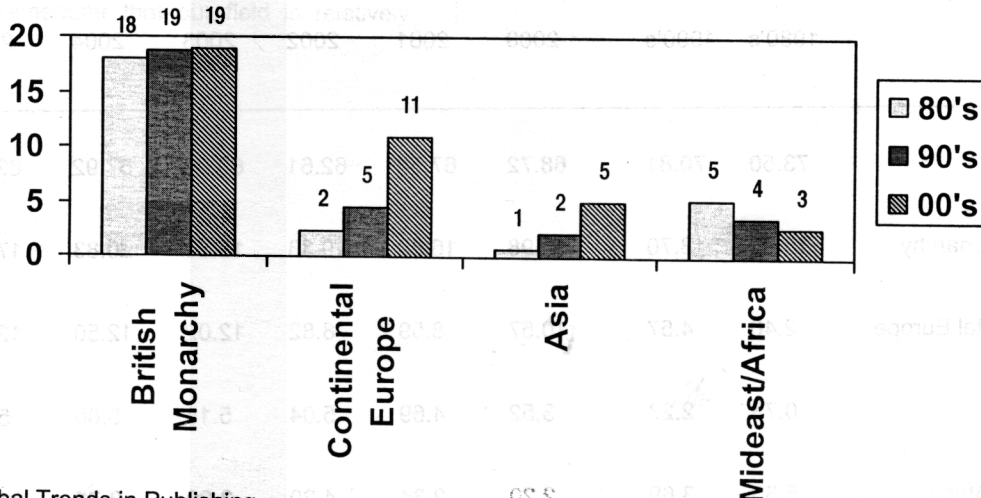


Figure 2: Global Trends in Publishing

Finally, to determine whether these overall trends have changed within the present decade, in Table 1, we provide the results for the 1980's and 1990's, but also break down the data by year since 2000. The rate of decline of American dominance appears relatively uniform, although the largest drop has occurred since 2000. Whereas publications from researchers in the British Monarchy nations was relatively stable from 1980-1999, it appears that since 2000, the rate of publication has increased sharply. In contrast, whereas Continental Europe's representation in the four journals increased dramatically from the 1980's, the increase appears to have leveled off since 2000. Asia appears to be continuing its ascendance, and representation from researchers in the Middle East and Africa continues to decline.

What do these trends tell us about the future of I-O psychology research? In some ways, our analysis poses more questions than it answers. For example, what has caused this trend? Does it mean that the American approach to psychology has become incorporated into Asian and European thinking, or does it mean that American researchers are more open to alternative perspectives? The obvious answer to this question is "some of each," and we do not doubt that it is true that European and Asian scholars are more open to American journals and American-style research, and that

American scholars are more open to global perspectives.

However, we also think there are challenges to a full convergence of perspectives. First, there is the issue of language. English is the language of the top journals included in this review yet, obviously, English is the native language of only a small minority of the world's population. It is true that English is the most common second language learned, but it is naive to assume that a second language is as readily absorbed as a native language. After all, even in 2006, more than 8 of 10 articles published were from researchers in English-speaking countries. This language barrier will continue to pose challenges in the globalization of I-O research, even as great strides are being made. Second, culture is a complicated matter, and it poses significant problems for I-O psychology research. How might one compare, for example, Romanian, German, and American cultures in the degree to which job redesign affects job attitudes? It is difficult to even define and measure national culture (Hofstede, 2002; Spector, Cooper, & Sparks, 2001), and to compare and contrast the three (or more) cultures is a complicated proposition. Moreover, there is some evidence that while cultural stereotypes are widely held (e.g., hard-working Germans, confident Americans), they are belied by greater within- than between-country differences (Terracciano et al., 2005).

Table 1. Global Publishing Trends Across Four Top Industrial-Organizational Psychology Journals

	1980 – 1999		2000 – 2006						
	1980's	1990's	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
U.S.	73.50	70.81	68.72	67.58	62.61	60.09	57.92	62.36	58.97
British Monarchy	18.03	18.70	14.98	16.80	19.33	19.74	20.83	17.87	23.44
Continental Europe	2.40	4.57	10.57	8.59	8.82	12.02	12.50	12.55	9.52
Asia	0.73	2.23	3.52	4.69	5.04	5.15	5.00	5.32	6.59
Mideast/Africa	5.33	3.69	2.20	2.34	4.20	3.00	3.75	1.90	1.47

Notes: British Monarchy represents the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

Despite these, and other, difficulties, we also think it is an exciting time with considerable progress. First, we see far greater communication and dialogue across cultures than was once the case. This journal, with its communication in three languages, is a good case in point. Second, technology has eased considerably the barriers to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. These diminishing barriers should disproportionately benefit those in relatively remote cultures. Third, more and more is being learned about cross-cultural issues, and there is no reason to believe that this trend is abating.

In light of these trends, what are some pieces of advice we would give to international researchers? We think the best source of research ideas is something everyone has in equal abundance – one's personal experience and observations. The great writers, after all, wrote about what they *knew*, and observed in their localities (e.g., Hardy's Tess in Wessex, Pasternak's Zhivago in revolutionary Russia). We can do the same, by blending our powers of observation with our scientific training. A great equalizer, then, is our ability, through introspection and keen observation, to generate ideas worthy of scientific investigation. Of course we do not advocate that one divorce oneself from the research literature, but once a topic has been mastered, it may be that the more "remote" one's culture, the more likely one is to bring into a topic new insights inherent in one's culture. As noted by Gelfand, Erez, and Aycan (2007) in a recent review, "Indigenous perspectives are critical for organizational behavior and need to be prioritized in future research" (p. 498).

While one's local environment and culture can be an excellent source of good ideas, it is important to remember that our field is relatively

conservative – we tend to adhere to precedent and careful execution. New ideas are important, but it is also important that they be executed using rigorous, careful methods. At this juncture, we see little evidence that the American journals (such as JAP) are willing to accept inferior execution as the price to be paid for new thinking. One will not substitute for the other.

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