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Differences in the organizational-commitment–rewards relationship  
between Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates in manufacturing  
companies in China

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – As China attracts more and more foreign enterprises today, it is getting more important to consider how to enhance the organizational commitment (OC) of host country employees. This paper examines the differences in the relationship between OC and rewards among Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates who work for Japanese manufacturing companies in China.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Hierarchical regression analysis was used to analyze survey data gathered from 539 Chinese managers and 354 Japanese expatriates working for a total of 19 Japanese manufacturing companies in China.

**Findings** – The findings reveal that, for Chinese managers, role clarity had a stronger influence and autonomy a weaker influence on OC than for Japanese expatriates. A possible reason is the ethnocentric culture of Japanese companies that leads to Japanese expatriates not sufficiently empowering local human resources. Moreover, there was no difference between senior- and junior-level Chinese managers in the association of any kind of reward with OC.

**Research limitations/implications** – The most significant limitation concerns its generalizability. We recommend that future research use other nations' expatriates as reference groups to objectively clarify the characteristics of Chinese workers, thus testing the validity of this research.

**Practical implications** – The results of this research may be used to reshape future human-resource-management practices in several types of the company located in China to facilitate attracting and employing the employees most able to make long-term contributions to the company.

**Originality/value** – Although previous research has elucidated OC–rewards relation in particular countries, it has not met the potential requirements of the expatriates who face the difference in OC–rewards relation with host country national managers. In this sense, this research was the first attempt to tackle this theme by contributing to the literature.

**Keywords** Chinese managers; Japanese expatriates; manufacturing companies; organizational commitment; rewards

## **Introduction**

Given the key role China plays in the global economy, understanding the behavior of Chinese employees will benefit both Chinese and foreign enterprises currently operating, or planning to operate, in China. Therefore, this study analyzes the antecedents of organizational commitment (OC), focusing on the differences in these antecedents between Japanese expatriates and Chinese managers employed in China by Japanese manufacturing firms. We define OC as an employee's commitment to assisting in the achievement of the organization's objectives that involves the employee's levels of involvement, loyalty, and identification (Caught et al., 2000). OC has been seen as one of the most significant factors in explaining why some individuals wish to remain employed while others seek to leave (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Peyyer et al., 2010) and why some individuals demonstrate high levels of work performance and others do not (Meyer et al., 2002; Phipps et al., 2013). OC is particularly important for workforces working in countries such as China and Japan because in collectivist, as opposed to individualistic cultures, stronger correlations between job performance and OC have been found (Jaramillo et al., 2005).

To date, there have been several studies comparing OC and its antecedents

between nations (e.g. Hong et al., 2016; Yamaguchi, 2013). To the best of the authors' knowledge, however, there has been no research to investigate the traits of Chinese host-country-national (HCN) workers' OC in comparison to expatriate foreigners. The reason why the researcher has used a sample of expatriates for comparison is that the expatriates sometimes look facing difficulties working together with HCNs due to *comparative* differences regarding OC–rewards relation with them. In support, it is pointed out that gaining an understanding of the host country's labor-related culture and how it differs from their own is important to minimize conflicts with HCNs (Chen et al., 2011; Hofstede, 1980). The reason why the researcher chose a sample of “Japanese” expatriates is that Japan has been one of the main investors in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China [NBSC], 2014) and because Japanese MNCs are more heavily dependent on expatriates for managing their foreign subsidiaries than their Western counterparts (Kawai and Strange, 2014) based on the understanding that Japanese expatriates are superior to HCNs in the management of local subsidiaries (Keeley, 2001). Therefore, the researcher considers that it is important to clarify the characteristics of Chinese managers in the context of OC and its antecedents compared to those of Japanese expatriates to obtain useful information for the future localization of MNCs.

## **Literature review**

### *Organizational rewards in Japan and China*

Barrett and O'Connell (2001) asserted that some employees perceive certain human resource practices as rewards. There is growing support for the idea that organizations can improve their workforce's commitment by providing organizational rewards (Newman and Sheikh, 2012). The present research is underpinned by social exchange theory, according to which, if an individual is satisfied with the rewards provided by the organization, that individual will, in turn, develop a positive attitude toward the

organization, e.g. higher levels of commitment (Haar and Spell, 2004). For example, it has been demonstrated that enhanced OC leads to lower turnover intention (see, e.g., Peyyer et al., 2010). As well as a large amount of research on OC in the West (see, e.g., Meyer et al., 2002), an increasing number of papers on OC and its antecedents have also been published in non-Western countries, including Japan and China (Dubinsky et al. 1992; Gregersen and Black, 1996; Newman and Sheikh, 2012; Kokubun, 2018; Kokubun and Yasui, 2020). However, it remains unclear how different types of organizational rewards influence OC between HCNs and expatriates in foreign subsidiaries. Therefore, this study aims to further explore the effects of rewards on developing OC for managerial staff working for Japanese companies in China and compare these effects with those of Japanese expatriates in managerial positions.

#### *The Japanese corporate culture and its modification in China*

The Japanese corporate culture can be characterized by (1) low role clarity and (2) low autonomy. It is known that Japanese MNCs seek to develop generalists who are strongly indoctrinated in the company culture through frequent rotation to offer them experience in various departments and divisions and to promote coordination and teamwork in the firm. Therefore, Japanese companies are known to put less emphasis on roles compared to their Western (Jacoby, 2005; Keeley, 2001) and Asian counterparts (Ishida, 1986) because of their features of limited individual responsibility and broad mutual responsibility. As a result of these characteristics, employees are willing to take on extra roles outside their formal job responsibilities due to tacit psychological contracts for cooperation and coordination (Ishida, 1986). To keep job boundaries obtuse, it is necessary to maintain a shared context through the socialization of employees so that they understand the company's culture and goals, which are instilled through long-term employment, group-centered activities, frequent job-rotation, consensus-style decision-

making involving extensive informal consultation, and so on (Keeley, 2001).

However, Japanese companies make a strong distinction between in-group and out-group (Gudykunst and Nishida, 2001) and tend to pursue more ethnocentric staffing strategies than multinationals in other developed countries (Bader et al., 2021). Therefore, HCNs are expected to work in a completely different way from the expatriates mentioned above. HCNs are usually treated more as specialists and generally do not have the opportunity to take up jobs outside the subsidiary, which limits their career opportunities and decision-making power. The lack of well-developed human networks significantly inhibits HCN managers' ability to influence decisions (Keeley, 2001). Relatedly, Okamoto and Teo (2011) point out that there is a tendency for HCNs to lack information because Japanese expatriates do not trust local staff and do not convey important information to prevent leaks (Okamoto and Teo, 2011).

Therefore, in Japanese companies, local managers are expected to have higher role clarity and lower autonomy work styles than expatriates. This is not documented in the workplace. However, it is thought that local managers who observe the state of the workplace will understand the working styles of expatriates and their expected working styles, and adjust their awareness and behavior (Wyant and Kramer, 2021). This is because it is necessary to work in a way that meets the expectations of the workplace to be evaluated. Such adjustments in local managers are most likely to occur in Japanese companies that have an ethnocentric culture and often have expatriates in key positions. This is because the global talent management of the head office is easier to be transferred to the local area as the economic level of the home country is relatively higher (Froese et al., 2020) and coordination of one's work style by local managers is easier to proceed as the power is weaker than that of expatriates (Fee and Michailova, 2021; Toh and DeNisi, 2007). When these adjustments occur and, in addition, the high rewards expected in the workplace are given, it is considered that the employee can have a high OC as reciprocity.

And, as can be easily inferred from the above discussion, the effect on OC in Chinese managers is greater in role clarity than in autonomy when compared to Japanese expatriates. In other words, the OC of Chinese managers is considered to show a higher correlation with role clarity and a lower correlation with autonomy than Japanese expatriates.

*The difference between senior-level and junior-level managers*

Top managers have a wider scope of interests concerning their organizations, as well as a longer period of responsibility and a higher level of authority in decision-making processes than middle managers (Jaques, 1990; Moon, 2000). Empirical studies have revealed that intrinsic rewards such as task autonomy, task involvement, and task significance tend to have a greater impact on the work satisfaction of managers than on that of lower-level employees (Kraut and Ronen, 1975; Locke, 1976). Moreover, it has been reported that while mid-level managers expressed stronger needs for autonomy and influence, non-supervisory staff tended to pay more attention to the relational aspects of work (Riggio et al., 1999; Sashkin and Williams, 1990). Therefore, Wilson (1999) finds that there is a positive relationship between OC and various empowerment measurements. In the same vein, for managerial employees in China, psychological empowerment was more strongly associated with task performance than trust in the supervisor, while for non-managerial employees, trust in the supervisor was more strongly associated with task performance than psychological empowerment (Huang et al., 2010). These are in line with arguments that hold that empowered individuals are likely to perform beyond the minimum role requirement to help their organization (Seibert et al., 2011; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). It is thought that these differences in work style preferences depending on the position give rise to the difference in OC-rewards relation between senior-level and junior-level managers. That is, similar to the



relationship between Japanese expatriates and Chinese managers, senior-level managers are more likely to be affected by autonomy than role clarity than junior-level managers.

## Theoretical framework and hypotheses

### *Rewards*

In this research, we use two kinds of rewards: intrinsic rewards and extrinsic/social rewards. The former is subdivided into two subcomponents: role clarity and autonomy. On the other hand, the latter is composed of four subcomponents: benefit satisfaction, fatigue, supervisor, and co-worker support. We use these variables because research has confirmed that they are associated with OC not only in Chinese and Japanese workers but also in Japanese manufacturing companies in China (Kokubun 2018; Kokubun and Yasui, 2021). Based on the findings above, it is considered that Japanese expatriates perceive autonomy as more important than Chinese managers, but perceive role clarity as less important. Accordingly, we are led to the following hypotheses.

*H1:* The relationship between role clarity and OC is stronger for the Chinese than for the Japanese.

*H2:* The relationship between autonomy and OC is weaker for the Chinese than for the Japanese.

Further, based on the argument above, it is considered that Chinese senior-level managers perceive autonomy as more important than Chinese junior-level managers, but perceive role clarity as less important. Accordingly, we are led to the following hypotheses.

*H3* The relationship between role clarity and OC is weaker for Chinese senior-level managers than for Chinese junior-level managers.

*H4* The relationship between autonomy and OC is stronger for Chinese senior-level managers than for Chinese junior-level managers.

The researcher supposes that the OC of Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates are similarly sensitive to other social and extrinsic rewards. This is because both China and Japan have been influenced by Confucianism and this similar cultural heritage has led to similar values and attitudes such as discipline-oriented work efforts (Baumann and Winzar, 2017). Previous research has indicated that there are not only differences but also similarities in values at the societal level and job-related attitudes between China and Japan (Alas, 2008). Accordingly, there is no reason to suppose differences between Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates other than the ones indicated in the two hypotheses above.

### **Research methodology**

The data for this study were collected through the Work Motivation Survey (WMS) project, which has been managed and directed by the first author as a project of the International Economy and Work Research Institute (IEWRI) in Osaka and IEWRI Japan Co., Ltd (IEWRI Japan) in Tokyo since 2005. The WMS is an annual survey of Japanese foreign affiliates in China and other East Asian countries that aims to research the employees' work attitudes systemically and longitudinally and give practical advice to the management of participating companies (Kokubun, 2018; Kokubun, 2019; Kokubun and Yasui, 2020; Kokubun and Yasui, 2021). The wide geographical coverage

is one of the advantages of the WMS data because existing studies on OC in East Asia have tended to focus on particular countries and regions.

The WMS's data set covers 64 manufacturing companies in China (Kokubun, 2018; Kokubun and Yasui, 2021). This dataset contains awareness data for 45,874 employees who participated from April 2007 to March 2016. Participating companies received a report of the survey results in exchange for their cooperation in the survey, and were able to know the level of employee awareness compared to other participating companies. For this reason, all employees were required to participate. However, to fit the focus of this paper, we used only the data for those who worked for 19 Japanese manufacturing companies in China because these companies comprised both Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates, while another 45 companies included either Chinese managers or Japanese expatriates only. The sample comprised 893 participants: 539 Chinese managers; and 354 Japanese expatriates. Given the large sample size with a wide area of coverage, the estimated figures may be regarded as representative of Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates who work for Japanese companies in China. Demographic information for the participants is shown in the tables in Table AI. We controlled for all demographic variables to alleviate concerns regarding sample compatibility. The following are the variables used in this research [for more details about the procedures and measures, see Kokubun (2018)]:

- *Role clarity.* A two-item scale was used to measure role clarity on a five-point scale from 1 (I don't think so) to 5 (I think so). The alpha reliability was 0.753 (Chinese) and 0.768 (Japanese).
- *Autonomy.* A four-item scale was used to measure autonomy on a five-point scale from 1 (I don't feel so) to 5 (I feel so). The alpha reliability was 0.652 (Chinese) and 0.696 (Japanese).
- *Benefit satisfaction.* A three-item scale was used to measure benefit satisfaction

on a five-point scale from 1 (dissatisfied) to 5 (satisfied). The alpha reliability was 0.716 (Chinese) and 0.691 (Japanese).

- *Fatigue.* A five-item scale was used to measure fatigue on a five-point scale from 1 (incorrect) to 5 (correct). The alpha reliability was 0.848 (Chinese) and 0.858 (Japanese).
- *Supervisor support.* A six-item scale was used to measure supervisor support on a five-point scale from 1 (I don't think so) to 5 (I think so). The alpha reliability was 0.906 (Chinese) and 0.891 (Japanese).
- *Co-worker support.* A four-item scale was used to measure co-worker support on a five-point scale from 1 (dissatisfied) to 5 (satisfied). The alpha reliability was 0.789 (Chinese) and 0.795 (Japanese).
- *Organizational commitment.* Four items were used to measure OC on a five-point scale from 1 (I don't think so) to 5 (I think so). The alpha reliability was 0.804 (Chinese) and 0.815 (Japanese).
- *Control variables.* To control for individual differences, several demographic variables were included. Unconverted response data was used for organizational tenure and age. The sample dummy shows Chinese managers or Japanese expatriates. Gender, marital status, turnover experience, university graduates/undergraduates, indirect/direct department, and Northeast/North/East/South region were also measured.

### **Analysis and findings**

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of all the items (except the control variables) was conducted to examine measurement invariance between Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates. The results of the factor analysis with varimax rotation are presented in Table 1 and confirm a seven-factor solution for the following items: role

clarity; autonomy; benefit satisfaction; fatigue; supervisor support; co-worker support; and OC. The factor structure was identical for Chinese and Japanese, confirming that both Japanese and Chinese ascribed the same meanings to the scale items used (Milfont and Fischer, 2010). We did not use eight low-factor-loading items: four benefit-satisfaction items (“Company’s evaluation of myself,” “Possibility of my promotion,” “My position or rank at the working place,” and “Holidays and working hours”); one co-worker-support item (“The atmosphere at my working place”); and three OC items (“I am attracted to the slogan of the company and the strategies to achieve it,” “My company makes very meaningful contributions to this society,” and “I have dreams about the future of my company and its work”) to prevent multicollinearity with other variables.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

Further, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test if the factors were related to the measures. The model fit was evaluated by examining the indices recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). These were the ratio of Chi-Square to the degree of freedom ( $\chi^2$ :df ratio: acceptable if 5.0 or less; Carmines et al., 1981), the comparative fit index (CFI: good if .90 or more; Bentler, 1990), the root - mean - square error approximation (RMSEA; good if .06 or less; Bentler, 1990), and the standardized root - mean - square residual (SRMR; good if .08 or less; Bentler, 1990). Based on the results presented in Table 2 that indicate better fit of a 7-factor model than 4- and 1- factor models, in the following analysis, we treat these variables separately.

(Insert Table 2 about here)

Chinese and Japanese descriptive statistics are shown in Table 3. In Table 4, we tested our hypotheses using hierarchical regression analysis, entering the control variables in Step 1 and, in Step 2, the main effects of role clarity, autonomy, benefit

satisfaction, fatigue, supervisor support, and co-worker support. We entered the sample variable in Step 3 (0 for Japanese; 1 for Chinese) and, to test nationality moderation, its interaction terms with the entire sample's main effects. We also conducted a separate regression analysis using Chinese and Japanese.

(Insert Table 3 about here)

(Insert Table 4 about here)

Step 1 showed the results when only the control variables were included in the regression to predict OC. Step 2 showed the results when the six main variables had been added to the regression: five of the reward variables were positively associated with the regression with only fatigue being negatively associated, all significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ). These rewards, based on the adjusted  $R^2$ , explained 38% of additional variance in OC, implying that these rewards are important for OC.

Step 3 showed the results when the sample variable and all six interaction variables were added to the regression. Here, the relationship between role clarity and OC was moderated by the sample, and results revealed that the relationship was stronger for Chinese than for Japanese ( $\beta = 0.32, p < 0.05$ ). To summarize, Chinese OC was affected more by role clarity than Japanese OC. However, the relationship of autonomy with OC was weaker for Chinese than for Japanese ( $\beta = 0.42, p < 0.05$ ), implying that autonomy is less important in forming OC for Chinese than for Japanese. These moderation tests' significant results support *H1* and *H2*. Interaction terms of the sample and other rewards, i.e. benefit satisfaction, fatigue, supervisor support, and co-worker support, were not significantly correlated with OC. Individually conducted regression analyses confirm these findings, indicating that role clarity and autonomy explain an additional 19% and 13% of the variance in OC respectively in Chinese managers, while the figures are 10% and 19% in Japanese expatriates. To further understand the meaning of the significant interaction terms, we divided each of the Chinese and

Japanese samples into high- and low-role clarity and high- and low-autonomy groups one standard deviation above and below the mean (Aiken and West 1991), and confirmed the differences graphically (available upon request).

Using the reduced data of 12 companies in which Chinese managers may be technically divided into senior- and junior-level managers, we tested the differences in the OC-rewards relationship within the management class (the managers of 7 other companies could not be subdivided into senior and junior levels due to the questionnaire structures). The data set comprised 300 managers: 100 senior- and 200 junior-level managers. The alpha reliabilities were: 0.651 (senior) and 0.795 (junior) for role clarity; 0.740 (senior) and 0.620 (junior) for autonomy; 0.685 (senior) and 0.716 (junior) for benefit satisfaction; 0.863 (senior) and 0.854 (junior) for fatigue; 0.904 (senior) and 0.918 (junior) for supervisor support; 0.724 (senior) and 0.818 (junior) for co-worker support; and 0.794 (senior) and 0.808 (junior) for OC. (Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables are available upon request.) The results are shown in Table 5. Contrary to our expectations, the interaction terms of the sample (Chinese senior managers) and any six reward variables were not significantly correlated with OC. This implies that senior- and junior-level Chinese managers responded to these rewards, including role clarity and autonomy, with the same strength. Therefore, *H3* and *H4* were rejected.

(Insert Table 5 about here)

## **Discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the differences between Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates, in terms of the antecedents of OC, among employees working in Japanese manufacturing companies in China. The significant interaction results suggested that the relationship of OC with role clarity was greater among the Chinese

than the Japanese. However, another significant result implied that the relationship of OC with autonomy was weaker among the Chinese than the Japanese. Insignificant interaction results suggested that there was no significant difference between Chinese and Japanese regarding the relationships of OC with fatigue, benefit satisfaction, supervisor support, or coworker support. In summary, Chinese and Japanese do not show differences in the associations of extrinsic/social rewards with OC. They show differences only in the relationship between OC and intrinsic rewards. However, we could not find any significant difference in the OC–rewards relationships between Chinese senior- and junior-level managers.

This research contributes to the literature by clarifying the OC–rewards relationship of Chinese managers compared to that of Japanese expatriates; role clarity is more important while autonomy is less important for OC of Chinese managers. These differences probably are because HCN, which is in a relatively vulnerable position, adjusted its working style in response to the demands of the workplace of a local subsidiary in which expatriates occupy important positions due to ethnocentricity. Or, it can be inferred that these differences are due to the tendency of Japanese companies to attract human resources that are suitable for the culture of Japanese companies, which are characterized by ambiguous roles and ethnocentrism.

Therefore, Japanese companies must also consider the possibility that their Japanese-centered corporate cultures have kept at a distance the local talents who could potentially work autonomously for them. For instance, in their foreign subsidiaries, Japanese companies often rely more heavily on expatriate managers, in particular for the top management positions, than their US or European counterparts (Pudelko and Tenzer, 2013). Such staffing policies have been described as overly ethnocentric (Black and Morrison, 2010; Wong, 2010) because HCNs in these subsidiaries have not been given the opportunities for promotion or decision-making authority in Japanese



companies (Yoshihara, 1996; Legewie, 2002). Such ethnocentrism has to do with the fact that training in Japanese overseas plants is narrowly limited to basic skills and does not generally cover the inculcation of corporate values (Dedoussis, 1994); this is in contrast with that in Japanese headquarters, where employers spend a considerable amount of time and money in training their employees to encourage the formation of flexible skills and inculcation of organizational values. This helps create a strongly unified corporate culture that binds employees inexorably to the firm (Dore, 1994; Levine and Kawada, 1980). Consequently, Japanese employers have failed to attract ambitious, highly qualified HCNs (Froese and Kishi, 2013). These studies suggest that Japanese expatriates may lack the skills to manage talented HCNs who could potentially work autonomously (Sekiguchi et al., 2016). If this is true, the main implications of the current research may be most applicable to HCNs working for Japanese companies rather than those working for other multinational corporations. The results of the current study that the correlation between autonomy and OC of HCN is lower than that of expatriates suggests that Japanese companies do not have an environment for autonomous working styles.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the *limited* role of HCN does not mean a *clear* role. Indeed, employees working for Japanese companies in China have been found to have more complaints due to ambiguous job scope than those working for Western companies (Yu and Meyer-Ohle, 2008). Such ambiguity may partly be due to the negative aspects of the autonomous work style in the Japanese workforce, which is different from that of Westerners (Itagaki, 2009). Japanese companies are known to put less emphasis on the role than Western organizations (Jacoby, 2005; Keeley, 2001) and Asian counterparts do (Ishida, 1986). Such a work system has been structured around small group activities, which serve as a tool to involve employees in decision-making while simultaneously improving implicit communication and company-specific knowledge

development (Takeda, 2005). However, non-Japanese workers face trouble adjusting to the vagueness of job boundaries and complain that Japanese bosses often trespass into their areas of authority. Japanese workers, on the other hand, criticize their non-Japanese counterparts for doing only what they are told to do and complain that they lack initiative and flexibility (Ishida, 1986; Okamoto and Teo, 2011).

Furthermore, the ambiguity of roles in Japanese companies is also caused by a lack of information and differences in communication styles. Of these, the lack of information is caused by the fact that Japanese expatriates do not trust local staff and do not convey important information to prevent leakage. On the other hand, the difference in communication style means that Japanese expatriates avoid direct conflicts and use ambiguous expressions. The lack of information and ambiguity caused by these is thought to obscure the role of local employees in their work (Okamoto and Teo, 2011). Therefore, the results of the current study that the relationship between role clarity and OC in HCN is stronger than that of expatriates indicates that the OC of HCN tends to decrease due to the low role clarity of Japanese companies.

No significant differences were found between Chinese and Japanese managers regarding the relations between OC and other rewards, i.e. fatigue, benefit satisfaction, and supervisor and co-worker support. This result means that both Chinese and Japanese are equally sensitive to these rewards because they share similarities in their collectivistic cultures while living together in today's industrial and materialistic societies. However, it has often been pointed out that many Japanese companies have difficulties attracting Chinese staff, due to inferior treatment to Western companies (Leung et al., 1996). Similarly, Japanese companies have not built trustful relations between Japanese managers and their local subordinates (Yu and Meyer-Ohle, 2008). Japanese companies may, therefore, have to reconsider their HRM practices, not only in terms of job clarity and autonomy but also in terms of payment schemes and human

relations at the workplace to attract the best local staff in China.

Further, no significant differences were found between senior- and junior-level Chinese managers regarding the OC–reward relationship, including role clarity and autonomy. This result indicates that both senior- and junior-level Chinese managers are equally sensitive to these rewards. This result is odd considering the generally assumed differences in the levels of complexity, flexibility, and creativity between the positions, but it may indicate an aspect of Japanese ethnocentric management styles—even senior-level managers are dealt with as support staff of Japanese expatriates and are not expected to take up truly autonomous work. Regardless, the results may be useful when planning future delegation and localization within multinational enterprises.

#### *Implications for theory and practice*

The results of this study suggest that HCN showed a different organizational commitment–reward relationship than expatriates by adapting to the work styles demanded by the workplace. Therefore, this study is an extension of the discussion that emphasizes the relationship with HCN in the adaptation of expatriates and the discussion that emphasizes the relationship with expatriates in the adaptation of HCN (Fee and Michailova, 2021; Toh and DeNisi, 2007). These discussions rely on the social learning approach (Bandura, 1986; Black and Mendenhall, 1991) and the stress and coping approach (Kim, 1988; Ward et al., 2001). In other words, when HCN's position is weaker than that of expatriates, adjustments on the HCN side are more likely to occur (Fee and Michailova, 2021). Therefore, it is considered that adjustments on the HCN side are likely to occur in Japanese companies that have a culture of ethnocentrism and whose expatriates occupy important positions. Workplaces where expatriates seek relatively high autonomy and low role clarity and HCN relatively low autonomy and high role clarity are convenient for maintaining hierarchy in the workplace and are therefore

easy to manage. However, on the other hand, the acquisition and training of HCN that demands high autonomy was delayed, and it is thought that many Japanese companies remained in a structure where management would be difficult to establish unless they continued to rely on expatriates. In this way, the difference between expatriates and HCN in the OC-rewards relationship is considered to reflect the hierarchical differentiation of expatriates and HCN in local subsidiaries and the delay in localization of management. By applying similar analytical methods to more countries and companies, it is thought that research on expatriates and HCN adaptation can be advanced.

#### *Study limitations and suggestions for future research*

This research suffers from three significant limitations. The most significant limitation concerns its generalizability. This study used “Japanese” expatriates as the reference group to understand the traits of OC–rewards association among Chinese local managers. Furthermore, the participation of only companies wishing for a survey report is thought to have created some sampling bias. Therefore, we recommend that future research use other nations’ expatriates collected by a method closer to random sampling as reference groups to objectively clarify the characteristics of Chinese workers, thus testing the validity of this research.

The second limitation concerns the variety of variables, i.e. considering the concept of OC as a single dimension. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), however, OC comprises three dimensions: affective; continuance; and normative. Although OC in the present study is close to affective commitment, other dimensions should also be examined. Further, the number of explanatory variables tested in the present study was only six. Adding other different variables may clarify further differences between Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates. This is also an issue to be considered in a

future study.

The final limitation concerns reliability. Individual respondents' self-report data was used, which may result in common method bias. Therefore, the inclusion of supervisor-rated scales is recommended in future research to strengthen the study design and reduce this bias.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in the relationships between rewards and OC of 539 Chinese managers and 354 Japanese expatriates working for 19 Japanese manufacturing companies in China. The comparison between Chinese managers and Japanese expatriates on the results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that role clarity had a stronger influence on OC for Chinese managers, while autonomy had a weaker influence, indicating that Chinese managers prefer working in more defined roles to work requiring less autonomous styles than Japanese expatriates.

These differences may be due to the ethnocentric practices of Japanese companies, in which Japanese expatriate managers tend to guard information and dominate decision-making because of the negative image Japanese managers have of the abilities or skills of local employees, which also prevents them from hiring highly qualified local employees. However, there was no difference in associations of other rewards (benefit satisfaction, fatigue, supervisor support, and co-worker support) with OC. Moreover, there was no difference between senior- and junior-level Chinese managers in the association of any kind of reward with OC.

The results of this research may be used to reshape future human-resource-management practices in several types of the company located in China to facilitate attracting and employing the employees most able to make long-term contributions to

the company.

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(Insert Table AI about here)

Table 1. Results of exploratory factor analysis.

Items	Chinese							Japanese						
	Role Clarity	Autonomy	Benefit satisfaction	Fatigue	Supervisor support	Co-workers support	Organizational commitment	Role Clarity	Autonomy	Benefit satisfaction	Fatigue	Supervisor support	Co-workers support	Organizational commitment
The division of labor between my co-workers and I is clear.	<b>0.70</b>	0.20	0.16	-0.10	0.14	0.18	0.22	<b>0.73</b>	0.21	0.11	0.03	0.18	0.05	0.10
The work division that I have to do is clearly identified.	<b>0.63</b>	0.22	0.11	-0.08	0.16	0.06	0.20	<b>0.74</b>	0.21	0.12	-0.10	0.10	0.03	0.10
I carry out my work by observing and planning it by myself.	0.24	<b>0.59</b>	0.10	-0.08	0.17	0.05	0.18	0.14	<b>0.67</b>	0.11	0.06	0.17	0.11	0.04
The level of my skill in the company is higher than the average.	0.02	<b>0.54</b>	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.05	<b>0.61</b>	-0.05	-0.07	0.03	0.10	0.17
I can mostly solve the problems that arise in my work.	0.08	<b>0.46</b>	0.05	-0.10	0.02	0.18	0.10	0.09	<b>0.61</b>	0.04	-0.08	0.00	0.14	0.10
My own ideas are fully utilized in my work.	0.24	<b>0.44</b>	0.07	-0.06	0.23	0.06	0.27	0.17	<b>0.55</b>	0.16	-0.02	0.17	0.04	0.15
Welfare system of the company.	0.14	0.09	<b>0.78</b>	-0.15	0.11	0.10	0.02	0.16	0.08	<b>0.74</b>	-0.15	0.12	0.11	0.08
Amount of my salary or wage.	0.01	-0.04	<b>0.56</b>	-0.14	0.18	0.10	0.22	-0.01	-0.01	<b>0.48</b>	0.02	0.20	0.22	0.18
Facilities and equipment of the company.	0.10	0.08	<b>0.55</b>	-0.20	0.14	0.10	0.12	0.10	0.17	<b>0.71</b>	-0.11	0.08	0.11	0.11
I often feel exhausted.	-0.02	-0.05	-0.15	<b>0.98</b>	-0.04	-0.08	-0.09	0.00	-0.09	-0.02	<b>0.90</b>	-0.03	-0.04	-0.06
I feel exhausted when I wake up in the morning.	-0.12	-0.09	-0.14	<b>0.69</b>	-0.09	-0.04	-0.13	-0.06	-0.04	-0.17	<b>0.74</b>	-0.10	-0.03	-0.13
After finishing my work, I feel exhausted.	-0.04	-0.08	-0.15	<b>0.69</b>	-0.02	-0.06	-0.07	-0.02	0.00	-0.05	<b>0.86</b>	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02
My boss/supervisor is trustful.	-0.01	0.07	0.06	0.00	<b>0.82</b>	0.11	0.16	0.13	0.02	0.09	-0.01	<b>0.84</b>	0.12	0.14

My boss/supervisor deals with employees' complaints effectively.	0.16	0.05	0.12	-0.04	<b>0.78</b>	0.16	0.13	-0.03	0.13	-0.05	-0.04	<b>0.75</b>	0.07	0.10
My boss/supervisor treats employees fairly.	0.07	0.05	0.18	-0.08	<b>0.78</b>	0.16	0.10	0.09	0.07	0.10	0.02	<b>0.75</b>	0.11	0.01
My boss/supervisor trusts workers.	0.03	0.10	0.10	-0.06	<b>0.76</b>	0.11	0.11	0.21	0.11	0.11	0.00	<b>0.63</b>	0.29	0.03
My boss/supervisor is willing to instruct the employees what they do not know about their work.	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.00	<b>0.73</b>	0.11	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.08	-0.13	<b>0.54</b>	0.09	0.11
My boss/supervisor gives me sufficient information about the management policy of the company and the division.	0.15	0.15	0.08	-0.07	<b>0.63</b>	0.11	0.13	0.09	0.16	0.21	-0.05	<b>0.67</b>	0.08	0.11
Evaluation by my co-workers and subordinates.	0.04	0.30	0.11	-0.04	0.18	<b>0.74</b>	0.07	-0.05	0.34	0.17	0.07	0.17	<b>0.60</b>	0.13
Relationship with my co-workers and subordinates.	0.10	0.33	0.06	-0.08	0.19	<b>0.66</b>	0.06	0.07	0.18	0.06	-0.04	0.11	<b>0.79</b>	0.22
Human relationship at my working place.	0.05	0.07	0.09	-0.03	0.17	<b>0.63</b>	0.32	0.06	0.14	0.07	-0.05	0.29	<b>0.65</b>	0.18
Ability of my co-workers and subordinates.	0.11	-0.05	0.13	-0.09	0.18	<b>0.52</b>	0.22	0.02	0.00	0.19	-0.06	0.12	<b>0.51</b>	0.15
I want to be employed by this company as long as possible.	0.13	0.11	0.07	-0.07	0.18	0.13	<b>0.70</b>	0.09	0.12	0.10	-0.08	0.14	0.18	<b>0.76</b>
I like my work in in this company.	0.24	0.14	0.27	-0.11	0.19	0.20	<b>0.65</b>	0.13	0.31	0.25	-0.11	0.08	0.25	<b>0.52</b>
I have strong will to work hard in this company.	0.06	0.17	0.04	-0.14	0.16	0.17	<b>0.57</b>	0.04	0.16	0.10	-0.03	0.15	0.21	<b>0.62</b>
On the whole, I am satisfied with my present work.	0.26	0.14	0.21	-0.12	0.26	0.24	<b>0.49</b>	0.14	0.36	0.18	-0.16	0.18	0.32	<b>0.52</b>

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Note(s): The italic values are the scores higher than 0.4.

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

<b>Model</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b><i>p</i>-Value</b>	<b><math>\chi^2/DF</math></b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>SRMR</b>
7-Factor model	278	0	4.021	0.917	0.058	0.047
4-Factor model	293	0	9.861	0.744	0.100	0.108
1-Factor model	299	0	17.526	0.513	0.136	0.110

Note(s): 7-factor model (1 = role clarity, 2 = autonomy, 3 = benefit satisfaction, 4 = fatigue, 5 = supervisor support, 6 = co-worker support, and 7 = OC); 4-factor model (1 = role clarity and autonomy, 2 = benefit satisfaction and fatigue, and 3 = supervisor support and co-worker support, and 4 = OC); 1-factor model (all factors combined).



Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Mean		SD		Japanese <sup>Y</sup> Chinese														
	Chinese	Japanese	Chinese	Japanese	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	1 Gender	0.737	0.980	0.441	0.139		0.287***	0.068	0.229***	0.151***	0.147***	-0.179**	0.171***	0.101**	0.102**	0.023	0.049	0.050	0.081
2 Age	39.432	42.605	6.244	7.120	0.183***		0.466***	0.311***	0.095**	0.316***	0.006	0.141***	0.216***	0.198***	0.163***	-0.147***	0.007	0.084*	0.193***
3 Tenure	10.848	9.331	5.809	9.930	0.080	0.284***		-0.239***	-0.033	0.190***	-0.163***	-0.066	0.166***	0.204***	-0.005	-0.011	-0.040	-0.014	0.073*
4 Turnover experience	0.738	0.220	0.440	0.415	-0.267***	0.021	-0.089*		0.195***	0.106**	0.122***	0.229***	0.091**	0.007	0.094**	-0.129***	0.010	0.122***	0.153***
5 University graduate	0.787	0.819	0.410	0.385	-0.067	-0.074	-0.197***	0.055		0.029	0.076	-0.015	-0.131***	0.068	0.036	-0.038	-0.017	0.061	-0.012
6 Marital status	0.904	0.893	0.296	0.310	0.147***	0.208***	0.151***	-0.146***	0.122**		-0.049	0.048	0.107**	0.210***	0.047	-0.062	0.040	0.032	0.171***
7 Indirect department	0.742	0.579	0.438	0.494	-0.039	0.051	-0.053	0.080	0.224***	-0.037		0.196***	-0.009	-0.027	-0.008	-0.166***	-0.043	0.066	-0.003
8 Year	2011.432	2012.593	2.816	2.028	-0.039	0.085	-0.121**	-0.035	0.145***	0.052	0.295***		0.184***	0.095**	0.132***	-0.125***	0.182***	0.204***	0.298***
9 Role clarity	4.144	3.727	0.913	0.947	0.034	0.173***	-0.051	0.117**	-0.019	0.064	-0.016	-0.025		0.433***	0.306***	-0.231***	0.327***	0.339***	0.506***
10 Autonomy	4.184	3.778	0.608	0.602	0.007	0.207***	0.023	0.060	-0.005	0.199***	0.071	-0.075	0.365***		0.206***	-0.206***	0.294***	0.359***	0.419***
11 Benefit satisfaction	3.455	3.621	0.839	0.766	0.045	0.101*	0.029	-0.015	-0.060	0.142***	0.023	0.052	0.264***	0.235***		-0.358***	0.332***	0.314***	0.405***
12 Fatigue	3.129	3.098	1.142	0.988	-0.020	-0.211***	-0.123**	-0.002	0.066	-0.166***	0.034	0.013	-0.113**	-0.123**	-0.202***		-0.162***	-0.203***	-0.302***
13 Supervisor support	4.091	3.908	0.845	0.713	0.001	-0.035	-0.029	-0.022	0.087	0.120**	0.141***	-0.016	0.284***	0.254***	0.313***	-0.138***		0.411***	0.449***
14 Co-worker support	4.043	3.766	0.590	0.581	-0.057	-0.006	0.019	-0.026	-0.022	0.080	0.035	0.041	0.188***	0.345***	0.377***	-0.111**	0.393***		0.497***
15 Organizational commitment	4.236	3.970	0.699	0.697	-0.006	0.063	0.066	-0.006	-0.015	0.214***	-0.029	0.006	0.322***	0.452***	0.402***	-0.230***	0.354***	0.528***	

Note(s): n=539(Chinese), 354(Japanese). \*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.10.

Correlations for Chinese appear above diagonal and Japanese below diagonal.

Table 4. Results of hierarchical regression analyses.

Variables	Organizational commitment (Chinese and Japanese, n=893)			Organizational commitment (Chinese, n=539)				Organizational commitment (Japanese, n=354)			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Gender	-0.06 *	-0.04	-0.03	-0.05	-0.07 *	-0.07	-0.06	-0.04	-0.05	-0.02	-0.01
Age	0.00	-0.04	-0.04	0.08	0.03	0.05	-0.01	0.03	-0.04	-0.06	-0.06
Tenure	0.08 **	0.04	0.04	0.03	-0.03	-0.02	0.01	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.06
Turnover experience	0.18	0.06	0.05	0.08 *	0.05	0.10	0.07 *	0.01	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01
University graduate	-0.04	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	0.05	-0.05	-0.01	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	0.01
Marital status	0.18 ***	0.09 ***	0.09 ***	0.12 ***	0.10 ***	0.06	0.08 **	0.22 ***	0.20 ***	0.12 **	0.08 *
Indirect department	-0.05	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***	-0.07 *	-0.07 *	-0.08 *	-0.07 **	0.00	0.01	-0.03	-0.05
Northeast	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.15	-0.11	-0.13	-0.11
North	-0.08	-0.03	-0.02	0.03	0.07	0.01	0.05	-0.21	-0.15	-0.14	-0.10
East	-0.12	-0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.01	-0.08	-0.06	-0.16	-0.11	-0.06	-0.04
Year	0.19	0.13	0.13	0.33	0.25	0.31	0.22	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.01
<i>Intrinsic rewards</i>											
Role clarity		0.17 ***	0.10 **		0.46 ***		0.22 ***		0.32 ***		0.10 **
Autonomy		0.17 ***	0.25 ***			0.38 ***	0.12 ***			0.46 ***	0.25 ***
<i>Extrinsic/social rewards</i>											
Benefit satisfaction		0.14 ***	0.15 ***				0.14 ***				0.14 ***
Fatigue		-0.09 ***	-0.10 **				-0.08 **				-0.10 **
Supervisor support		0.13 ***	0.09 *				0.17 ***				0.09 *
Co-worker support		0.27 ***	0.32 ***				0.22 ***				0.32 ***
Sample			0.30								
SamplexRole Clarity			0.32 **								
SamplexAutonomy			-0.42 **								
SamplexBenefit satisfaction			-0.05								
SamplexFatigue			0.03								



Table 5. Results of hierarchical regression analyses (Chinese only).

Variables	Organizational commitment (Chinese senior-level managers and Chinese junior-level managers, n=300)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	-0.06	-0.08 *	-0.08 *
Age	0.09	-0.04	-0.09
Tenure	0.07	0.05	0.05
Turnover experience	0.14 **	0.10 *	0.12 **
University graduate	-0.04	-0.01	-0.02
Marital status	0.13 **	0.10 **	0.11 **
Indirect department	-0.12 *	-0.09 *	-0.11 **
Northeast	0.03	0.02	0.04
North	0.09	0.15	0.26 *
East	0.01	0.01	0.09
Year	0.36 ***	0.26 ***	0.28 ***
<i>Intrinsic rewards</i>			
Role clarity		0.26 ***	0.22 ***
Autonomy		0.13 ***	0.18 ***
<i>Extrinsic/social rewards</i>			
Benefit satisfaction		0.12 **	0.19 ***
Fatigue		-0.11 **	-0.08
Supervisor support		0.14 ***	0.16 **
Co-worker support		0.19 ***	0.12 **
Sample			0.18
Sample×Role Clarity			0.31
Sample×Autonomy			-0.43
Sample×Benefit satisfaction			-0.32
Sample×Fatigue			-0.11
Sample×Supervisor support			-0.07
Sample×Co-worker support			0.52
R <sup>2</sup>	0.17	0.52	0.54
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.49	0.50
F	5.45 ***	18.00 ***	13.52 ***

Note(s): \*Significance at the 10% level; \*\*Significance at the 5% level; \*\*\*Significance at the 1% level.

Appendix. Demographic information.

	Educational background								Total
	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School	Specialized College	College/Vocational	University	Graduate School	In the middle of school years	Others	
Chinese	7 1.3%	7 1.3%	5 0.9%	93 17.3%	362 67.2%	62 11.5%	0 0.0%	3 0.6%	539 100.0%
Japanese	0 0.0%	22 6.2%	2 0.6%	40 11.3%	205 57.9%	85 24.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	354 100.0%
Total	7 0.8%	29 3.2%	7 0.8%	133 14.9%	567 63.5%	147 16.5%	0 0.0%	3 0.3%	893 100.0%

	Gender		Total	Age					Total
	Male	Female		Below 20 years old	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 years old and above	
Chinese	397 73.7%	142 26.3%	539 100.0%	2 0.4%	23 4.3%	251 46.6%	231 42.9%	32 5.9%	539 100.0%
Japanese	347 98.0%	7 2.0%	354 100.0%	0 0.0%	7 2.0%	116 32.8%	174 49.2%	57 16.1%	354 100.0%
Total	744 83.3%	149 16.7%	893 100.0%	2 0.2%	30 3.4%	367 41.1%	405 45.4%	89 10.0%	893 100.0%

	Tenure					Total	Turnover experience		Total
	Below 1 year	1 year	2-4 years	5-9 years	10 years and above		Have experience	Have no experience	
Chinese	13 2.4%	22 4.1%	78 14.5%	79 14.7%	347 64.4%	539 100.0%	398 73.8%	141 26.2%	539 100.0%
Japanese	42 11.9%	64 18.1%	81 22.9%	23 6.5%	144 40.7%	354 100.0%	78 22.0%	276 78.0%	354 100.0%
Total	55 6.2%	86 9.6%	159 17.8%	102 11.4%	491 55.0%	893 100.0%	476 53.3%	417 46.7%	893 100.0%

	Marital status			Total	Indirect department		Total
	Single	Married	Others		Direct department	Indirect department	
Chinese	45 8.3%	487 90.4%	7 1.3%	539 100.0%	139 25.8%	400 74.2%	539 100.0%

Japanese	33 9.3%	316 89.3%	5 1.4%	354 100.0%	149 42.1%	205 57.9%	354 100.0%
Total	78 8.7%	803 89.9%	12 1.3%	893 100.0%	288 32.3%	605 67.7%	893 100.0%

	Area				Total
	Northeast	North	East	South	
Chinese	53 9.8%	227 42.1%	244 45.3%	15 2.8%	539 100.0%
Japanese	24 6.8%	51 14.4%	272 76.8%	7 2.0%	354 100.0%
Total	77 8.6%	278 31.1%	516 57.8%	22 2.5%	893 100.0%

	Year									Total
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Chinese	70 13.0%	91 16.9%	0 0.0%	10 1.9%	96 17.8%	11 2.0%	22 4.1%	215 39.9%	24 4.5%	539 100.0%
Japanese	15 4.2%	7 2.0%	0 0.0%	25 7.1%	62 17.5%	34 9.6%	34 9.6%	140 39.5%	37 10.5%	354 100.0%
Total	85 9.5%	98 11.0%	0 0.0%	35 3.9%	158 17.7%	45 5.0%	56 6.3%	355 39.8%	61 6.8%	893 100.0%