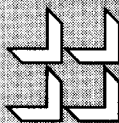


Cross-Cultural Notes



Under this heading are brief reports of studies that provide comparable data from two or more societies, using a standard measuring instrument. These Notes consist of a summary of the study's procedure and as many details about the results as space allows. Additional details concerning the results can be obtained by communicating directly with the author.

Organizational Performance and Learning Styles in Hong Kong

SIMON S. K. LAM

School of Business

The University of Hong Kong

KOLB (1976, 1985) DEVELOPED a Learning Style Inventory (LSI) to measure individual preferences for four types of learning abilities: concrete experience (CE), abstract conceptualization (AC), reflective observation (RO), and active experimentation (AE). The LSI is based on the assumption that learning involves two separate dimensions: CE versus AC and RO versus AE. Researchers use the combination of scores on these two dimensions to identify four types of learners: accommodators (CE and AE), divergers (CE and RO), convergers (AC and AE), and assimilators (AC and RO).

Since it was first published, researchers have used the LSI extensively in Western academic and professional settings to identify the learning-style preferences of different groups (Ruble & Stout, 1990; Sims, Veres, Watson, & Buckner, 1986). Because the research has been confined to Western settings, I investigated the relationship of different learning styles and organizational performance in a non-Western sample of 95 salespersons (72% were women; 96% had completed high school). I recruited the participants from eight diverse organizations in Hong Kong: one conglomerate, one international bank, two major manufac-

Address correspondence to Simon S. K. Lam, School of Business, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.

turers, two retailing companies and two construction companies. All the participants were of Chinese origin; their ages ranged from 18 to 37 years ($M = 21.6$ years). They completed the LSI during a training seminar and sent questionnaires to their immediate supervisors, who indicated on a 5-point scale their subjective evaluations of the participants' organizational performance.

I used the SPSS statistical package to calculate an analysis of variance for the type of learning style (accommodator, $n = 34$; assimilator, $n = 15$; converger, $n = 27$; and diverger, $n = 19$) and the reported organizational performance. The results of the analysis were significant, $F(3, 90) = 5.19, p = .0024$. The respective means and standard deviations of organizational performance for the four learning types were (a) 3.41 and .66 for accommodators, (b) 2.93 and .70 for assimilators, (c) 2.85 and .60 for convergers, and (4) 3.0 and .33 for divergers. According to further analysis with Duncan's multiple range test, the 34 salespersons categorized as accommodators significantly ($p = .05$) outperformed all other salespersons in the sample.

Kolb (1985) indicated that accommodators are intuitive trial-and-error problem solvers who prefer to carry out plans and become involved. Accommodators also display social and interpersonal skills that are essential for a salesperson. Researchers should assess whether that initial finding is consistent across other working groups. In summary, the present findings, similar to those from a Western setting, indicate that the LSI is useful in a non-Western setting as well.

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Received March 5, 1997