

International and Cross-Cultural Comparisons

**Kanan Patel-Coleman, DEnv, MPH,
MA**

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Major Workplace Changes

- **Globalization**
- **Changing nature of work** (NIOSH 2002)
 - Downsizing, reengineering
 - Outsourcing
 - Nontraditional employment practices
 - Downward management responsibilities
 - Lean production
 - Technological advances

Globalization

- **Expansion of global linkages, social life and consciousness creating a world society.**
- **The tendency of businesses, technologies, or philosophies to spread throughout the world, or the process of making this happen.**
- **Economic: the increasing integration of world markets for goods, services, and capital.**

Economic Globalization

- Lower costs of communication, transportation and labor
- Expansion of multinational corporations, mainly manufacturing industries
- Blurred national boundaries
- Regional movement

Benefits of Globalization

- **Greater access to opportunities, values, and products**
- **Jobs (primary and secondary)**
- **Increased national income → health and social services, infrastructure**

Costs of Globalization

- **Environmental degradation**
- **Erosion of social/cultural identities**
- **Occupational hazards**
 - Physical: ergonomics of factory work
 - Chemical: solvents, metals, pesticides
 - Psychosocial: high quotas, low decision authority; new practices

Tokyo Declaration

- 1998 meeting on work-related stress and health
- Trends and future research, training and information needs
- Tokyo Declaration—proposals to policy-makers:
 - Implementation of available information to prevent and reduce workplace stress
 - Research to address knowledge gaps
 - Surveillance at individual work sites and regional and national monitoring
 - Training of occupational professionals participating in research and program design

Tokyo Declaration

- **Acknowledged health burden in developing countries**
- **Focus on the postindustrial societies of the European Union, Japan and the United States.**

Why Less Industrialized Countries?

- High rural to urban migration of populations searching for jobs
- Natural experiments—agrarian to industrial economies
- Exportation of foreign work practices
- Cultural differences

Unique Research Questions

- Are exposures and outcomes similar within similar occupations and social classes between countries?
- Are exposures and outcomes similar for the same occupations between workers in their native country and immigrants in another country?
- Do illnesses show the same relationship to exposures, e.g., does job strain predict blood pressure in the same way?
- Do cultural differences moderate the relationship between workplace stressors and health outcomes in unique ways?

Two Approaches

1. Comparison of measurement instruments
2. Cultural modifiers

Limitations

- **Demand-control model assumes individual control over one's job is important**
- **Desired vs. possessed control**
- **Individual vs. group control**
- **Based on US and Europe—highly individualistic**

Limitations

- **Translations; concepts**
- **Socioeconomic level of development of industrializing country (influences values)**

Electronics Factory, Mexico

- **Female workers in two plants—250 assembly line operators; 50 supervisors**
- **Produce microchips, keyboards, computer cables, etc.**
- **JCQ**
- **Outcomes: depression index, anger, exhaustion**

Leonor Cedillo (unpublished dissertation) Ch. 3: Reliability and validity of the Spanish version of the JCQ among women workers in the maquiladora industry in Mexico.

Professionals, Mexico City

- **179 nurses, psychologists, physicians, social workers, teachers, police officers**
- **Employed more than 30 hrs/wk**
- **JCQ**
- **Outcomes: burnout, GHQ, CVD symptoms, BP (nurses only)**

Arturo Juarez (unpublished) Testing variables from the job/personal model for psychosocial diagnosis at workplace.

- **3 JCQ items had low reliability in electronics workers:**
 - I have very little freedom to decide how to do my work. (gender bias?)
 - I have time enough to finish my work. (fixed hours?)
 - My job involves a lot of repetitive actions.
- **Reworded for professionals study**
 - I have a lot of freedom to decide how to do my work. (much improved)
 - I have enough time to finish my work. (same)
 - Frequently, the activities of my work station are very repetitive *and* The activities I have to do in my work are repeated one after another. (same)

Other Results

- **Electronics workers:**
 - Job insecurity was best predictor of depression, anger and exhaustion; not psychological demands nor decision latitude
- **Professionals:**
 - Job insecurity was most correlated with CVD symptoms
 - Decision latitude predicted systolic and diastolic BP

Danish Study

- **Danish National Psychosocial Work Environment Study**
- **5 job demand scales not in JCQ**
 - Quantitative, cognitive, emotional, sensorial, hiding emotions
- **Demands for hiding emotions strongly negatively correlated with health status**

Maquiladoras in Mexico

- **Manufacturing plants owned by transnational corporations; in Mexico mostly at border with U.S.**
- **Foreign investment; local employment**
- **Few rest periods, excessive noise, high quotas, low decision latitude**
(Guendelman and Silberg, 1993)

Maquiladoras in Mexico

- Moure-Eraso study (1997) in two border communities with large pools of maquila workers
- Fixed shift; daytime hours
- 53% worked 48 hr/wk or more
- Difference in interpretation of “overtime”: regular overtime reported more in community where workers worked significantly fewer hours

Other

- **EuroDisney in France—delay in opening because workers refused strict dress and appearance codes**
- **BP Petroleum in Colombia—low productivity and absenteeism**
- **Maquiladora in Mexico—resistance to reduced lunch time**

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

- **Acculturation: Cultural change from continued firsthand contact between two distinct cultures**
 - Physical: housing, population density, pollution
 - Biological: types of food
 - Cultural: political, economic, technical, linguistic, religious, social
- **Non-uniform process dependent on characteristics of both cultures**

Types of Acculturation

- **Assimilation**
 - abandoning group's own cultural identity and adopting larger culture
 - many groups merge to form new group, “melting pot”
- **Integration**
 - Maintain cultural identity but become integrated into larger society

Types of Acculturation

- **Rejection**
 - Incoming group maintains its own culture and rejects assimilation or integration
- **Deculturation**
 - Immigrant group strikes out against larger society out of intense identity confusion and alienation
 - Loses both
 - Marginality; ethnocide

Acculturation Processes

1. **Contact period: initial meeting phase**
2. **Conflict period: dominant group pressures change; identity crisis**
3. **Resolution period: conflict resolved through**

Acculturative Stress

- **Psychocultural stress due to the acculturation process of incoming culture with host culture**
- **Reduced physical and/or mental health status**
- **Greater if differences between cultures are greater**

Factors Affecting Stress

- Amount of exposure
- Level of education and skills
- Sex
- Age
- Language
- Race
- Psychological and spiritual strengths
- Conditions prior to immigration

Amerasian Study, U.S.

- **Amerasians: persons born of American servicemen and Vietnamese and Cambodian women; 1987 act allows immigration to U.S.**
- **101 youth interviewed; 19-23 yrs**
- **Gender, race, employment, spoken English**
- **Outcome: acculturative stress**

Nwadiora and McAdoo (1996)

Amerasian Study, U.S. (cont.)

- **Results**
 - No gender or race difference
 - Less stress if employed
 - Less stress if speak English

Call Centers, India

- **Highly educated, low cost work force**
- **High tech infrastructure**
- **Unique phenomenon strictly due to globalization**
 - Trained to respond to culture of customers (language, accent, pop culture)
 - Night shift hours—reduced family time
 - Traditional holidays may conflict

References

- NIOSH (2002) The Changing Organization of Work and the Safety and Health of Working People.
- Tokyo Declaration (1998) [May be viewed at www.workhealth.org/news/tokyo.html]
- Cooper CL et al. (2001) Organizational Stress, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Kawakami N et al. (2003) Assessment of psychological job demands: review and future directions. Presented at JCQ Workshop, APA-NIOSH Conference on Work and Health, Toronto, March 19, 2003.
- Nwadiora E and McAdoo H (1996) Acculturative stress among Amerasian refugees: Gender and racial differences. *Adolescence*, 31(122):477-487.

Discussion

- Think about the psychosocial factors measured on Jcq, ERI, OSI. How might cultural factors influence the responses to these questions?
- Do you think the demand-control model is transferable for use in developing countries? Why or why not?