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Matching Versus Mismatching Cultural Norms in Performance Appraisal Effects of the Cultural Setting and Bicultural Identity Integration

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ABSTRACT The present study examined how biculturals (Asian-Americans) adjust to differing cultural settings in performance appraisal. Biculturals vary in the degree to which their two cultural identities are compatible or oppositional – Bicultural Identity Integration (BII). The authors found that individual differences in BII interacted with the manipulation of the cultural setting (American or Asian) in determining whether employee outcomes were evaluated as matching or mismatching cultural norms. Results showed that Asian-Americans with high BII gave less weight to employees' situational conditions in the American setting (matching American cultural norms) and more weight in the Asian setting (matching Asian cultural norms), whereas those with low BII showed the opposite pattern, giving more weight to employees' situational conditions in the American setting (mismatching American cultural norms) and less weight in the Asian setting (mismatching Asian cultural norms). We discuss the implications of understanding bicultural identity dynamics in managerial judgment and behavior.

KEY WORDS • bicultural identity integration • causal attribution • cultural frame switching • performance appraisal

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As companies become more global, understanding how managers adjust to differing cultural settings is important (e.g. Black and Mendenhall, 1991; Black et al., 1991; Maertz et al., 2009). On cross-cultural assignments, managers need to have considerable knowledge of the host-culture norms (Earley, 2002; Earley and Peterson, 2004; Van Vianen et al., 2004; Thomas and Inkson, 2004), resolve internal inconsistencies when values of the host culture conflict with their own values (Earley, 2002; Maertz et al., 2009; Van Vianen et al., 2004), and learn a new behavioral repertoire to mesh with the host culture (Berry, 1997; Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Earley and Peterson, 2004; Molinsky, 2007; Thomas and Inkson, 2004). Behavioral mismatch with cultural norms can negatively affect managers' own performance as well as that of the organization (Black and Gregersen, 1999; Kraimer et al., 2001; Yamazaki and Kayes, 2004).

Research on the cross-cultural adjustment of managers in a work context has mostly focused on expatriates of a single culture who learn about the host culture prior to departure from the home culture, or during the assignment period (e.g. Black, 1990; Black and Mendenhall, 1990, 1991; Naumann, 1993; Nicholson and Imaizumi, 1993; Yamazaki and Kayes, 2004). Little research has focused on the cross-cultural adjustment of *bicultural* managers, who are considered fluent in both the host- and home-culture norms and hence require less cross-cultural training. For example, the host culture is not considered 'new' or 'foreign' to them. Bicultural managers are sought after by multinational companies with the belief that they are sensitive to cultural cues and they adjust like chameleons to match the cultural expectations of a setting (Briley et al., 2005; Fu et al., 2007; Ross et al., 2002; Trafimow et al., 1997). Research on the psychology of biculturals (e.g. Asian-Americans) suggests that they have two sets of cultural interpretive frames and they can switch between the two, depending on factors like the culture of the setting (e.g. an

American setting might trigger American cultural frames) (Hong et al., 2000). Yet biculturals' identity motives (Mok and Morris, 2009; Zou et al., 2008) and their identity structure (e.g. Benet-Martinez et al., 2002) can determine whether they shift their behaviors in ways that match or mismatch the cultural norms of a setting. Recent evidence suggests that the more a bicultural feels their two cultural identities are oppositional, rather than compatible, the more likely they are to show behaviors that contrast with cultural norms (e.g. an American setting might trigger Asian frames) (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002). In this case, bicultural managers with oppositional cultural identities may act in accordance with home-culture norms in the host culture; or with host-culture norms in the home culture. Therefore, without a deeper understanding of bicultural identity dynamics in organizational settings, scholars and multinational companies may prematurely conclude that bicultural managers are more apt to embrace cultural norms in their assignments.

In this paper, we explored bicultural managers' frame switching in the area of performance appraisal, a critical organizational outcome where culturally variable norms have been documented (e.g. DeVoe and Iyengar, 2004). We examined managers' attributions (dispositional versus situational) for employee outcomes in different cultural settings based on their ratings of merit and reward. Rather than assuming that bicultural managers appraise employees congruent with cultural norms of the appraisal context, we propose that they could also contrast against cultural norms depending on their bicultural identity structure, such as whether their two cultural identities are compatible rather than oppositional. We now develop our hypotheses.

Attribution in Performance Appraisals

A large literature on performance appraisal has focused on ways that managers inter-

pret employee outcomes, such as due to the employee's personal contribution or merit, as opposed to the inhibitory or facilitative conditions that he or she faced (Bernardin, 1989; Carson et al., 1991; Ilgen and Knowlton, 1980; Jawahar, 2005; Mitchell and Wood, 1980). Jawahar (2005) observed that managers make appraisals in light of employees' situational conditions in order to make a judgment of merit, as their performance ratings were more lenient toward employees who operated under inhibitory than facilitative conditions for a given outcome. Managers' attributions of employee outcomes affect their behavior. When employees' negative outcomes are attributed more toward situational (vs dispositional) factors, less severe disciplinary actions are taken (Green and Liden, 1980; Green and Mitchell, 1979; Ilgen and Knowlton, 1980; Mitchell and Wood, 1980; Wood and Mitchell, 1981). Together, managers' appraisals and behavior are not merely influenced by employees' objective outcome, but also by their attributions such as how and why the outcomes are produced.

Recent work indicates that culture shapes how managers evaluate employees (DeVoe and Iyengar, 2004; Martinko and Douglas, 1999; Snape et al., 1998). DeVoe and Iyengar (2004) found that American managers' appraisals were linked to their perceptions of employee intrinsic motivation, whereas East Asian managers' appraisals were linked to their perceptions of employee extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. These findings are in line with prior evidence suggesting that members of Western cultures (e.g. North Americans, Europeans) focus on dispositional causes for an actor's behavior and give less weight to contextual information, whereas members of East Asian cultures make more situational attributions for an actor's behavior and give more weight to contextual information (Choi et al., 1999; Lee et al., 1996; Morris and Peng, 1994).

DeVoe and Iyengar's (2004) study focused on cultural differences in managers' tendency

to attribute employee outcomes to their intrinsic or extrinsic motivation; likewise, there could be cultural variation on managers' tendency to attribute employee outcomes to their merit or situational conditions. If Americans attribute outcomes more to internal dispositions, whereas East Asians attribute outcomes more to the situational context (e.g. Morris and Peng, 1994), one might expect that American managers, compared to East Asian managers, would give less weight to employees' situational conditions in performance appraisal. Person perception research suggests that when perceivers have a dispositional inferential goal (e.g. 'How well did the individual perform?'), an initial dispositional attribution is made, followed by a situational correction to the initial attribution in light of possible situational constraints on the actor (e.g. Gilbert and Malone, 1995; Krull, 1993; Quattrone, 1982). When situational factors are seen to facilitate (constrain) the observed behavior, perceivers modify their initial attribution in the direction of a weaker (stronger) dispositional attribution (Lieberman et al., 2002, 2005). Recent evidence indicates that Americans apply less situational correction compared to East Asians (Knowles et al., 2001); hence, managers in American versus East Asian culture could be less sensitive to employees' situational conditions in performance evaluation.

Cultural Frame Switching and Bicultural Identity Integration

Research has found that biculturals shift between attribution styles depending on the culture of a setting. In experiments by Hong et al. (2000), for example, Asian-American biculturals made dispositional attributions for an actor's behavior after exposure to American cultural cues (e.g. an image of the Statue of Liberty and the White House), whereas they made situational attributions after exposure to Asian cultural cues (e.g.

an image of the Great Wall of China and a Chinese dragon). This implies that culture has a dynamic influence on behavior (see also Fu et al., 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi, 2002). Biculturals are able to shift between interpretive frames presumably because they have acquired distinct networks of shared knowledge from participating in two different cultures (Hong et al., 2000); cultural cues could heighten the accessibility of cultural frames (Hong et al., 2000; see also Higgins, 1996).

The way that biculturals experience their two cultural orientations affects whether they shift in ways that match or mismatch the cultural norms of a setting. Individual differences in Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) – the degree to which biculturals’ two cultural identities are experienced as compatible or oppositional (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martinez et al., 2002) moderates the frame-switching process. For example, using the same method as Hong and her colleagues (2000), Benet-Martinez et al. (2002) found that whereas Asian-American biculturals with compatible identities, or high BII, made less situational attributions in the American (vs Asian) setting, implying assimilation to cultural norms, those with oppositional identities, or low BII, made stronger situational attributions in the American (vs Asian) setting, implying contrast with cultural norms.

A motivational mechanism has been proposed to underlie the contrast responses of biculturals. Low versus high BII could be associated with different identity motives, such as a need to maintain one’s sense of identity against external influence. For example, Zou et al. (2008) found that low BIIs were more likely to disidentify with one of their cultures, and this disidentification was associated with contrastive responses to cues of that identity. Disidentification involves a desire to avoid conforming to external identity expectations (e.g. Zou et al., 2008). Hence the contrastive response is akin to reactance, in which an individual ‘pushes back’ against

external constraints by seeking the behavioral option discouraged by the external influence (e.g. Dowd, 1989). Biculturals with less integrated cultural identities (low BIIs) may react against cultural norms to protect their other cultural identity from perceived threat or neglect (see Mok and Morris, 2009).

The asymmetry in how biculturals adjust to differing cultural settings (assimilation or contrast) has been recently observed in a work domain. Friedman et al. (2008) found that Westernized Taiwanese professionals who viewed their Taiwanese and American identities as compatible (high BII) preferred using an equity-based rule in employee pay allocation in an American setting (matching American norms) and an equality-based rule in an Asian setting (matching Asian norms). Conversely, those who viewed their two cultural identities as oppositional (low BII) preferred using an equality-based rule in an American setting (mismatching American norms) and an equity-based rule in an Asian setting (mismatching Asian norms).

The present research aimed to further investigate the interaction between the cultural setting and BII in performance appraisals. If high BIIs tend to show attribution biases that match the cultural norms of a setting (e.g. Benet-Martinez et al., 2002), we expect that Asian-American managers with high BII would evaluate employees less situationally or give less weight to situational factors on their observed outcome in an American versus Asian setting. Conversely, as low BIIs tend to show attribution biases that mismatch the cultural norms of a setting, we expect that Asian-American managers with low BII would evaluate employee outcomes more situationally or give more weight to situational factors on their observed outcome in an American versus Asian setting.

Although research has demonstrated an interaction between the cultural setting and BII on attributions (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2006), past studies are limited in several ways. First, perceivers

are typically asked to make judgments of non-human targets in an ambiguous context (e.g. explain why a single fish is swimming in front of a group of fish in a cartoon stimulus), whereas everyday social judgment involves interpreting other people's behavior in a rich social context. Hence, it is unclear whether the social judgment tendencies in past research extend to managerial settings. Secondly, participants are typically asked to rate whether the observed behavior was caused by 'something about the actor' or 'something about the situation'; these ratings could simply reflect preference for a linguistic convention (Gilbert and Malone, 1995) or conscious (anti)conformity to cultural lay theories of social behavior (Norenzayan et al., 2002). It is plausible that the findings would differ when attributions are probed alternatively. Thirdly, judgments in past studies usually do not assess interpersonal consequences. For example, attributions with or without behavioral implications could differ significantly. Unless research directly examines biculturals' judgment and behavior in more realistic social situations, we cannot be sure that the effects of culture and BII documented in social psychology research so far have theoretical and practical implications for international management.

We argue that for bicultural managers, the cultural setting and their level of BII would jointly influence their attributions and decisions about employees (e.g. who to credit or penalize). To overcome the limitations of past studies, we adopted a performance evaluation task that involved appraising and allocating rewards to employees, a common practice performed by managers. As perceivers do not make attributions in a vacuum, we provided information about employees' situational conditions (e.g. whether they operated in a competitive market or not) in addition to their outcome. To probe whether cultural reactance could be a relatively unconscious dynamic, we manipulated the culture of the appraisal context and assessed managers'

attributions as the weight given to situational information about the employee; greater weight implies a weaker dispositional or stronger situational attribution.

Because managers obviously cannot promote or give pay increases to all of their employees in performance appraisal, their task in effect is to judge which employees' outcome indicates unusual merit. Managers can use the company norm or objectives of the position as a reference point for their appraisals (Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1993), or salient information could guide their attributions (Green and Mitchell, 1979; Taylor and Fiske, 1978). For example, researchers (Lord and Smith, 1983; Wong and Weiner, 1981; Wood and Mitchell, 1981) have emphasized that managers elaborate their attributions for outcomes that are disappointing rather than good. Also, unexpected employee outcomes induce more effortful attributional processes (Weiner, 1986). A negativity bias in information processing (Baumeister et al., 2001) could underlie these effects. Studies have found that people are more sensitive and attuned to negative than positive information (Fiske, 1980; Hamilton and Zanna, 1972; Kanouse and Hanson, 1971). Negative events elicit more articulate attributions (Hastie, 1984; Schwartz and Clore, 1983) and affect people's decision-making process more strongly (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Managers could assume positive employee outcomes to be the norm, so negative outcomes depart saliently from this norm. As Clark and Clark (1977) explains: 'Goodness is considered normal because it is what it is expected – what should be – and so badness is abnormal.' Hence, when appraising employees with positive outcomes, managers may make swift dispositional attributions with little motivation to analyze possible situational causes. Conversely, employees with negative outcomes should attract managers' attention and trigger their efforts to identify situational causal factors.

We test the idea that bicultural manag-

ers' appraisals would not only be affected by their cultural setting and BII, but also by the salience or negativity of employees' outcome relative to others' in the organization. We manipulated two levels of employees' outcome – positive and negative, and expected our hypothesis to be more strongly supported in appraisals of negative outcomes.

In sum, we investigated whether individual differences in BII affect whether bicultural managers evaluate employees in ways that match or mismatch the cultural norms of a setting. Specifically, we studied Asian-Americans' attributions for employee outcomes in either an American or Asian setting and predicted culturally matching behaviors for high BIIs and culturally mismatching behaviors for low BIIs. A match with American or Asian cultural norms would be evidenced by less situational sensitivity in the American versus Asian setting, such as evaluating employees operating under inhibitory conditions more harshly and employees operating under facilitative conditions more leniently for the same outcome. A mismatch with American or Asian cultural norms would be evidenced by greater situational sensitivity in the American versus Asian setting, such as evaluating employees operating under inhibitory conditions more leniently and employees operating under facilitative conditions more harshly for the same outcome. Ratings of both merit and reward were used to capture situational bias.

Method

Overview

To test the hypothesis, we adapted a work scenario used by Jawahar (2005). Participants were asked to play the role of a sales manager and to evaluate the performance of four employees. Unlike prior empirical studies that have manipulated culture using cultural primes that were unrelated to the judgment task (e.g. Hong et al., 2000; Benet-Martinez et al., 2002), we sought to cue culture in the

task by manipulating both the geographic location of the organization and the names of employees (Western or Asian). Thus, our task should be meaningful from both a theoretical and practical perspective. We recruited biculturals from both university student and working professional populations in order to increase the generalizability of the results.

Participants

Our sample comprised 80 East Asian-Americans (36 males, 44 females) with parents from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, or Japan. Participants identified themselves as an 'Asian-American bicultural' and were drawn from a large university ($n = 45$) and religious centers ($n = 35$) in New York City. The former sample comprised university students (mean age = 22.2 years, $SD = 4.4$) and the latter sample were full-time working professionals (mean age range = 26–30 years, $SD = 1.5$; assessed by numeric code, where 1 = under 20 years, 2 = 21–25 years, 3 = 26–30 years, 4 = 31–35 years, 5 = 36–40 years, 6 = 41–45 years, 7 = 46–50 years, and 8 = > 50 years). Mean years of work experience for the latter sample was 7.5 years ($SD = 8.1$).

Participants for the samples combined had lived, on average, 19.6 years ($SD = 8.6$) in the USA and 5.6 years in an East Asian country ($SD = 8.2$). Self-rated identification with American and East Asian culture, rated on a scale of 1 (*very weak*) to 7 (*very strong*) was 5.1 ($SD = 1.4$) and 5.2 ($SD = 1.3$), respectively. Proficiency in English and an East Asian language, assessed on a scale of 1 (*very poor*) to 7 (*very fluent*) was 6.7 ($SD = 0.9$) and 4.7 ($SD = 1.7$), respectively. Thirty-one participants were first-generation biculturals, 47 participants were second-generation and two participants were third-generation. Participants were recruited through campus flyers, emails, and word-of-mouth in exchange for \$5.

Materials and Procedure

The experiment was described as a study on social perception. University students

were tested in small groups in a classroom and working individuals were tested in their homes. Participants were given instructions to imagine themselves as a regional sales manager at A&B Cellular. Half of the participants read that their organization was based in North America, whereas the other half read that their organization was based in South East Asia. The organization was described as follows:

A&B Cellular manufactures and markets a variety of wireless phones throughout North America [South East Asia]. A&B Cellular conducts a thorough analysis of the market for its products, and estimates the market potential of different sales territories. Also, A&B Cellular collects and updates information about the number of customers and major competitors in each sales associate's territory and the average amount of time each sales associate spends commuting between customers. Historically, A&B Cellular's estimates have been reasonably accurate.

Next, participants reviewed information on the performance and situational conditions of an average sales associate at A&B Cellular. Their average annual sales was given as \$45 million; the average market potential per sales territory was \$75 million; the number of major competitors per sales territory was six; and the average time to travel between customers was 50 minutes. Following this, participants viewed a similar report for four employees and were asked to evaluate the performance of each employee using a series of rating scales. Participants could refer to the data regarding the average sales employee at the organization (i.e. the company norm) as a standard of comparison against which to evaluate their employees. Participants in the American condition rated the individuals 'T. Anderson', 'H. Williams', 'C. Taylor', and 'J. Harris', whereas participants in the Asian condition rated the individuals 'T. Lee', 'H. Choi', 'C. Yim', and 'J. Chang'.

We manipulated both employees' outcome and their situational conditions as within-subject factors. Employees with negative (vs

positive) outcomes attained a lower (higher) sales figure than the company norm, whereas employees in the inhibitory (vs facilitative) conditions operated in more difficult (easy) sales environments compared to the company norm. The outcome and situational conditions of each employee were manipulated as follows. In the negative (vs positive) outcome condition, total sales for the past year amounted to \$34 or \$36 million (vs \$52 or \$55 million). Employees with a first initial 'T' or 'C' achieved negative outcomes whereas employees with a first initial 'H' or 'J' achieved positive outcomes. In the inhibitory (vs facilitative) condition, the market potential per sales territory was \$66 or \$67 million (vs \$73 or 74 million);¹ the number of major competitors per sales territory was eight (vs four); and the average time to travel between customers was 67 or 70 min (vs 28 or 30 min). Employees with a first initial 'T' or 'H' operated under facilitative conditions whereas employees with a first initial 'C' or 'J' operated under inhibitory conditions. In sum, each employee represented one of the four cells. The presentation order of information regarding each employee was completely randomized, and participants rated the employees in the order that they were presented.

After the evaluation task, participants completed the eighteen-item self-monitoring scale (Gangestad and Snyder, 1985). Self-monitoring was used as a covariate in the analyses as it may confound the effects of culture on attributions (e.g. high self-monitors tend to evaluate individual outcomes more situationally compared to low self-monitors, Jawahar, 2005). Then, participants rated their strength of identification with American and East Asian culture and their proficiency in English and an East Asian language (the rating scales were described previously). To assess BII, participants were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) with respect to a vignette tapping oppositional cultural identities (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005):

I am a bicultural who keeps American and Asian cultures separate and feels conflicted about these two cultures. I am simply an Asian who lives in America (vs an Asian-American), and I feel as someone who is caught between two cultures.

The ratings were subsequently reverse-coded so that higher scores reflect higher BII. Last, participants provided demographic information regarding their age, sex, years lived in the USA and an East Asian country, and generation status. Working participants also indicated their years of work experience. At the end of the survey, participants were thanked, debriefed, and paid.

Dependent Variables

Participants rated the overall performance of each employee on a scale of 1 (*very poor*) to 7 (*very good*). They also rated the potential for promotion for each employee and their potential for a bonus, using the same rating scale. The first measure, overall performance, taps participants' appraisal or judgment of merit. The average of the last two measures, potential for promotion and a bonus, taps participants' crediting or reward behaviors that follow from the appraisal (α ranged from .65 to .82 for the four employees). To check that participants made judgments in light of other information besides employees' objective outcome, participants were asked to write a few sentences justifying their ratings of overall performance before proceeding to the other ratings. Situational sensitivity or bias was assessed by computing the difference score between the rating in the inhibitory condition and the facilitative condition for each level of outcome (negative; positive) and for the appraisal and crediting measures separately. Greater situational sensitivity in appraisals or crediting implies weaker dispositional or stronger situational attributions for employees' outcome, which should be more likely in East Asian than American culture.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis regarding appraisal was tested on a 2 (situational sensitivity for outcome: negative vs positive) \times 2 (cultural setting: American vs Asian) \times level of BII mixed-factors analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), controlling for self-monitoring and American identification strength (the rationale for the latter covariate is provided below); the first variable was within-subjects. The hypothesis regarding crediting was tested using a similar ANCOVA, with the degree of situational sensitivity in crediting replacing that for appraisal.² On both dependent measures, we found no main or interaction effects of participant's sex or generation status so they were dropped to increase the power of the analyses.

Results

Preliminary Considerations

We compared the student and working professional subsamples on the demographic variables and our main dependent measures using independent-sample *t*-tests. Compared to students, the working group had lived more years in the USA ($M = 14.8$, $SD = 7.0$ and $M = 25.7$, $SD = 6.2$, respectively), $t(78) = -7.20$, $p < .001$, and had lower East Asian language proficiency ($M = 5.1$, $SD = 1.7$ and $M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.5$ respectively), $t(78) = 2.48$, $p < .05$. We found no differences on all the other measures, $p > .05$. Thus, we combined the data of the two subsamples.

Participants' BII ratings were negatively skewed ($M = 5.4$, $SD = 1.4$; median = 6.0; skewness = -1.0) so we performed a square transformation (skewness = -.5) and used this in our hypothesis testing. (Using non-transformed BII scores, however, did not change any of the main findings reported.) To assess the relationship between BII and the demographic variables, we compared participants with high and low BII using a median split (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2006). Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for high and low bicultural identity integration (BII) participants

	Combined sample ^a			Student subsample ^b			Working professional subsample ^c				
	High BII	Low BII		High BII	Low BII		High BII	Low BII			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Years in the USA	19.5	8.6		14.6	6.5		26.0	6.5		25.2	6.0
Years in East Asia	5.1	7.0		6.2	7.5		3.6	6.2		3.7	7.8
English language	6.8	0.6		6.8	0.5		6.8	0.7		6.5	1.1
East Asian language	4.7	1.6		5.0	1.6		4.2	1.5		4.2	1.7
American identification	5.5	1.0	4.6*	5.4	1.1	4.6	5.6	0.9	4.6*	5.0	1.6
East Asian identification	5.1	1.2	5.3	5.1	1.2	5.6	5.2	1.1	5.0	5.0	1.4

^a *n* = 80 Asian-American participants; *n* = 49 high BIIs, *n* = 31 low BIIs; ^b *n* = 45 Asian-American participants; *n* = 28 high BIIs, *n* = 17 low BIIs; ^c *n* = 35 Asian-American participants; *n* = 21 high BIIs, *n* = 14 low BIIs. * *p* < .05.

Results for the combined sample showed that high BIIs (*n* = 49) had stronger American identification than low BIIs (*n* = 31), $t(78) = 2.81, p < .01$, which is consistent with past findings that high BII is associated with a more complete embrace of American culture for Asian-Americans (Mok et al., 2007); the correlation between BII and American identification was $r(80) = .28, p < .05$. To assess the unique contribution of biculturals' identity structure (integration) beyond their cultural identification strength on frame switching, we controlled for American identification in the analyses. The BII groups did not differ on any other demographic variables, $p > .05$. Moreover, BII was not significantly related to self-monitoring, $r(80) = .19, p > .05$.

We also examined participants' explanations for their ratings of overall performance. The analysis suggested that they attended to our manipulation of employees' outcome and their situational conditions, such as in relation to the company norm or to other employees. For example, participants' responses included 'below average sales, good circumstances', 'sales were poor despite few competitors and little time to travel', and 'below average in sales, should be able to have better performance with only four competitors'. Thus we were reasonably confident that participants incorporated other relevant information besides employees' objective outcome in their evaluations.

Appraisal

Results showed a main effect of BII, $F(1, 74) = 4.14, p < .05$, and a three-way interaction between outcome, cultural setting, and BII, although it was marginally significant, $F(1, 74) = 2.79, p < .10$. To clarify this interaction, analyses were done for the outcomes separately. For negative outcomes, results showed a two-way interaction of cultural setting and BII, $F(1, 74) = 4.53, p < .05$; no other effects emerged. The two-way interaction was not significant for positive outcomes, $F(1, 74) = .41, p > .10$; there was only a main

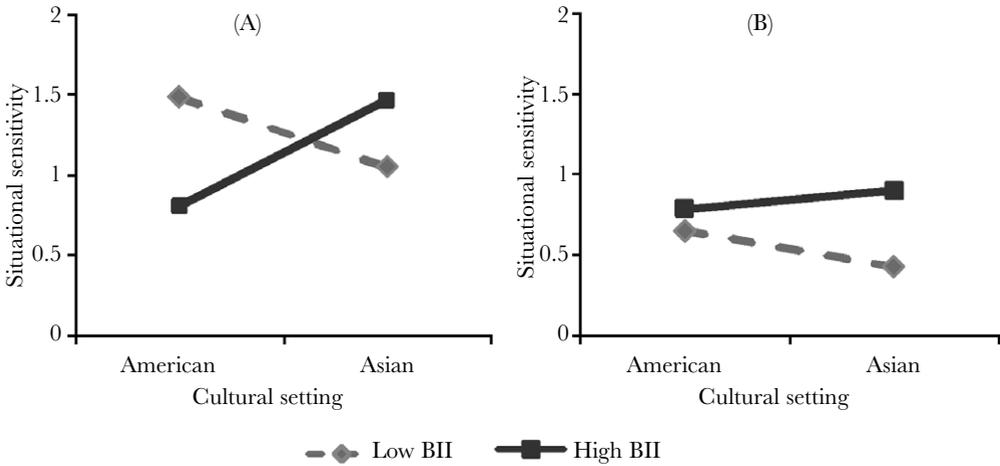


Figure 1 Situational sensitivity in appraisal as a function of employee’s outcome, cultural setting and managers’ bicultural identity integration (BII): (A) negative outcome; (B) positive outcome.

Table 2 Situational sensitivity in appraisal as a function of employee’s outcome, situational conditions, cultural setting and managers’ bicultural identity integration (BII)

Cultural setting	Employee’s outcome	BII	Employee’s situational conditions				Situational sensitivity (Inhibitory–Facilitative)	
			Inhibitory M	SE	Facilitative M	SE	M	SE
American	Negative	Low	4.42	0.25	2.92	0.28	1.49	0.32
		High	3.65	0.24	2.84	0.27	0.81	0.32
	Positive	Low	6.22	0.20	5.57	0.22	0.65	0.29
		High	6.13	0.19	5.35	0.22	0.78	0.28
Asian	Negative	Low	3.89	0.32	2.84	0.37	1.05	0.43
		High	4.32	0.20	2.85	0.23	1.47	0.27
	Positive	Low	6.23	0.26	5.81	0.29	0.42	0.38
		High	6.50	0.16	5.60	0.19	0.90	0.24

Note. Bold is used for predictions which were supported.

effect of BII, $F(1, 74) = 6.42, p < .05$. Thus as predicted, for negative outcomes participants with high BII ($n = 49$, using a median split) showed less situational sensitivity in the American than Asian setting, implying they matched cultural norms in performance appraisal (e.g. they followed American norms in American settings and Asian norms in Asian settings). The reverse pattern was found for low BIIs ($n = 31$), who showed

greater situational sensitivity in the American than Asian setting, implying they mismatched cultural norms in performance appraisal (e.g. they followed Asian norms in American settings and American norms in Asian settings); see Figure 1 and Table 2.

Crediting

The analysis revealed a main effect of outcome, $F(1, 74) = 4.30, p < .05$, a two-way

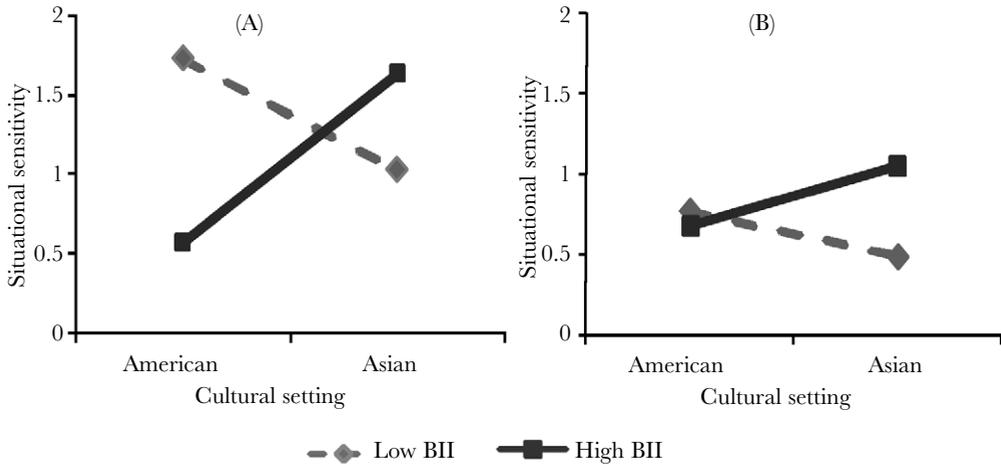


Figure 2 Situational sensitivity in crediting as a function of employee's outcome, cultural setting and managers' bicultural identity integration (BII): (A) negative outcome; (B) positive outcome.

interaction of outcome and cultural setting, $F(1, 74) = 4.16, p < .05$, and a two-way interaction of cultural setting and BII, $F(1, 74) = 5.10, p < .05$. The latter interaction suggests that participants with high BII followed cultural norms in their crediting, whereas those with low BII contrasted from cultural norms. We expected the interaction of cultural setting and BII to be qualified by the three-way interaction of cultural setting, BII, and employee's outcome. The three-way interaction was significant, $F(1, 74) = 6.31, p = .01$. Further analysis for the outcomes separately showed that the predicted interaction between the cultural setting and BII was strongly supported for employees with negative outcomes, $F(1, 74) = 8.26, p = .005$ (there was also a main effect of cultural setting, $F(1, 74) = 5.37, p < .05$), but not positive outcomes, $F(1, 74) = 1.00, p > .10$ (no effects were significant in this analysis). For negative outcomes, crediting by high BII ($n = 49$) was related to less situational sensitivity in the American than Asian setting, implying they matched cultural norms in performance appraisal. Conversely, crediting by low BII ($n = 31$) was related to greater situational

sensitivity in the American than Asian setting, implying they mismatched cultural norms in performance appraisal (see Figure 2 and Table 3).

General Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that BII influences how bicultural managers appraise employee performance in different cultural settings. Specifically, Asian-Americans with compatible cultural identities (high BII) showed attribution biases that matched the cultural norms of a setting (e.g. they evaluated employees less situationally in the American than Asian setting), whereas individuals with oppositional cultural identities (low BII) mismatched the cultural norms of a setting (e.g. they evaluated employees more situationally in the American than Asian setting). In short, Asian-Americans with high BII acted like a typical American (Asian) manager in an American (Asian) setting, whereas those with low BII acted like an a typical American (Asian) manager in an Asian (American) setting. This pattern emerged beyond individual differences in chronic motivation for social

Table 3 Situational sensitivity in crediting as a function of employee's outcome, situational conditions, cultural setting and managers' bicultural identity integration (BII)

Cultural setting	Employee's outcome	BII	Employee's situational conditions				Situational sensitivity (Inhibitory–Facilitative)	
			Inhibitory		Facilitative		M	SE
			M	SE	M	SE	M	SE
American	Negative	Low	4.36	0.25	2.64	0.27	1.72	0.38
		High	3.39	0.25	2.82	0.26	0.57	0.37
	Positive	Low	6.22	0.19	5.45	0.24	0.77	0.31
		High	6.06	0.18	5.38	0.23	0.68	0.30
Asian	Negative	Low	4.00	0.33	2.98	0.35	1.02	0.49
		High	4.23	0.21	2.60	0.22	1.63	0.31
	Positive	Low	6.23	0.24	5.75	0.31	0.49	0.40
		High	6.42	0.15	5.37	0.20	1.05	0.25

Note. Bold is used for predictions which were supported.

adjustment (e.g. self-monitoring) or cultural identification strength (e.g. American identification). The present research is the first empirical evidence, to our knowledge, of biculturals' cultural accommodation versus reactance in performance appraisal of *multiple* individuals, and in response to mundane cultural cues such as culturally associated names and the geographical office location. Ratings of both appraisal and crediting revealed cultural biases in attribution.

Additionally, our results support the idea that managers elaborate their attributions more for negative than positive outcomes. Our findings accord with the interpretation that negative outcomes are effective in cueing managers' attribution processes because they are more salient, unexpected, or worthy of attention (e.g. Baumeister et al., 2001; Hastie, 1984; Lord and Smith, 1983; Wong and Weiner, 1981). Managers may engage in the negativity bias, and negative (vs positive) outcomes could trigger greater interest and motivation to elaborate on the causal explanations. Alternatively, managers might be attributionally attuned to negative outcomes because people dislike giving harsh appraisals (Longnecker, 1989; Longnecker et al., 1987).

Managers may devote more effort to analyzing information about employees' situational conditions to ensure that their ratings are fair. The lack of effects of the cultural setting or of BII on positive outcomes converges with research that positive information is processed more efficiently (Taylor, 1991); positive outcomes may not sufficiently motivate perceivers to adjust their initial dispositional attribution. Given Jawahar (2005) found that *more* weight is given to employees' situational conditions with increasing levels of outcome, which is incongruent with the present findings, future research should test whether this depends on different manipulations such as the reference point for the appraisal, and the culture of the work setting.

Implications and Future Research

Much of the organizational behavior literature has focused on the cross-cultural adjustment of managers with a single cultural background (e.g. Black, 1990; Black and Mendenhall, 1991), and whether and when they assimilate to the norms of the new host culture, versus adhere to the norms of their

home culture (e.g. Black et al., 1991). By studying managers with multiple cultures, such as biculturals, we were able to assess how individuals who have internalized two cultural frames of reference, or two sets of cultural rules for appropriate behavior, might respond across differing cultural settings. Rather than simply assuming that bicultural managers adjust like cultural chameleons in their assignments, whether in the home culture or abroad, we demonstrated that they can in fact respond with cultural contrast or reactance (Brehm, 1966; Ogbu, 1993). Our findings imply that BII can significantly influence whether bicultural managers will orient themselves toward or away from cultural norms in employee evaluations. Appraisals of performance, if not judged according to cultural norms, could lead to perceptions of injustice in the organization, such as when employees feel unfairly blamed for poor outcomes or view that others are rewarded more than they deserve. Therefore, multinational companies who assign managers with compatible or integrated cultural identities to work overseas could reduce the chance that their behaviors would contrast from cultural norms and lead to interpersonal conflict, such as with employees they supervise (Martinko and Gardner, 1987; Martinko et al., 2007).

Our analysis implies that cultural cues and BII do not always interact to affect attributions of employee outcomes. Such outcomes vary in salience and valence, and we found that negative outcomes engaged bicultural perceivers' attribution process more strongly than positive outcomes. Exploring other conditions when the cultural setting and BII interact to affect performance evaluations is a fruitful avenue for future research (Friedman and Liu, 2009). Managers' attributions could in turn influence their affect such as their liking or willingness to mentor employees. Other research could examine biculturals' attributions in diverse, multicultural settings.

Why do cultural cues seemingly elicit culturally matching responses for high BIIs but

mismatching responses for low BIIs? Our proposal is one of internal identity management. Individuals with compatible and intertwined cultural identities (high BIIs) may have a more secure sense of self-identity relative to those with oppositional and dissociated cultural identities (low BIIs). Thus, integrated biculturals can match cultural norms because they do not feel that they undermine their other cultural identity in doing so. Conversely, less integrated biculturals may render following cultural norms as threatening their other cultural identity, spurring an impulse to retreat, or affirm that other identity to restore equilibrium in their bicultural identities (see Mok and Morris, 2009). This idea shares connections with theories in clinical psychology (Dowd, 1989) and acculturation (Garza and Gallegos, 1995) that reactance occurs, in part, when individuals attempt to regain control over the self and the situation.

Given participants are unlikely to be aware of cultural biases in attribution, at least in the way it was operationalized in the present study, our data suggest that (anti)conformity to cultural norms can be a relatively spontaneous and unconscious dynamic. Such unconscious habits may begin with conscious efforts to navigate culture-related cues in one's environment. Repeated efforts to either uphold or defy cultural expectations could crystallize into automatized habits of assimilating to or contrasting against cultural norms cued by the setting. (Mis)matching cultural norms (e.g. in performance appraisal) may develop into a dominant response for (low) high BIIs.

On a practical level, bicultural managers with less integrated cultural identities could be suitable for assignments that involve transferring practices from the home culture to abroad (or vice versa). For example, an Asian-American manager with low BII who is instructed to introduce equity reward practices in the China office, used by the American headquarters, could be more effective than a colleague with high BII, who may instead assimilate to Chinese norms of

rewarding employees equally. Likewise, an Asian-American manager with low BII could be effective in training American employees who are preparing for work assignments in South East Asia, as they act more Asian in an American setting. Alternatively, low BII managers may negotiate well on behalf of the company overseas if it means they are less susceptible to culture-based, influence tactics of the other party; yet high BIIs may have an advantage in making a deal if it depends on how mindful they are of the local cultural norms in negotiation (Thomas and Inkson, 2004). These are important areas for future research.

As low BII managers could have problems adjusting to local cultural practices (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005), future research could identify ways in which to elicit culturally matching responses for low BIIs. For example, low BII managers could be made aware that their behaviors tend to mismatch cultural norms such as in performance appraisal, and that by attempting to display culturally congruent behavior they could avoid potential negative consequences of norm violation (Earley and Ang, 2003; Francis, 1991) and embarrassment (Keltner and Buswell, 1997). In addition, recent evidence suggests that an individuals' level of BII is situationally malleable and positive experiences with culture can enhance biculturals' identity integration (Cheng and Lee, 2009; Mok, 2009). Instilling a positive cultural environment in organizations could diminish cultural reactance responses and norm violation behaviors.

The present study is not without limitations. We inferred participants' situational bias from their merit and reward ratings, rather than directly asking them to rate the causal relevance of various situational factors (e.g. number of competitors, market potential). Also, participants were asked to rate employees' *potential* for a promotion or bonus; future studies could use a procedure which highlights that rewards are in limited supply

and participants have to choose between different employees to better capture the crediting situation in real life. These limitations should be addressed in future research.

Our data raise an interesting question of whether Asian-Americans' consideration of situational information across cultural settings (American vs Asian) is automatic, as opposed to effortful. Future research could examine this directly. Moreover, studies could address what kinds of biculturals (mis)match cultural norms: more recent research reveals that the vignette measure of BII comprises two distinct components: Cultural Distance, the perceived separateness of the two traditions (e.g. 'I keep American and Asian cultures separate'), and Cultural Conflict, the feeling of tension between them (e.g. 'I feel caught between the two cultures') (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005). Studies could explore whether it is the perceptual or affective component of BII that affects culturally (mis)matching responses in attribution and decision-making.

Conclusion

This research provides a more complete picture of how bicultural managers adjust cross-culturally, with a focus on their employee evaluations. We show that bicultural managers shift between attributional styles in performance appraisal depending on the cultural setting. Furthermore, the degree to which their two cultural identities are compatible versus oppositional influences whether their reactions to employee outcomes match or mismatch the cultural norms of a setting. The present research contributes to our understanding of biculturals' cognitions and behavior in a cross-cultural work context. Also, it can inform organizations on how to harness biculturals' knowledge and behavioral responses as their business becomes more global.

Notes

- 1 The manipulation of inhibitory or facilitative conditions (compared to the company norm) should be interpreted in terms of the total sales as a proportion of the market potential, and not merely based on the absolute market potential.
- 2 Analyzing the data without using difference scores does not diminish the validity of our conclusions in any way. The significance levels are identical when submitting the ratings for appraisal or for crediting to a 2 (outcome: negative vs positive) \times 2 (situational condition: inhibitory vs facilitative) \times 2 (cultural setting: American vs Asian) \times BII mixed-factors analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), controlling for self-monitoring and American identification strength (the first two factors were within-subjects). That is, analysis for the 4-way interaction replicates the results of a 3-way interaction between situational sensitivity for outcome (negative vs positive), cultural setting (American vs Asian), and BII. Likewise, analysis for the 3-way interaction between situational condition, cultural setting, and BII for negative [positive] outcomes yields identical results as a 2-way interaction between cultural setting and BII on situational sensitivity for negative [positive] outcomes.

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Résumé

Assonance ou dissonance des normes culturelles lors de l'évaluation annuelle de performance : effets de l'environnement culturel et intégration de l'identité biculturelle (Aurelia Mok, Chi-Ying Cheng et Michael W. Morris)

Cette étude examine comment les personnes biculturelles (ici, les Asio-américains) s'ajustent aux différents environnements culturels lors d'évaluations annuelles de performance. Ces derniers varient selon le degré de compatibilité ou d'opposition de leurs identités culturelles – intégration de l'identité culturelle (IIB). Les auteurs concluent que les différences individuelles en matière d'IIB interagissent avec la manipulation de l'environnement culturel (américain ou asiatique) pour déterminer si les résultats des employés sont évalués selon des normes culturelles assonantes ou dissonantes. Les conclusions de l'étude montrent que les Asio-américains avec une IIB élevée donnent moins de poids aux conditions situationnelles des employés dans l'environnement américain (assonance des normes culturelles américaines) et plus de poids à l'environnement asiatique (assonance des normes culturelles asiatiques) ; en revanche ceux dotés d'une faible IIB sont à l'opposé de ce schéma, donnant plus de poids aux conditions situationnelles des employés dans l'environnement américain (dissonance des normes culturelles américaines) et moins de poids à l'environnement asiatique (dissonance des normes culturelles asiatiques). Nous étudions enfin les implications de la dynamique d'identité biculturelle dans le jugement et le comportement managérial.

摘要

绩效评估中的文化规范匹配与失配：文化环境与双元文化认同融合的影响

Aurelia Mok, Chi-Ying Cheng et Michael W. Morris

本研究考察了双元文化人士（亚裔美国人）是如何适应绩效评估中不同的文化环境的。双元文化人士对于两种文化认同相容或对抗的程度是有差异的——双元文化认同融合（BII）。我们发现，双元文化认同融合中的个体差异与个体对于文化环境（美国的或亚洲的）的掌控二者形成互动，并共同决定了员工表现是否会被评价为与文化规范匹配。研究结果表明，那些双元文化认同融合度高的亚裔美国人不太重视美国环境中（符合美国的文化规范）员工的情景条件，而非常重视亚洲环境中（符合亚洲的文化规范）

员工的情景条件；那些双元文化认同融合度低的亚裔美国人则表现出相反的模式，即非常重视美国环境中（不符合美国的文化规范）员工的情景条件而不太重视亚洲环境中（不符合亚洲的文化规范）员工的情景条件。最后我们讨论了了解管理者判断和行为中双元文化认同动态的重要性。