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# Psychological Attachment to the Group: Cross-Cultural Differences in Organizational Identification and Subjective Norms as Predictors of Workers' Turnover Intentions

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*Two studies used the theory of reasoned action, social identity theory, and Ashforth and Mael's work on organizational identification to predict turnover intentions in Japanese and British commercial and academic organizations. In both studies and in both countries, the authors expected and found that identification with the organization substantially and significantly predicted turnover intentions. Attitudes predicted intentions only in Study 2, and subjective norms significantly predicted intentions across both studies. The authors hypothesized that subjective norms would be a significantly stronger predictor of turnover intentions in a collectivist setting. This prediction was supported. In addition, organizational identification was significantly associated with turnover intentions across both cultures, the subjective normative aspects of group membership are significantly more strongly associated in the Japanese organizations.*

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**E**mployee turnover presents significant economic and psychological challenges to organizations. Investment in selection, training, and promotion is wasted if valued workers leave. Thus, it is useful to understand the social and psychological variables that affect turnover intentions (see Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). The present research uses the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to predict turnover intentions. The TRA has been used widely to predict intentions from individuals' attitudes and normative beliefs, thus emphasizing the subjective expected utility of intended actions. SIT has been used predominantly to

predict group-serving behavior, emphasizing the relationship between behavior and identity. Both theories have been used separately, but not in combination, to predict turnover intentions in organizations (e.g., Fishbein & Stasson, 1990; Mael & Ashforth, 1995). Recent research also suggests that there may be important cross-cultural differences in psychological aspects of workers' turnover intentions (e.g., Besser, 1993). Accordingly, the present research compares the variables that contribute to turnover intentions in the individualistic culture of the United Kingdom and the collectivist culture of Japan.

## *Theory of Reasoned Action*

The TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) distinguishes between different "calculative" influences on intentions, including the attractiveness of the behavior or its outcomes (attitude) and the direction and subjective importance of normative pressure to engage in the behavior. According to the TRA, behavioral intentions are the result of the weighted additive combination of attitudes toward the behavior and subjective

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norms. The TRA has been used previously to predict workers' turnover intentions (Lane, Mathews, & Presholdt, 1988; Mobley et al, 1979; Presholdt, Lane, & Mathews, 1987). For example, Lane et al. (1988) found that attitudes and subjective norms were both significantly associated with turnover intentions among nurses, and intentions mediated the path to turnover behavior. Consistent with the TRA, Steel and Ovalle (1984) reported a meta-analytic correlation of  $r = .50$  between turnover intentions and turnover behavior.

Ajzen (1991) augmented the TRA by adding perceived behavioral control as a predictor of intentions. Perceived control is particularly relevant to situations where control over behavior might be uncertain. This does not seem to be the case for intentions associated with organizational commitment. For example, in a study of U.S. academic faculty, Hinz and Nelson (1990) found that attitudes and subjective norms were significant predictors of turnover intentions but that perceived behavioral control was not. Fishbein and Stasson (1990) studied a complementary intention, that of seeking additional job-related training among nonacademic university employees. They found that attitudes and subjective norms, but not perceived control, were significant predictors of intentions. One reason why perceived control may be of limited relevance to turnover intentions is that people may have complete control over the behavior. It would be easy to resign if one wished to. In this respect, turnover differs from addictive or habitual behavior such as smoking, for which perceived behavioral control might be expected to vary across individuals (Ajzen, 1991). In the light of past findings concerning perceived control and turnover intentions, the present research limited its focus to attitudes and subjective norms within the framework of TRA.

#### *Organizational Commitment*

The term *organizational commitment* is commonly used to describe employee-organization linkages and has been variably and extensively defined, measured, and studied (Reichers, 1985). Perhaps the most frequently used measure has been Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian's (1974) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This questionnaire measures three components of commitment: belief in, and acceptance of, organizational goals and values; willingness to exert effort toward organizational goal accomplishment; and desire to maintain organizational membership. Items assessing this last component include the following: "It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization" and "I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization." These seem to imply turnover intentions, so perhaps it is not surprising

that research using the OCQ consistently reveals a negative correlation between organizational commitment and turnover (e.g., Ben-Bakr, Al-Shammari, Jefri, & Prasad, 1994; Hom, Katerberg, & Hullin, 1979; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Porter, Crampon, & Smith, 1976) and also with related behaviors such as absenteeism (Koch & Steers, 1978; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analytic review of research examining the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions revealed a meta-analytic  $r = -.47$ . Mathieu and Zajac emphasize the distinction between the "attitudinal" and "calculative" components of organizational commitment. The OCQ primarily taps attitudinal commitment, which can be thought of as affective and affiliative orientations to the organization as a whole. In contrast, calculative commitment reflects the side bets or sunk costs associated with membership in an organization. Calculative commitment can be increased by factors that are unrelated to the organization itself but make it harder to leave and more attractive to stay. These factors include having established a family and being older (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Meyer & Allen, 1984). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that turnover was more strongly associated with attitudinal than with calculative commitment. However, as mentioned above, attitudinal commitment measures are often confounded with other constructs such as intention. Also, these measures often focus on general attitudinal commitment rather than attitudes specifically associated with turnover behavior.

Within the TRA, attitudes focus on evaluations of an act or an outcome associated with an act. In our view, the operationalization of attitudes in the TRA is closer to the calculative than the attitudinal aspects of commitment referred to in the organizational commitment literature (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). If this is the case, then we would expect attitudes toward quitting to be relatively weakly associated with intentions.

#### *Organizational Identification*

Neither the organizational commitment approach nor the TRA explicitly considers another important factor in workers' turnover intentions, namely, the sense of identification or "oneness" with an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). According to SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), identity can be described along a continuum ranging from personal identity at one end to social identity at the other. Personal identity refers to self-conceptions in terms of unique and individualistic characteristics, for example, "I am a friendly sort of person" or "I am good at playing the guitar." Social identity, in contrast, derives from category memberships, for example, "I am British" or "I am a member of this university." Category and group

memberships are important because they also contribute to a person's identity (cf. Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

Given the importance of group memberships for self-conceptions, we hypothesize that turnover intentions will be negatively associated with organizational identification. This is consistent with Ashforth and Mael's (1989) application of SIT to organizational settings. Like Ashforth and Mael, we distinguish identification from behavioral commitment. Ashforth and Mael propose that the consequences of identification should include support for the organizations and social attraction to in-group members. These should be manifested as increased commitment to remain within the organization.

Mael and Ashforth (1995) point out that whereas organizational commitment tends to be conceptualized as a general orientation (to a set of organizational goals or values), organizational identification involves psychological attachment to a *specific* company. For example, Mael and Ashforth's measure of identification among members of the armed forces used the following items: "When someone criticizes the army, it feels like a personal insult"; "I am very interested in what others think about the army"; "When I talk about the army, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they' "; "The army's successes are my successes"; and "When someone praises the army, it feels like a personal compliment." Mael and Tetrick (1992) conducted a factor analytic study that verified the statistical independence of organizational identification and organizational commitment measures. In Mael and Ashforth's (1995) study, turnover was significantly predicted by organizational identification, even after accounting for various factors such as previous experience, teamwork, delinquency, achievement orientation, and educational level. In light of SIT and existing research findings on organizational identification, we expect identification with the organization to be negatively related to turnover intentions.

#### *Cross-Cultural Differences in Factors Related to Organizational Turnover Intentions*

Although the theoretical rationales from TRA for expecting attitudes and subjective norms to relate to turnover intentions and from SIT for expecting identification to relate to turnover intentions are clear, there is also important research suggesting culture may relate to turnover intentions and its correlates as an important moderating variable. In particular, the distinction between individualistic cultures, such as the United Kingdom, and collectivistic cultures, such as Japan, seems especially pertinent (Triandis, 1995). One theoretical account for Japan's successful economic development contends that the unique management style of Japanese organizations maximizes employee commitment through factors such as security of employment, welfare

programs, and strong company ideology (e.g., Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Shook, 1988). Cross-cultural comparisons suggest that Japanese workers may be more willing to maintain organizational membership and exert effort toward organizational goals than are workers in Western countries. For example, the Japanese have lower rates of turnover and absenteeism (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990), and they work longer hours per week than do North American workers (43 vs. 37 hours in 1982; Keizai Koho Center, 1987). Reports of unexpected absenteeism in Japan are generally very low (Sengoku, 1985).

In contrast to these behavioral measures, research based on workers' self-reports suggest a more mixed picture. For example, although scales such as the OCQ appear to retain their factor structure in Japan and other Eastern cultures (White, Parks, Gallagher, Tetrault, & Wakabayashi, 1995), there appear to be significant differences in mean scores. Some surveys of Japanese and North American workers suggest that Japanese workers feel *less* commitment to their organizations (e.g., Cole, 1979). One interpretation of such findings is that they reflect measurement problems and response biases, such as a tendency toward modesty and understatement in Eastern cultures (Farh, Dobbins, & Cheng, 1991). Nevertheless, the available evidence indicates that modesty biases may only be weak and/or domain specific (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Yu & Murphy, 1993).

More central to our concerns, Besser (1993) proposes that there are cultural differences in the role of structural and normative processes affecting organizational turnover and commitment. Besser suggests that one reason for the weaker association between organizational commitment and turnover rates among Japanese workers is the relatively greater importance of other ties in Japanese culture. These ties include duties to family, community, and specific others. For example, Takezawa and Whitehill (1981) asked Japanese and American respondents "why workers work hard." Japanese respondents were more likely to say that their main motivation was to "live up to the expectations of family, friends, and society." It seems likely that Japanese workers' willingness to work hard for their organizations may reflect influence from others, even when their personal commitment to the organization is not high.

The normative pressure described by Besser reflects the importance that individuals attach to norms associated with particular social relationships. The pressure may or may not be exerted directly or explicitly, but it is experienced subjectively and implicitly. This is consistent with Cole, Kalleberg, and Lincoln's (1993) view that the effects of social pressures on turnover should be mediated by perceptions and expectations.

Besser's analysis is also consistent with Markus and Kitayama's (1991) account of cross-cultural differences

in the way people construe the self, others, and the interdependence between the two. In Western cultures, including Great Britain and the United States, people seek *independence* from others. Relationships with others are relatively unimportant for self-definition. In contrast, in Eastern cultures (including Japan), the emphasis is on attending to others, fitting in, and harmonious *interdependence*. The self is defined through relationships with others. The claim that Japan has a collectivist, or socio-centric, culture is supported by many studies (e.g., Cousin, 1989; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). Japan has also been characterized in terms of "social relativism": an all-encompassing concern among the Japanese with human relationships and social interactions (Lebra, 1976). As a result of such cultural differences in the nature of the self, anticipated reactions from others can be expected to play a more important role in determining intentions to leave a work organization in a collectivist culture such as Japan than in Great Britain, which has a typically "Western" individualistic culture.

#### *Overview and Hypotheses*

Previous research in the United States has demonstrated reliable relationships between turnover intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms. Other research has demonstrated reliable effects of organizational identification on turnover intentions. However, previous research has not examined whether variables specified by the TRA and organizational identification are able to account for unique portions of the variance in turnover intentions. Thus, a conceptual and empirical gap remains to be explored. Specifically, because studies using the TRA have not included a measure of organizational identification, it is conceivable that effects associated with attitudes and norms are actually due to shared but unmeasured variance with identification. Similarly, studies investigating organizational identification have not included a measure of subjective norms, leaving open the possibility that the association between identification and turnover intentions is partially due to normative pressure for loyalty to the organization. In the light of these issues, the first goal of our research was to examine the utility of a model that employs both the TRA and organizational identification variables to predict turnover intention. Our second goal was thus to analyze the relative contribution of each predictor variable.

We anticipate that attitudes, subjective norms, and identification will each make distinct contributions to turnover intentions. For attitudes, we expect a positive association between attitudes and intentions, as found in previous studies (see also Becker, Randall, & Riegel, 1995).<sup>1</sup> For subjective norms, we expect a negative relationship with turnover intentions. Our attitude measure

concerns the favorability toward the outcomes of leaving the organization, rather than attitudes toward the organization per se. In this respect, it may be closer to calculative attitudinal commitment as defined by Mathieu and Zajac (1990). Recall that Mathieu and Zajac discovered that calculative commitment was the less important of the two forms. Accordingly, we expect that the attitude measure may carry less weight than will subjective norms in our research.

We opt to use our own measure of organizational identification (Abrams, 1985, 1990, 1994; Abrams & Emler, 1992; Hinkle, Taylor, Fox-Cardamone, & Crook, 1989), developed within an SIT framework. Versions of this measure have been used by us or our colleagues in several previous studies of organizational contexts (e.g., Abrams, 1992; Brown, 1978; Brown, Condor, Wade, Mathews, & Williams, 1979; Hinkle & Brown, 1990). The items in our measures focus exclusively on feelings about membership in the organization and on the importance of the organization to the individual. They thus reflect Tajfel's (1978) definition of social identity—"the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership." In contrast to our measures of attitudes and subjective norms, our identification measure is not specifically related to turnover intention. However, it does tap the psychological indissolubility between the self and the organization and should therefore influence intentions independently of perceived social pressure and evaluative judgments of quitting. To the extent that a person's membership in an organization is a positive part of his or her identity, that person should be less willing to lose that part of his or her identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and hence be less willing to quit.

Various researchers have suggested that biographical factors may be important either as antecedents of organizational identification (Mael, 1991) or as side-bet determinants of commitment and turnover intentions (Alutto, Hrebiniak, & Alonso, 1973; Loscocco & Kalleberg, 1988; Meyer & Allen, 1984). We thus control for the effects of marital status, number of children, and age by including them as covariates in our analyses.

A final goal of the present research is to investigate cross-cultural differences in the predictors of turnover intentions. Our two studies compare workers in parallel organizations in Japan and Great Britain. In Study 1, we compare workers from the commercial sector, and in Study 2, we compare university faculty from the academic sector. Cultural factors, such as conventions of modesty or humility, might influence the mean levels of attitudes, subjective norms, identification, and intentions reported by Japanese and British respondents. However, we predict that the *relationships* between vari-

ables should be unaffected by modesty. Previous evidence suggests that the weak relationship between self-reported commitment and turnover among Japanese workers may result from the relatively increased importance of interpersonal norms within Japanese culture. If the intentions of Japanese workers are more heavily influenced by expectations from others, it follows that subjective norms will have greater importance in determining turnover intentions in Japan than in Great Britain.

## STUDY 1

### *Method*

#### DESIGN AND SAMPLE

The survey was conducted during March and April 1995. In each country, 80 questionnaires were distributed to the employees at each workplace. These were mailed back directly by each participant to the researcher at a university address in that country. The questionnaire was described as a survey of work experiences. It was emphasized that all responses were completely confidential and that the organization would not have access to the data. Participants were unaware that the research project involved cross-cultural comparisons. To maximize the similarities in organizational culture, the organizations had to be Japanese managed, to operate in the service or business (not manufacturing) sectors, and to employ more than 100 employees. The sample in the United Kingdom consisted of people working in a Japanese-owned organization. Fifty-one of these people returned their questionnaires, a response rate of 65%. Three respondents were non-British and thus discarded, leaving 49 in total (36 male employees and 13 female employees). The Japanese sample consisted of Japanese workers from several comparable organizations in Japan. Fifty-four questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 68%, of which 6 were from non-Japanese respondents. These were discarded, leaving 48 respondents in total (31 male workers and 17 female workers). Twenty-nine workers in the Japanese sample were from the same Japanese organization that provided the British sample. Fifty-one percent of all the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 29, 31% were in their 30s, and 18% were older than 40. Fifty-five percent were married or living with a long-term partner, and 37% had one or more children.

#### MEASURES

We produced parallel British and Japanese versions of the questionnaire. Every question was first constructed in English, then translated into Japanese and verified by back translation. Unless otherwise specified, questions were answered by using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The

following constructs were all measured by using composite scales, where the score for each scale was the mean response to the relevant items.

*Turnover intention.* Intention to leave was measured by using four items concerning plans to leave or remain within the organization: "In the next few years I intend to leave this company"; "In the next few years I expect to leave this company"; "I think about leaving this company"; "I'd like to work in this company until I reach retirement age." Responses were coded so that a higher score reflects greater intention to leave the company.

*Attitude toward leaving the organization.* Attitude toward leaving the company was assessed by using two questions. Participants were asked how much their pay and their opportunities for advancement would change (for better or worse) if they left the company in the next few years. A higher score on this scale indicates a more positive attitude toward leaving the company.

*Subjective norm.* Subjective norm was measured by using four questions asking how much each of the following people would approve of the respondent leaving the organization in the next few years: partner, family members, colleagues, and supervisor. A higher score reflects greater perceived approval for leaving.

*Organizational identification.* Identification with the organization was measured by using seven items. Two questions, "I feel strong ties with this company" and "This company is important to me," were selected from Hinkle et al.'s (1989) in-group identification scale. Five questions—"I feel proud to be a member of my company"; "I often regret that I belong to this company" (reversed); "I feel a strong sense of belonging to this company"; "Belonging to this company is an important part of my self-image"; and "I am glad to be a member of this company"—were taken from previous research by Abrams (1985, 1990, 1992). A further criterion for item selection was that all items should be closely translatable between English and Japanese. A higher score indicates a higher level of identification.

### *Results*

#### PRELIMINARY DATA SCREENING

Prior to the main analyses, the data were screened for multivariate outliers assessed in terms of Mahalanobis distance (the distance of each case from the centroid of the dependent and independent variables for all remaining cases) following procedures suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (1989). No outliers were found. We also checked to see whether there was any sign of response bias associated with speed of responding. Respondents were numbered to reflect when their questionnaires were returned (with tied ranks for questionnaires re-

TABLE 1: Study 1. Means and Standard Deviations in Commercial Organizations as a Function of Country

	Great Britain (n = 49)	Japan (n = 48)	t(df = 96)
Turnover intention	2.37*** (0.81)	2.87 (1.14)	2.45*
Attitude	3.35*** (0.67)	2.40*** (0.66)	7.81***
Subjective norm	2.41*** (0.57)	2.82 (0.66)	3.32***
Identification	4.18*** (0.48)	3.25** (0.59)	8.60***

NOTE: Standard deviations are given in parentheses. Significance levels of differences from the scale midpoint of 3.0 are indicated with asterisks, as are the significance levels for differences between the British and Japanese samples.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

turned on the same day). None of the measures were significantly associated with this index. Thus, there was no evidence of population differences associated with the rapidity with which participants returned their questionnaires. Finally, we subdivided the Japanese sample to compare respondents from the company matched in the United Kingdom with those from other companies. There were no significant differences on any measure between these two Japanese subsamples. Because the samples from different companies were comparable, the data from all Japanese respondents were included in subsequent analyses.

*Reliability of measures.* Cronbach's alphas for the various scales were as follows: turnover intention (.88), attitude toward leaving the organization (.73), subjective norm (.74), and organizational identification (.87). The results indicated reasonably high internal consistency for each measure.

#### NATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Tests were conducted to examine whether the Japanese and British samples differed on any of the variables. In addition, mean scores were compared with the scale midpoints (3.0) to see whether responses were significantly valenced. The means are displayed in Table 1. Turnover intentions were significantly negative in the British sample only,  $t(48) = 5.32$ ,  $p < .001$ , and were significantly weaker among British rather than Japanese workers,  $t(96) = 2.45$ ,  $p < .05$ . British respondents had a significantly positive attitude toward quitting,  $t(48) = 4.68$ ,  $p < .001$ , whereas Japanese respondents had a significantly negative attitude,  $t(47) = 6.37$ ,  $p < .001$ , and these scores differed significantly from one another,  $t(96) = 7.81$ ,  $p < .001$ . Subjective norms were significantly negative in the British sample,  $t(48) = 7.33$ ,  $p < .001$ , and significantly more negative among British rather than Japanese workers,  $t(96) = 3.32$ ,  $p < .001$ . Finally, organizational identification was significantly strong for both samples, British sample,  $t(48) = 17.36$ ,  $p < .001$ , Japanese sample,  $t(47) = 3.04$ ,  $p < .005$ , and significantly stronger

TABLE 2: Study 1. Zero-Order Correlations Between Variables in Commercial Organizations as a Function of Country

	1	2	3	4
1. Intention to leave		-.09	.22	-.61***
2. Attitude	-.05		.19	.01
3. Subjective norm	.48***	.25		-.26
4. Identification	-.48***	-.08	-.18	

NOTE: Correlations for the British sample ( $n = 49$ ) are above the diagonal; those for the Japanese sample ( $n = 48$ ) are below the diagonal.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

among British rather than Japanese workers,  $t(96) = 8.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In sum, British respondents had weaker intentions to quit but more positive attitudes toward quitting. They also reported stronger organizational identification and weaker normative support for quitting. There were no significant differences across cultures in terms of age or number of children, but the Japanese workers were less likely to be married,  $\chi^2(2) = 10.44$ ,  $p < .01$ .

#### CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES

The focus of our main analysis was on differences in the relationships between these variables in Japan and Britain. The intercorrelations between variables within each country are shown in Table 2.

In the British sample, the only significant correlation was between turnover intentions and organizational identification,  $r(48) = -.61$ ,  $p < .001$ . Workers who identified more strongly with the organization had lower turnover intentions. In the Japanese sample, turnover intentions were significantly associated with both subjective norms,  $r(47) = .48$ ,  $p < .001$ , and organizational identification,  $r(47) = -.48$ ,  $p < .001$ . Workers who identified more strongly and who had lower subjective norms had lower turnover intentions. These relationships are consistent with our hypotheses.

To examine the effects more systematically, we pursued a multiple regression approach, which tested the effects of each independent variable while accounting for other variables either preceding or entering the equation at the same stage of the analysis. This allowed us to see whether the apparent difference in the role of subjective norms between Britain and Japan remained once other variables were taken into account.

With turnover intentions as the dependent variable, we first entered respondents' age, marital status, number of children, and gender to take into account variance associated with these variables. We then entered attitudes; subjective norms; organizational identification; country; and the Country  $\times$  Attitude, Country  $\times$  Norms, and Country  $\times$  Identification terms. Finally, to make sure that the effects of the covariates on the dependent variables were similar across levels of the independent vari-

TABLE 3: Study 1. Hierarchical Regression Weights for Predictors of Turnover Intentions

Step	Variables Entered	$\beta$	t	$\Delta R^2$	F(residual df = 95)
1	Attitude	-.11	0.98	.40	13.92***
	Subjective norms	.29	3.18**		
	Identification	-.60	5.31***		
	Country	-.32	2.37*		
2	Country $\times$ Attitude	.16	1.90	.05	2.70*
	Country $\times$ Norms	-.21	2.44*		
	Country $\times$ Identification	-.10	0.80		

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

ables, we checked for homogeneity of covariance by entering the covariate by country, identification, norms, and attitude interaction terms. Variables were centered to avoid multicollinearity problems.

This analysis revealed homogeneity of the covariates,  $F(12, 90) = 0.29$ , but the covariate block did not account for a significant portion of the variance,  $F(4, 90) = 1.45$ . As expected, addition of the theoretically relevant independent variables did account for a significant proportion of variance in turnover intentions,  $F(7, 83) = 9.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .42$ , total  $R^2 = .48$ . Within this block there were significant effects of norms, identification, country, and the Country  $\times$  Norms interaction. Accordingly, and to maximize statistical power, we dropped the covariates and repeated the analysis using only the independent variables of theoretical relevance. The results are depicted in Table 3.

The first block of theoretically based independent variables accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in turnover intentions,  $F(4, 95) = 13.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .40$ . Theoretical expectations following from the TRA were partially supported. Although attitude was not a significant predictor of turnover intentions, subjective norms were,  $\beta = .29$ ,  $t(95) = 3.18$ ,  $p < .01$ . That is, as pressure from subjective norms to leave the organization increased, so did intentions to leave the organization. However, as expected from an analysis in terms of SIT, identification was also significantly associated with variability in turnover intentions,  $\beta = -.60$ ,  $t(95) = 5.31$ ,  $p < .001$ . Higher identification with the organization was associated with lower turnover intentions. Country was also a significant predictor of turnover intentions,  $\beta = -.32$ ,  $t(95) = 2.37$ ,  $p < .05$ , as the intention to leave the organization was weaker in Great Britain than in Japan.

The final step in development of the regression model involved adding interaction terms between culture and attitudes, subjective norms, and identification. This resulted in a significant increase in variance accounted for in turnover intentions,  $F(3, 95) = 2.70$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ , total  $R^2 = .45$ .<sup>2</sup> The effect of norms was the only relationship to turnover intentions qualified by a

significant interaction with country,  $\beta = -.21$ ,  $t(95) = 2.44$ ,  $p < .05$ . Subjective norms had a stronger positive effect on turnover intentions in Japan than in Great Britain.

This difference is also reflected in the simple correlations between subjective norms and turnover intentions in the two samples, presented in Table 2. For the Japanese sample, the correlation is .48 ( $p < .001$ ); the corresponding correlation of .22 in the British sample is nonsignificant. These correlations differ marginally ( $Z = 1.43$ ,  $p < .08$ ) but in the predicted direction.

Finally, we examined the semipartial correlations between each independent variable and turnover intentions. The semipartial correlation squared represents the amount of variance in intention accounted for by one independent variable over and above the variance accounted for by the other independent variables. It can therefore provide a good index of the relative "importance" of individual predictor variables (Howell, 1997). The largest semipartial correlation was with identification ( $-.44$ ), followed by subjective norms (.26), country ( $-.20$ ), and attitudes ( $-.08$ ), respectively.

## STUDY 2

Study 2 was conducted with university teaching staff to provide a comparative test of the results from Study 1, focusing on a different organizational population. Universities have fewer of the commitment-enhancing personnel management strategies that are typical of Japanese commercial organizations. For example, universities generally lack rewards for nonabsenteeism, company welfare programs, and strong vertical relationships between supervisors and subordinates (Besser, 1993). In addition, with university samples, there may be greater cross-cultural similarity in the type of work and job status characteristics than is the case for commercial organizations. If the same relationships between variables persist in the more cross-culturally similar organizational context of Study 2, then that would support the view that differences between the countries are attributable to differences in national rather than specific organ-

izational cultures. Because universities and commercial organizations are different in nature, we might expect different mean scores on our major variables compared with Study 1. However, if cultural differences indeed affect the relationships between variables, then we should expect a similar pattern of correlations to that observed in Study 1. In summary, we predict Study 2 will result in a pattern of relationships between the variables similar to those observed in Study 1. However, we do not expect mean scores to necessarily remain the same across the two studies, as these may well be affected by local organizational factors.

### Method

#### SAMPLE

The survey was conducted during May 1995. Questionnaires were sent to 100 teaching staff at the University of Kent and 50 staff members at Canterbury Christ Church College in the United Kingdom. Names were randomly selected from staff lists. Forty-nine people returned the questionnaire, for a response rate of 33%. Two non-British respondents were excluded from the analysis, leaving a total of 47 (30 men and 17 women). In Japan, 60 questionnaires were sent to teaching staff at Nagoya City University, 50 were sent to staff at Nagoya University, and 45 were sent to staff at the Yonezawa Women's College. Seventy-five questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 50%. Seven questionnaires were dropped because they came from non-Japanese respondents, leaving 68 respondents in total (60 men and 8 women). The small number of Japanese female respondents reflects the situation in Japanese universities, where most of the staff members are male. Among the respondents in Study 2, 36% were in their 30s, 32% were in their 40s, and 32% were between the ages of 50 and 65.

#### MEASURES

The measures used in Study 2 were identical to those used in Study 1, but the word *company* was replaced by *university* or *college* in many of the items.

### Results

#### PRELIMINARY DATA SCREENING

Following the same procedures used in Study 1, the data were screened for multivariate outliers. Four significant outliers were identified, and these were excluded from subsequent analyses. As in Study 1, we also checked within each sample to see whether there was any sign of response bias associated with the speed of responding. None of the measures was significantly associated with this index.

*Reliability of measures.* Cronbach's alphas for the various scales were as follows: turnover intentions (.89),

TABLE 4: Study 2. Means and Standard Deviations in Universities as a Function of Country

	Great Britain (n = 47)	Japan (n = 68)	t(df = 109)
Intention to leave	3.14 (0.93)	2.58** (1.08)	2.86**
Attitude	3.29* (0.76)	2.80 (0.85)	3.10**
Subjective norm	2.92 (0.55)	2.71*** (0.74)	1.65
Identification	3.06 (0.93)	3.44*** (0.82)	2.28*

NOTE: Standard deviations are given in parentheses. Significance levels of differences from the scale midpoint of 3.0 are indicated with asterisks, as are the significance levels for differences between the British and Japanese samples.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

attitude toward leaving the organization (.77), subjective norm (.79), and organizational identification (.93). These statistics indicate reasonably high internal consistency for each measure.

#### NATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Tests were conducted to examine whether the Japanese and British samples differed on any of the variables. In addition, mean scores were compared with the scale midpoints to see whether responses were significantly valenced. The means are displayed in Table 4. Turnover intentions were significantly negative for the Japanese sample,  $t(67) = 3.25$ ,  $p < .002$ , and significantly lower among Japanese rather than British workers,  $t(109) = 2.86$ ,  $p < .01$ . British workers had a significantly positive attitude toward quitting,  $t(41) = 2.15$ ,  $p < .015$ , and their scores were significantly higher than those of the Japanese workers,  $t(109) = 3.10$ ,  $p < .01$ . Subjective norms were significantly negative in the Japanese sample,  $t(67) = 3.31$ ,  $p < .001$ , but did not differ across cultures. Finally, organizational identification was significantly strong for Japanese workers,  $t(67) = 4.44$ ,  $p < .001$ , and significantly greater than the organizational identification of British workers,  $t(109) = 2.28$ ,  $p < .05$ . In sum, British workers had higher intentions to quit, a more positive attitude toward quitting, and weaker organizational identification. There were no significant differences between the samples in terms of age, number of children, or marital status.

#### CORRELATION AND REGRESSION ANALYSES

Intercorrelations between the variables in each country are shown in Table 5. In the British sample, the only significant correlation was between turnover intentions and organizational identification,  $r(42) = -.79$ ,  $p < .001$ . Workers who identified more strongly with their organizations had lower turnover intentions. In the Japanese sample, turnover intentions were significantly associated with attitudes,  $r(68) = .38$ ,  $p = .001$ , subjective norms,  $r(68) = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ , and organizational identification,  $r(68) = -.56$ ,  $p < .001$ . Workers who held less positive attitudes, lower subjective norms, and who identified



**TABLE 5: Study 2. Zero-Order Correlations Between Variables in Universities as a Function of Country**

	1	2	3	4
1. Intention to leave		.18	.19	-.79***
2. Attitude	.38***		-.05	-.06
3. Subjective norm	.57***	.26*		-.17
4. Identification	-.56***	-.23	-.33**	

NOTE: Coefficients for the British sample ( $n = 42$ ) are above the diagonal; those for the Japanese sample ( $n = 68$ ) are below the diagonal.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

more strongly with their organizations had lower turnover intentions. In addition, attitude and subjective norms were significantly associated,  $r(68) = .26$ ,  $p < .05$ , as were subjective norms and organizational identification,  $r(68) = -.33$ ,  $p < .01$ . Workers with lower subjective norms also had less positive attitudes to turnover and identified more strongly with their organizations. These relationships were consistent with our hypotheses, although the involvement of attitudes was unclear. To examine these effects more systematically, we once again adopted the regression approach used for Study 1.

The initial analysis revealed homogeneity of the covariates,  $F(12, 84) = 1.04$ , and the covariate block accounting for a significant portion of the variance in turnover intentions,  $F(4, 103) = 4.07$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $R^2 = .13$ . However, none of the covariates individually accounted for a significant amount of variance. Addition of the theoretically relevant independent variables and their interactions with culture did account for a significant amount of variance,  $F(7, 96) = 16.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .47$ , total  $R^2 = .60$ . Within this block, the effects of identification, norms, and the Country  $\times$  Norms interactions were all significant. We therefore proceeded as in Study 1 by dropping the covariates from the analysis, given that none of them were individually significant, and repeating the analysis using only the independent variables of theoretical relevance. The results are shown in Table 6.

The results generally parallel those of Study 1. Again, the block of theoretically based independent variables consisting of attitudes, subjective norms, and organizational identification accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in turnover intentions,  $F(4, 107) = 31.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .55$ . Predictions stemming from the TRA were fully supported as both attitudes,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $t(107) = 2.16$ ,  $p < .05$ , and subjective norms,  $\beta = .28$ ,  $t(107) = 3.96$ ,  $p < .001$ , were significant predictors of turnover intentions. As attitudes toward leaving the organization became more positive and pressure from subjective norms to leave the organization increased, so did intentions to leave the organization. Consistent with SIT, increased organizational identification was also significantly associated with decreased turnover intentions,  $\beta = -.53$ ,  $t(107) = 7.41$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Addition to the model of interaction terms between culture and attitudes, subjective norms, and identification resulted in a marginally significant increase in variance accounted for in turnover intentions,  $F(3, 107) = 2.06$ ,  $p < .11$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ , total  $R^2 = .58$ .<sup>3</sup> The only individually significant interaction was between subjective norms and country,  $\beta = -.15$ ,  $t(107) = 2.18$ ,  $p < .05$ . As in Study 1, the interaction stems from the fact that the relationship between subjective norms and turnover intentions is weaker in the British sample than in the Japanese sample. Again, the interaction can be described in terms of the correlations between subjective norms and turnover intentions in the two samples (see Table 5). For the Japanese sample, the correlation is .57 ( $p < .001$ ); for the British sample, the correlation is a nonsignificant .19. These two correlations differ significantly ( $Z = 2.23$ ,  $p < .02$ ).

Finally, we again examined the semipartial correlations to investigate the amount of variance uniquely shared between each independent variable and turnover intentions. The largest semipartial was with identification ( $-.44$ ), then subjective norm (.26), attitude (.14), and country ( $-.07$ ), respectively.

#### STUDIES 1 AND 2: INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

Integrating the results from Study 1 and Study 2, we see that in Japanese and British comparisons across two quite different organizational contexts, variables derived from the TRA were somewhat useful in predicting turnover intentions. Attitude was a significant predictor in Study 2 and subjective norms were a significant predictor in both Studies 1 and 2. However, there are two results of notable import for the TRA in both studies. First, in both studies, the semipartial correlations show that attitudes consistently accounted for less variance in turnover intentions than did subjective norms. Second, the relationship between subjective norms and turnover intentions was qualified by culture. In both studies, norms were only related to turnover intentions in the Japanese sample. Finally, consistent with expectations derived from SIT, organizational identification was consistently and reliably related to turnover intentions. In both organizational contexts, increased identification with the organization was associated with weaker turnover intentions. The nature of this relationship was equally strong in the Japanese and British samples.

#### DISCUSSION

##### *Theory of Reasoned Action*

As predicted, attitudes were only weakly associated with turnover intentions. The one significant association between attitudes and intentions was found in the Japanese academic sample in Study 2 (see Table 5). One

TABLE 6: Study 2. Hierarchical Regression Weights for Predictors of Turnover Intentions

Step	Variables Entered	$\beta$	t	$\Delta R^2$	F (residual df = 107)
1	Attitude	.15	2.16*	.55	31.87***
	Subjective norms	.28	3.96***		
	Identification	-.53	7.41***		
	Country	-.07	1.07		
2	Country $\times$ Attitude	-.01	0.15	.03	2.06 <sup>†</sup>
	Country $\times$ Norms	-.15	2.18*		
	Country $\times$ Identification	-.11	1.59		

<sup>†</sup> $p < .11$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

explanation for the weak attitude-intention relationships may lie in the slightly low reliability of the attitude measure in Study 1.<sup>4</sup>

Previous studies that revealed significant associations between attitudes and turnover intentions have employed considerably larger samples than ours (e.g., Hinz & Nelson, 1990; Lane et al., 1988), suggesting that the present research may have lacked sufficient statistical power. However, the pattern of correlations between attitudes and intentions was inconsistent in our studies, with no hint of a systematic relationship. Moreover, given the rather "calculative" nature of our attitude measure, our results are fairly consistent with Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) conclusion that the relationship between calculative commitment and turnover intentions is small. Nevertheless, we remain open to the possibility that a more comprehensive measure of attitudes, administered to a larger sample, might reveal a more consistent or subtle relationship with turnover intentions. It is also conceivable that cross-cultural differences in the attitude-intention relationship could be revealed.

We predicted that subjective norms would play a more important role in shaping turnover intentions in Japan than in Great Britain. This prediction, which was confirmed in both Study 1 and Study 2, is in line with Besser's (1993) view that the committed behaviors of Japanese workers can be partially explained by the pressures of the work group, family, and community, rather than by strong feelings of commitment to organizations. Near (1989) also suggested that the low rate of turnover in Japan may be due to the normative pressure exerted by coworkers and friends, and by the lack of available job opportunities. Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that in Japan, relationships with others are assigned more importance than they are in Western cultures. These analyses all suggest that strong social ties in Japan make people more sensitive to others' expectations for their actions. In both studies, these propositions received support from the significant Country  $\times$  Subjective Norm interactions that were predicted and observed. Although

the mean levels of subjective norms did not differ systematically between Japan and Great Britain, they were substantially associated with turnover intentions in both Japanese samples and only weakly associated with turnover intentions in the British samples. This is consistent with our hypothesis regarding the increased cultural and personal relevance of subjective norms in Japan.

#### *Organizational Identification*

The present research extends our previous work combining components of SIT with the TRA (Abrams, 1990; Hinkle, Fox-Cardamone, Haseleu, Brown, & Irwin, 1996). Previous studies with the OCQ found commitment scores to be negatively associated with propensity to leave an organization. The OCQ, however, includes "a strong desire to maintain organizational membership" (Porter et al., 1974), which overlaps with the behavioral intention to leave (Reichers, 1985). The present research revealed that our measure of organizational identification (which did not involve any behavioral components) was negatively associated with intention to leave in both corporate and university settings, and among both British and Japanese workers. This finding is consistent with SIT, which would predict that when group membership is important for their self-concepts, people will try to maintain that membership. In fact, as the semipartial correlations reveal, we found that organizational identification was the most important predictor of turnover intentions in both studies.

In our studies, the correlations between subjective norms and identification with the organization were generally small and significant only in the Japanese university sample (Tables 2 and 5). This suggests that acceptance of external social norms regarding turnover intentions does not necessarily imply parallel levels of identification with the organization. For some individuals, subjective norms may even press in one direction (e.g., to stay) and identification in another (e.g., to leave). Thus, our data seem consistent with the view that identification and subjective norms are two different

psychological constructs that should remain conceptually and empirically distinct as determinants of turnover intentions. This is consistent with Cole et al.'s (1993) analysis. They argue that committed behaviors, and thus turnover intentions, can stem from social pressures, but that the effects of these pressures depend on a high degree of individual acceptance and compliance, which are ultimately internalized as commitment.

*Additional Cross-Cultural Differences in Attitudes, Norms, Identification, and Intentions*

In Study 1, which involved employees of commercial organizations, British workers reported more positive attitudes and subjective norms about leaving, but they also identified more strongly with their organization than did the Japanese workers. In Study 2, which involved university employees, British workers again reported more positive attitudes and intentions toward leaving the organization, but weaker identification relative to the Japanese sample. There was no general evidence of ceiling or floor effects within nationality across these studies. Within each country and type of organization, all of the scale means fell within 1.2 scale units of the scale midpoints. Moreover, within studies, the largest mean difference between British and Japanese responses was .95 on a 5-point scale, and responses generally fell on the same side of the scale midpoint. Only for attitudes in Study 1 did British and Japanese workers differ significantly from the scale midpoint in opposite directions (significantly positive in Great Britain and significantly negative in Japan). In summary, the scale means varied slightly as a function of the particular sample but did not reveal a consistent pattern of differences between cultures. There was no evidence of any particular cultural bias in responses or differences in levels of organizational commitment. In this respect, our data suggest that differences in commitment between Japanese and Western workers (Besser, 1993; Cole et al., 1993) may depend on particular organizational settings. It appears that in some organizations, Japanese workers express more, and in others less, commitment than do their Western counterparts.

In the absence of theoretically relevant mean differences on specific measures, we feel confident in the cross-cultural differences in the relationships between the variables. Identification emerges as a consistent predictor of turnover intentions across cultures. As predicted, subjective norms are a significantly stronger predictor of turnover intentions in Japan.

*Issues for Research*

Our research leaves some questions unanswered. For example, the relationships we have explored are correlational rather than causal. Previous research has estab-

lished causal links from other indicators of organizational commitment to turnover intentions and from intentions to turnover behavior (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Taken together with two decades of research on the TRA, we think it is reasonable to believe that attitudes, subjective norms, and identification have a greater causal effect on turnover intentions than vice versa. Future research could address these issues directly by using a longitudinal design and by including a measure of turnover behavior.

An important aspect of our research strategy, and one of the key recommendations in Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) review, was to sample from different types of organizations. Sampling from multiple organizations helps to avoid problems of homogeneity of experience (and hence restriction of variance and covariance among measures). Adding a powerful factor, such as culture, increases the confidence with which we can generalize not only across organizations but within and between nations as well.

The existence of a substantial relationship between identification and intention in both cultures is consistent with the idea that social identity involves the subjective value of group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Our findings also reaffirm the relevance of social identity for organizational turnover (Mael & Ashforth, 1995). We concur with Ashforth and Mael (1989) that there may be multiple antecedents of group identification. Pertinent to this, our measure of organizational identification differs from Mael and Ashforth's, because of our focus on private rather than public recognition of social identity. Our measure also turns out to be slightly more reliable (alphas were .87 and .93 as compared with Mael and Ashforth's [1995] alpha of .74). Future research might benefit from using the two measures in conjunction. It would then be possible to explore whether there are distinct antecedents and consequences of these two measures of organizational identification.

It is conceivable that the value associated with group membership arises through different processes in Japan and Great Britain (Markus & Kitayama, 1994) and that this might affect the relationship between identification and intention. For example, in a study of intentions to leave Hong Kong after the transition from British to Chinese sovereignty, we found that individual differences in collectivism/individualism moderated the identification-intention relationship (Abrams, Hinkle, & Tomlins, 1997). The positive association between identification and intention to remain in Hong Kong was higher among collectivists than individualists. Future research could compare the effects of such individual differences on the identification-turnover intention relationship within individualistic and collectivist cultures (cf. Triandis et al., 1988).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, we have shown how two types of self-group relationships have implications for turnover intentions in Great Britain and Japan. In Great Britain (an individualistic culture) and Japan (a collectivist culture), membership in an organization influenced turnover intentions through the process of social identification. Social identification can be described as a subjective *conceptual* relationship between the self and the group (cf. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In contrast, in Japan but not Great Britain, subjective normative pressure from *tangible* social relationships with family, coworkers, and supervisors was also an important determinant of turnover intentions. This pattern of results is consistent with the view that people in collectivist cultures place more weight on interdependent relationships in matters of importance to the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

On the basis of our interpretation of these findings, some aspects of Japanese management systems may be seen as making efficient use of the cultural value of interdependence. One example described by Besser (1993) is Toyota, where no extra workers are hired to cover for injured, tardy, or absent employees. This means that when somebody is absent, his or her coworkers must do the work of the missing person. The system motivates workers to try to avoid absenteeism because of the costs borne by their coworkers. However, this kind of system may be less effective in individualistic cultures, where our analysis suggests that such concerns may be less psychologically compelling. In contrast, our data suggest that management systems that bolster organizational identification may well succeed in reducing turnover in both cultural contexts.

### NOTES

1. We hesitated to make a strong prediction about cultural differences in the relationship between attitudes and turnover intentions because previous research has varied greatly in the definition and generality of the attitude measures that were used. In the present research, we were careful to restrict our attitudinal measure to the issue of whether respondents thought that leaving the organization would be good or bad for them. We hoped that this would minimize overlap with the subjective norm and identification measures.
2. Note that, with the covariates absent from the analysis, the independent variables account for marginally more variance in intentions.
3. As in the case of Study 1, when the covariates are absent from the analysis, slightly more of the variance in intentions is accounted for by the independent variables.
4. In Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analytic review of organizational commitment, effect sizes ( $r$ s) were corrected for attenuation to adjust for variation in reliability across studies and measures. Most of our measures had reasonably high reliability, and we reasoned that the magnitude of associations between the measures was based on a comparable amount of measurement error. For this reason, we have not corrected for attenuation throughout the analyses reported in this article. For exploratory purposes, we computed corrections for attenuation for correlations involving our least reliable measure (attitudes in

Study 1). The adjusted attitude-intention relationship remained very low and nonsignificant in both Japan and Great Britain (both  $r$ s < .12).

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