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Comparing a Japanese team with an American team: a case-study in teamwork

Jennifer L. Black
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COMPARING A JAPANESE TEAM WITH AN AMERICAN TEAM:
A CASE-STUDY IN TEAMWORK

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Speech Communication
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jennifer L. Black
December 1995

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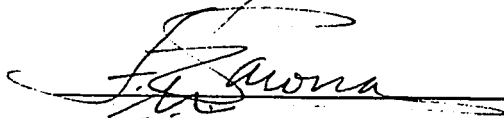
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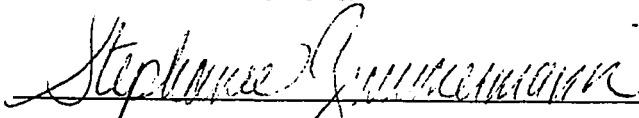
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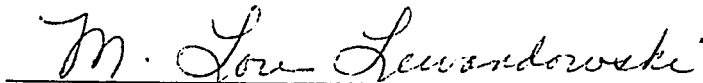


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ABSTRACT

COMPARING A JAPANESE TEAM WITH AN AMERICAN TEAM:
A CASE-STUDY IN TEAMWORK

by Jennifer L. Black

The general purpose of this research is to emphasize the importance of teamwork effectiveness strategies in light of both cross-cultural management studies and organizational communication studies. Specifically, this study is designed to assess the cultural similarities--if any--and differences --if any--in teamwork effectiveness characteristics that exist between a Japanese born team situated in Japan and an American born team situated in the United States.

This thesis utilizes both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide descriptive and interpretive information on the two teams and to decrease researcher bias. The results reveal that there are differences between these two teams on the eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness. The results also reveal that the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism play a key role in explaining these differences.

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Roxi-Noa, for being uniquely Roxi-Noa. The future belongs to you.

Those of my friends--including China--who made me laugh, when that was most necessary.

To all those who, like myself, have to make that extra effort to overcome a learning disability.

And, to Jerry and Yithak, the ultimate team 'players'.

"Nothing left to do but smile, smile, smile."

R. Hunter

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Speech communication specialists have long argued that those human communication patterns employed in Asia differ greatly in both form and substance from those commonly employed in the West: Asians emphasize collectivism; Westerners emphasize individualism (Hsu, 1981; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Yum, 1988; and James, 1993). James (1993) defines a collectivist culture as one in which "personal goals are subordinated to group goals," in which "the family and the employment organization are the core social units," in which "duty, harmony, politeness, and modesty are very important," and in which "discipline is high" (pp. 19-20). Furthermore, he notes that "individuals are not permitted to stand out from the crowd" (p. 20). Alternately, James (1993) defines an individualist culture as one in which "group goals are subordinated to personal goals," in which "independence and personal achievement are valued highly," in which "discipline is often loose," and in which "the individual is the core of the social unit" (p. 19). Moreover, he adds that "people in these cultures cherish their freedoms, the right to free speech, the right to protest" (p. 19).

Meanwhile, in the more specifically defined sub-field of organizational communication, some scholars have focused their recent studies on the effectiveness of teams (Adler, 1992; Blubaugh & Varona, 1991; and Denton, 1992). Larson and LaFasto (1989a) bemoan the fact that, as Americans, "we seem to lack the essential ability to work together effectively to solve critical problems" (p. 13). Their ground-breaking research into teamwork reveals that if Americans are to succeed in an ever more competitive global market, they must learn to collaborate in teams more effectively with their co-workers. They claim that:

we need to know how to set aside individual agendas so that a common understanding of a problem has an opportunity to develop...we need to understand how that common understanding gets translated into concrete performance objectives so that a realistic and attainable solution to the problem becomes identified...we need to know how the activities of people can be coordinated and their efforts brought together...we need to know how to foster the truth and the sharing of information that will lead to the best decisions—decisions that will have the maximum impact on the problem...we must go one step further and demand that our thoughtful, creative individuals 'put their heads together' to reach the best possible solutions (pp. 14-15).

In seeking this knowledge, Larson and LaFasto (1989a) developed an instrument to measure the effectiveness of teams. This tool identifies eight distinguishing dimensions that they judge essential to team success: a clear, elevating goal; a results-driven structure; competent

members; a unified commitment; a collaborative climate; standards of excellence; external support and recognition; and principled leadership. Larson and LaFasto (1989a) broadly define a team thus:

A team has two or more people; it has a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of a team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective (p. 19).

Fisher (1991) uses the term 'synergy' to laud the benefits of successfully employed teamwork. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines synergy as that "increased effectiveness, achievement, etc., produced as a result of combined action or cooperation" (1994, p. 1993). In arguing that synergistic teamwork is smart teamwork, Fisher (1991) claims that "synergy offers corporations the greatest single possibility for strengthening effectiveness through mobilizing human resources" (p. 48). He continues:

Getting the maximum benefits from commitment, involvement, strong initiative, good inquiry, open advocacy, effective conflict resolution, solid decision making, and extensive use of critique is what spectacular teamwork is all about. Each member of the team, including the leader, needs to assume responsibility for creating a vision--that is, to adopt the vision as his or her own and share responsibility for achieving it (p. 48).

That both Larson and LaFasto (1989a) and Fisher (1991) believe that the employment of well functioning teams is essential to dealing with many of the myriad problems that face humankind at the end of the twentieth century, is clear. Larson and LaFasto (1989a) declare this belief in straightforward language by stating that because the problems that confront society today are extremely complex we must go one step further and demand that our thoughtful, creative individuals 'put their heads together' to reach the best possible solutions (p. 15). Blubaugh and Varona (1991) add an intercultural aspect to this organizational claim, by declaring that a "knowledge of teams and teamwork for participating cultures will be necessary to solve organizational problems in intercultural contexts" (p. 1).

It must be noted that while Blubaugh and Varona (1991) employ Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) methodology to examine teams speaking different languages, Spanish and English, they do so by examining these teams within the context of the same country--the United States of America--and under the umbrella of that country's dominant cultural beliefs. It must also be noted that, while they confirm the validity of this methodology for their particular study, they feel that further "confirmation of this stream of research is needed" (p. 21). As of this time, no studies have been found that apply Larson and LaFasto's methods to teams that communicate in different languages, in separate countries, and under the influence of a different set of cultural mores. So, if

Blubaugh and Varona's (1991) introduction of intercultural issues into the teamwork debate is to be extended, new research might profitably focus on comparing similarly sized, similarly employed teams involved in the same industry, but in culturally disparate countries. For the purposes of this study in teamwork effectiveness, the cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism will serve as evidence of that cultural disparity: a team from a collectivistic society will be compared to a team from an individualistic society James (1993) perceives value in such a study: he claims that a comparison of the aspects of one or more Asian--collectivistic--cultures with one or more Western--individualistic--cultures will allow Westerners to better understand Asians and Asians to better understand Westerners (p. 19).

As the researcher is an American born citizen of the United States, living, working, and studying in Northern California, she chose an American born, English speaking team as one of the two to be studied. And, as the United States has the largest economy in the 'individualistic' world, she chose a similarly employed Japanese born, Japanese speaking team--Japan has the largest economy in the 'collectivistic' world--to compare with the American team. The fact that the United States and Japan have the two largest economies in the world (James, 1993, p.88) merely underscores the relevance of

comparing teams from these two countries, especially when one considers the nature of Japan's recent economic success:

"for an island nation having limited natural resources, a small fraction (4%) of the land area of the United States, and less than one half the population of the United States, Japan's economic strength and achievements are remarkable" (James, 1993, p.87).

In light of these facts, the researcher considers it important to the future prosperity of American business ventures that research be undertaken into the successful creation and maintenance of efficient workplace teams. Managers need to understand the dynamics that contribute to the smooth running of such teams and employees need to understand the essentials of cooperation. This case study was designed to contribute toward and further any such understanding by comparing two particular teams--a Japanese born, Japanese speaking team situated in Japan and an American born, English speaking team situated in the United States--using that one of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) organizational tools that measures eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness from the team member's perspective. Furthermore, this comparison will be performed in terms of the cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism.

Review of Literature on Teamwork

The researcher recognizes and accepts Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) definition of a team as "two or more people; it has a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among members of the team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective" (p. 19). Moreover, the researcher will employ Larson and LaFasto's (1989) eight characteristics--dimensions--of effectively functioning teams: (1) a clear, elevating goal; (2) a results driven structure; (3) competent team members; (4) unified commitment; (5) a collaborative climate; (6) standards of excellence; (7) external support and recognition; (8) principled leadership.

A Clear, Elevating Goal

Larson and LaFasto (1989b) describe this first dimension as "a worthwhile and challenging objective which is compelling enough to create a team identity and has clear consequences connected with its achievement" (p. 4). Indeed, goal clarity and goal performance are the most common issues discussed in several studies and articles devoted to the component elements of teamwork. Larson and LaFasto (1989a) find that high performance teams have both "a clear understanding of the goal to be achieved and a belief that the goal embodies a worthwhile or important result" (p. 27).

Katzenbach and Smith (1991) claim that teams develop direction, momentum, and commitment by pursuing a meaningful purpose. They add that "if a team fails to establish specific performance goals or if those goals do not relate directly to the team's overall purpose, team members become confused, pull apart, and regress to mediocre performance" (p. 113). Denton (1992) believes that there is no substitute for unity and purpose. He insists that "every team must have a common purpose and common goals...without these shared goals, time and energy are wasted and little will be accomplished" (p. 87). Harris (1993), too, argues in support of the notion that goal clarity and goal importance are both key elements of an effective team: "when the group is clear on its goals and all members endorse them, members tend to be more supportive and committed" (p. 70).

A Results-Driven Structure

Larson and LaFasto (1989b) define a results-driven structure as "a team design which is determined by the objective to be achieved and supported by clear lines of responsibility, open communication, fact-based judgement and methods for providing individual performance feedback" (p. 4). This includes such fundamental characteristics as communication channels, division of labor, and clear authority. They believe that the significance of this dimension lies in the successful identification and

implementation of that structure most appropriate to achieving a specific performance objective: a configuration that does not confuse effort with results and that makes most sense to the team members involved (1989a, p. 40). They claim unequivocally that teams should be designed around desired results, rather than around any preexisting or extraneous circumstances. Larson and LaFasto (1989a) insist that for a team to be functional and useful, "it must be established in such a way that individual and combined efforts always lead toward the desired goal" (p. 42).

Competent Team Members

Larson and LaFasto describe competent team members (1989b) as those "who possess the essential skills and abilities to accomplish the team's objectives, and demonstrate a confidence in each other and the ability to collaborate effectively" (p. 4). Katzenbach and Smith (1991) believe that in addition to being the right size, "teams must develop the right mix of skills and that the skills need to be complimentary to do the team's job" (p. 114). Denton (1991) holds that every successful team must have certain roles assumed by or assigned to its members, so that each member of that team will know exactly what role s/he is to play. Katzenbach and Smith (1991) suggest that "agreeing on the specifics of work and how they fit together to integrate individual skills and advance team performance lies at the

heart of shaping a common approach" (p. 115). Larson and LaFasto (1989a) indicate that "when strong technical skills are combined with the desire to contribute and an ability to be collaborative, the observable outcome is an elevated sense of confidence among team members" (p. 71).

Unified Commitment Among Members

Larson and LaFasto (1989b) recognize the presence of unified commitment among the members of a team when "the achievement of the team goal is a higher priority than any individual objective and inspires a willingness for members to devote whatever effort is necessary to achieve team success" (p. 4). In simple terms, unified commitment may be identified as a sense of loyalty and dedication to a team. It comprises, in fact, an unrestrained sense of excitement and enthusiasm about the team, a willingness to do anything that has to be done to help the team, and a sense of identification with the team. Ultimately, it is the surrender of the interests of the individual to the interests of the collective, or, in other terms, the loss of self (Larson and LaFasto, 1989a, 73).

A Collaborative Climate

To Larson and LaFasto (1989b), a collaborative climate is one "which embraces a common set of guiding values, allowing team members to trust each other sufficiently to accurately share information, perceptions, and feedback" (p. 4). Getting people involved and allowing them autonomy promotes collaboration. Sackmann (1991) identifies Larson and LaFasto's collaborative climate dimension as task accomplishment. She believes that there are two major components to this characteristic: autonomy and team effort. Autonomy refers to each individual's effort and dedicated contribution; team effort portrays the coordination and integration of these individual efforts and contributions. Both are characterized as "that way of behaving best described as efficient and work oriented" (p. 93).

This notion of collaborative climate holds a special position among the many factors that influence a team's success--including that team's self-image--or failure. Furthermore, collaborative climate may be perceived as the essence of any team; it is, in fact, the heart of the working team in 'teamwork.' According to Larson and LaFasto (1989a), both team leaders and team members believe that a collaborative climate exists when team members trust one another to perform their duties to the best of their abilities.

Katzenbach and Smith (1991) believe that "only through the mutual discovery and understanding of how to apply all a team's human resources to a common purpose can a team develop and agree on the best approach to achieve its goals" (p. 118). At the heart of this development lies a commitment-building process during which a team candidly explores which member is best suited to each task and how the several individual roles will interrelate. In effect, the team members establish a regulatory social contract among themselves.

"No group ever becomes a true team until it holds itself accountable as a team" (Katzenbach and Smith, 1991, p. 118). Achieving and maintaining such mutual accountability is every bit as trying a test as is developing a clear, elevating goal. According to Katzenbach and Smith (1991) "it is about the sincere promises we make to ourselves and others, promises that underpin two critical aspects of effective teams: commitment and trust" (p. 119).

Standards of Excellence

Larson and LaFasto (1989a) claim that, as a dimension of effectively functioning teams, standards of excellence are present in that "team which establishes high standards and exerts pressure on itself to constantly improve performance" (p. 94). While such pressure may be exerted in several different forms, it eventually focuses on individual effort,

as team performance ultimately depends upon the competence with which each individual member executes her or his assigned responsibilities. The maintenance of high standards will positively influence team performance; and, even though such standards are often elusive and always demanding, the potential rewards, both tangible and intangible, are monumental (p. 75).

As a group, team members adopt, both formally and informally, norms of behavior and codes of operation. This adoption results from the need to coordinate the group's efforts and activities toward a common goal. Such standards, or expectations, provide a framework for adjusting individual needs and resources toward the group's requirements. These norms "stabilize group energies and contribute to cohesiveness and improved performance" (Harris, 1992, p. 69).

At the broadest and most conceptual level, a standard consists of the pressure to achieve a required or expected level of performance. Most simply articulated, "standards define those relevant and very intricate expectations that eventually determine the level of performance a team deems acceptable" (Larson & LaFasto, 1989a, 95).

External Support and Recognition

Some social scientists have alluded to the 'invisible team': people outside of the team who have expectations of it and who make demands on it (Hastings, Bixby, & Chaudry-Lawton, 1987). Although these people are not part of the internal infrastructure that supports any given team, they may be related to that team in other, nonetheless important ways. The external support and recognition that are often important to a team may even involve parties from outside the specific business organization that the team belongs to. This being the somewhat nebulous case, Larson and LaFasto (1989b) broadly define this dimension as "the presence of the necessary resources and external support required to accomplish the team's objectives, including the appropriate forms of recognition and incentives" (p. 5).

External support and recognition is an important ingredient in determining the success or failure of a team. Larson and LaFasto (1989b) believe that "identifying factors such as individuals being rewarded/compensated on the basis of the team's effectiveness, team members being provided with the necessary resources to do the job, and people in positions of power supporting the ideas and actions of the team, substantiate the significance of external support to team success" (p. 110).

Principled Leadership

Principled team leadership is the final ingredient necessary to ensure effective team performance. Larson and LaFasto (1989b) indicate that the selection of the right person to fill a leadership role is tremendously valuable to any collective effort, even to the point of sparking the outcome with an intangible kind of magic. They define principled leadership as "the articulation of the team goal in such a way as to inspire commitment, and actions which stem from strong adherence to basic principles such as: trusting team members with meaningful levels of responsibility, confronting inadequate performance and rewarding superior performance" (1989a, p. 5).

Simply stated, leadership involves the ability to inspire and influence the thinking, attitude, and behavior of people (Adler, 1992, p. 149). Denton (1992) approaches team leadership practically, setting specific criteria for leaders to follow: "leaders should be able to supply essential information, clarify issues, encourage all members to participate, and, at the same time, protect individual members from being attacked" (p. 88). He suggests that "leaders should help the group stay on track, support team efforts, strive for continuous improvement, and demonstrate their support for the group and in individual members when things are not going smoothly" (p. 88).

Good leadership clearly involves more than just putting a 'spin' on team effort. In effect, principled leadership fundamentally changes the nature of team effort: successful leaders allow their fellow team members to feel connected with mainstream happenings by helping them to understand the organization's vision; they overcome inertia and, thus, demonstrate that change is possible; and, perhaps most importantly, they create self-confidence in each team member, thereby encouraging those members to take risks, to make decisions, and to act, in turn, as leaders themselves (Larson and LaFasto, 1989b, p. 129).

The researcher will employ these eight dimensions to measure the effectiveness of two culturally disparate teams: (1) a clear, elevating goal; (2) a results driven structure; (3) competent team members; (4) unified commitment; (5) a collaborative climate; (6) standards of excellence; (7) external support and recognition; (8) principled leadership.

Review of Literature on Individualism/Collectivism

Several social scientists hold that Japanese culture differs from American culture in several fundamental ways: the predominant culture of Japan emphasizes group activity, hierarchy, harmony, and indirect language; the predominant culture of the United States encourages individualism, equality, confrontation, and direct language. Accordingly,

Ruch (1984) notes that "Japanese people tend to be reserved, formal, and structured; while Americans are assertive and informal" (p. 226).

While investigating such disparities, Hui and Triandis (1986) note much controversy as to the application of theoretical constructs to 'real world' situations. They identify a failure to commonly define terms that effectively causes researchers investigating identical areas to talk past one another, rather than to build a unified body of knowledge (pp. 224-225). This failure to communicate is, of course, detrimental to the scientific enterprise. Therefore, Hui and Triandis (1986) attempt to attribute a commonly accepted 'real world' meaning to the cultural constructs, or dimensions, of individualism and collectivism: they define individualism as that "feeling or conduct in which the guiding principle is the interest of the individual" (p. 226); and, they define collectivism as a "cluster of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward a wide variety of people" (p. 240). Their study demonstrates that a common definition of these two terms can be widely accepted throughout the social science community.

Triandis et al. (1986) employ these concepts-- individualism and collectivism--to describe differences that exist between Japanese society and American society: they, too, apply the label collectivism to Japanese culture; and, they, too, apply the label individualism to American culture. Numerous cross-cultural studies (Hofstede, 1980; Hsu, 1971;

Hui and Triandis, 1986; Ruch, 1984; Wheeler et al., 1989; and Yum, 1988) support this individualism-collectivism dimension as a viable cultural categorization tool.

The individualism-collectivism dimension has gained both acceptance and popularity in the business community, too. James employs this dimension in his 1993 book, Doing business in asia: A small business guide to success in the world's most dynamic market. In noting that American businessmen must master the cultural factor (p. 19), he indicates that "there are two principal cultural groupings in the world, individualist cultures and collectivist cultures." Further, James suggests that by "comparing the two cultural groupings," Americans, who live and work in an individualist society, will be able to "understand Asians better" (p. 19).

Several scholars recognize that, as concepts, individualism and collectivism address the relational aspects of cultural groups. Hsu (1981) differentiates between individual-centered life--which emphasizes the predilections of the individual--and situation-centered life--which emphasizes the individual's appropriate place and behavior. Yang (1981) articulates a similar position by juxtaposing individual orientation--focussing on internal wishes or personal interests--against social orientation--acting in accordance with external expectations or social norms. Others employ their own terms to describe comparable distinctions: 'idiocentric' versus 'allocentric'

orientations (Triandis et al., 1986); independent and interdependent 'self-construals' (Markus & Kitayama, 1991); and so on. In their universal types of values theory, Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) confirm the cross-cultural significance of distinguishing between those values that best serve the individual's own interests and those that best serve the collectivity. They employ data from Australia, Finland, Hong Kong, Spain, and the United States to conclude that individual task achievement and self-direction values serve individualistic interests; alternately, they find that prosocial tendencies serve collective interests. As those who have investigated this topic confirm both the validity and ultimate usefulness of the individualism-collectivism construct as a cross-cultural investigative tool, it will be employed as such in this research.

Individualism

Hui and Triandis (1986) define Individualism in terms of four psychological qualities: a sense of personal identity (Erikson); self-actualization (Maslow); internal locus of control (Rotter); and, post-conventional principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg) (p. 226). Triandis et al. (1986) specifically define individualism as comprising both an emphasis on self reliance and a distaste for in-groups. In other words, individualism is manifested in the propensity to

be more concerned with one's own needs, interests, and goals: the 'I' identity. They believe that individualism consists in three important factors: (a) an emphasis on self-reliance; (b) a low concern for in-groups; and, (c) a distance from in-groups. They also suggest that individualism is associated with the tendency to be most concerned with the ramifications that one's behavior will have on one's own needs, interests, and goals (Triandis et al., 1986, p. 258).

Hsu (1971) reveals that the western concept of 'personality'--an entity separate from society and culture--does not exist in the Asian tradition. Hsu holds that the 'personality' concept is merely a reflection of western individualistic thought. Alternately, "the Japanese use the word *jin* for 'man' in order to describe a 'human constant' which includes the person himself plus his intimate societal and cultural environment which makes his existence meaningful" (Hsu, 1971, p. 25).

As Larson and LaFasto (1989a) define a team as "two or more people" committed to, among other things, the "coordination of activities" (p. 19), the researcher assumes that those characteristics identified as being individualistic in nature may work contrary to the optimal functioning of any given team. With that assumption in mind,

the researcher believes that such individualist characteristics might best be toned down for the sake of effective teamwork.

Collectivism

Collectivist cultures set aside personal interests for the good of the group. They maintain harmony: the 'We' identity. Hui and Triandis (1986) define Collectivism as "a cluster of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward a wide variety of people" (p. 240). They summarize this definition in a single word, *concern*: "the more concern one has toward others, the more bonds with others are felt and acted upon, the more collectivist is the person" (p. 240).

Triandis et al. (1986) attribute the following traits to collectivism: (a) an emphasis on the views, needs, and goals of the in-group rather than of oneself; (b) a readiness to cooperate with the in-group members; and, (c) an intense emotional attachment to the in-group. They suggest that "collectivism is associated with the tendency to be more concerned about the consequences of one's behavior for in-group members and to be more willing to sacrifice personal interests for the attainment of harmony and collective interests" (p. 159).

Collectivism does not demand the negation of the individual's well-being or interest; rather, the very notion of collectivism implies that maintaining the group's well-

being is the best guarantee for the individual (Hsu, 1971, p. 26). Hofstede (1980) reports that in a Japanese collectivist setting, an individual behaving in an 'inner-directed' manner, does so at the risk of losing face. "'Face' is lost when the individual, either through his action or that of people closely related to him, fails to meet essential requirements placed upon him by virtue of the social position he occupies" (Ting-Toomey et. al., 1991).

As Larson and LaFasto (1989a) define a team as "two or more people" committed to, among other things, the "coordination of activities" (p. 19), the researcher assumes that those characteristics identified as being collectivist in nature might enhance the functioning of any given team.

Review of Literature on the Importance of Teamwork

With Japan continuing to dominate international trade, corporate executives and university researchers alike now devote increasing attention to the cultural and communicative dimensions involved in this success. Cross-cultural management studies tended to be most popular and plentiful during the early 1980's, with researchers like Adler (1984), Hofstede (1983), and Tung (1984) leading the way. Then, from the mid 1980's through the early 1990's, researchers began to focus on the effectiveness of teams (Driskell and Salas, 1991; Dryer, 1984; Foushee, 1984; Larson and LaFasto, 1989b; Ruch, 1984). More recently, Salas, Dickinson,

Coverse, and Tannenbaum (1992) note that effective teamwork is critical to many organizations, because modern task demands are likely to exceed the capabilities of individuals. Larson and LaFasto (1989b) explain that "Americans possess the technical competence, physical resources, and intellectual capacity to satisfy all the basic needs of mankind, but seem to lack the essential ability to work together effectively to solve critical problems" (p. 13).

In today's ever more complex business environment, American management must act with increasing creativity and innovation to meet foreign competition. Timothy Dickinson (1992), argues that "teams may be the only management remedy for bureaucratic inflexibility: teams are an almost poisonous antibody which the company needs to fight this infection" (p. 69).

According to William Ruch (1984), America's managers may be able to learn from the Japanese approach to management, in which "effective employee communication is viewed [by the Japanese] in exactly the same manner, and with the same order of priority, as product quality; indeed the two concepts are inseparable" (p. 86).

This notion of effective communication and, thus, cooperation is key to any Japanese business organization. The Japanese expect that the willing cooperation of each member of an organization will further the interest and success of that organization. Research indicates that

Japanese workers implicitly understand that if an organization prospers, every member of that organization will prosper (Ruch, 1984, p. 89). Thus, true individualists rarely fit in with the traditionally cooperative spirit common to large Japanese firms. March (1992) attributes part of the Japanese industrial accomplishment to the successful harnessing of the 'need for a cause' in productive endeavors: "the cause [for the Japanese worker] is not only the survival of his or her corporation, but the need to transform his or her corporation into the most successful in its industry" (p. 26). Both March (1992) and James (1993) attribute the Japanese success story to a management philosophy that stresses collective decision making and total responsibility for all the work in any given worker's domain. March (1992) explains that total responsibility does not imply sole responsibility, but the collective responsibility shared by that worker and her or his fellow workers. Hence, "at any level in the organization, each individual is responsible for the decisions over which he or she may have even the smallest modicum of control" (p. 27).

Moran (1993) holds that change is in the air for American business organizations. He believes that this change includes the mobilization of human resources for strengthened results, productivity, quality, creativity, and innovation. Furthermore, he stipulates several goals that must be set to enhance and foster change: sustained growth; effective competition in a global economy; and, thus, better

profit. Fisher (1991) contends that these goals will be best attained in an atmosphere of synergistic teamwork: the joint action of agents that when taken together increases each other's effectiveness. In any such situation, the successfully synergistic employment of several such persons takes both effort and patience. However, the potential rewards are great: synergistic teamwork is smart teamwork. According to Fisher (1991) "synergy offers corporations the greatest single possibility for strengthening effectiveness through mobilizing human resources" (p. 48). Fisher continues:

Getting the maximum benefits from commitment, involvement, strong initiative, good inquiry, open advocacy, effective conflict resolution, solid decision making, and extensive use of critique is what spectacular teamwork is all about. Each member of the team, including the leader, needs to assume responsibility for creating a vision--that is, to adopt the vision as his or her own and share responsibility for achieving it (p. 48).

The limited research performed in this case-study indicates that one team exhibits a greater degree of effectiveness--Larson and LaFasto (1989a)--than the other. The researcher believes that these findings might reflect the divergence in cultural beliefs extant between the teams.

Research Questions

The success of this case study rests upon the answers to these three questions:

1. What, if any, similarities are there between the Japanese team and the American team in light of Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness?
2. What, if any, dissimilarities are there between the Japanese team and the American team in light of Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness?
3. What, if any, influences do the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism exert on the differences found between the two teams on Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness?

CHAPTER II

Method

Design

A 'triangulation' of methods was employed to gather data for this study. This triangulation was performed for two reasons: on the one hand, it serves to provide both descriptive and interpretive information relevant to the two teams; on the other hand, it serves to decrease the possibility of researcher bias. Schein (1985) defines triangulation as "the identification of data and subsequent checking of individual bits of information obtained against other bits of information until a pattern begins to reveal itself" (p. 135).

This study employed both quantitative--Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness questionnaire--and qualitative--open-ended, survey type questions--methods to gather data.

Measuring Instruments

The eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness questionnaire employed in this study is one of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) three Team Excellence Instruments. This forty-item Likert-type-scale questionnaire is broken down into eight categories, each of which represents one of the

eight teamwork effectiveness dimensions. The questionnaire permits each respondent to answer every question in one of four ways: (1) true; (2) more true than false; (3) more false than true; or, (4) false. This particular Team Excellence Instrument enables team members to assess their own team's performance from the perspective of being an integral member of that team (see Appendix A).

This researcher developed and utilized a 'Demographic Information' survey to obtain such information as the gender, ethnicity, native language, place of birth, length of time employed with both organization and team, and education level of each respondent (see Appendix B). This information will aid in analyzing the results of this study. Further, the researcher developed and utilized four open-ended, short answer 'survey questions' to identify the influence on teamwork effectiveness, if any, exerted by the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism (see Appendix B). The researcher formulated each of these four questions with both a specific teamwork effectiveness dimension and previous research into individualism-collectivism in mind. Thus, these questions served both to supplement the quantitative findings derived from the application of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) eight dimensions and to strengthen the interpretation of any cultural differences extant between the Japanese team and the American team.

Participants

The researcher studied two teams: a Japan based customer service team comprised of Japanese born employees and a United States based customer service team comprised of American born employees. Each team meets monthly in its respective country to discuss customer service concerns. These concerns typically include shipping, initial product quality, and product service and repair turnaround issues as raised by customers. The teams aim to effectively handle such problems in this collaborative monthly forum. Team training on the use and operation of new products is also discussed in these monthly meetings, as and when needed.

The Japanese team is drawn solely from the torque tool customer service department of a diversified manufacturing and trading organization. This seventy-two year old organization, headquartered in Osaka, Japan, manufactures and distributes such tools and other products worldwide. It is more diversified, larger, and older than the American organization researched in this study. However, the strict departmentalization by product line of this larger corporation should justify its use in this particular case-study, as both teams deal with a narrowly defined set of products, as both teams serve similar functions within the parent organization, as both teams are of similar size, and as both teams spend most of their working day as a unit

rather than dealing with other departments within the organization. Indeed, both of these teams generally communicate with the organization as a whole through the team leader and not as individuals.

As noted, the Japanese customer service team studied serves the torque tool division. It is comprised of six customer service representatives and one customer service manager. Each customer service representative is responsible for a specific geographic region of Japan. Although team membership has not remained constant over the course of many years, it did remain so during the period of this study.

The American team is drawn from the customer service department of a thirty-one year old torque tool manufacturing and distribution corporation, headquartered in San Jose, California. It is comprised of eight customer service representatives and one customer service manager. Each customer service representative is responsible for a specific geographic region of the United States. As with the Japanese team, although team membership has not remained constant over the course of many years, it did remain so during the period of this study.

Data Collection

Quantitative - Questionnaire Administration

The questionnaires were administered to the customer service departments of both organizations during the same time period.

The researcher sent a questionnaire to an administrative assistant at the Osaka, Japan location via facsimile machine. This Japanese employee then made photocopies of the questionnaire and passed them on to the Japanese customer service manager at that location. The customer service manager, in turn, distributed these copied questionnaires to the six other members of the customer service team--keeping one copy for her/himself--to be answered. Then, the seven completed Japanese questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes to the Japanese administrative assistant, who mailed them in a single mailing to the researcher in the United States.

The researcher handed nine questionnaires to the American customer service manager at the San Jose location. The customer service manager, in turn, distributed these questionnaires to the eight other members of the customer service team--keeping one questionnaire for her/himself--to be answered. Then, the nine completed American questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes to the researcher.

Qualitative - Interview Survey Administration

Once the completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher, they were statistically analyzed by hand to determine the mean scores and standard deviations both for each of the eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness and for each of the forty component questions that comprise those eight dimensions. This quantitative analysis completed, the researcher then developed two qualitative tools to aid in further analysis of the quantitative data. The researcher designed each of these tools--one a demographic survey, the other an open-ended, short answer survey--to generate qualitative data that might assist in the explanation of any noted differences extant between the two teams regarding the eight teamwork effectiveness dimensions (see Appendix C).

The demographic survey considered gender, ethnicity, first or native language, place of birth, time employed by the organization in question, duration of team membership, and level of education.

The open-ended, short answer questions were developed to further analyze those four of Larson LaFasto's eight teamwork effectiveness dimensions on which the mean responses of the Japanese team varied most from the mean responses of the American team:

The first question was developed to correlate with Larson and LaFasto's Dimension 7, External Support and Recognition:

1. Please list the most important reasons why you enjoy or why you do not enjoy being a member of this team.

The second question was developed to correlate with Larson and LaFasto's Dimension 4, Unified Commitment:

2. When your team discusses important issues, what are you more concerned with: A. putting aside your personal interests and ideas for those of the group? or B. putting aside the interests and ideas of the group for those of your own? Which would you choose and please explain why.

The third question was developed to correlate both with Larson and LaFasto's Dimension 2, Results-Driven Structure--the contribution of communication channels, division of labor, clear authority, and so on to teamwork effectiveness--and with their Dimension 5, Collaborative Climate--getting people involved and allowing them autonomy:

3. If you could change anything in order to help this team function more effectively, what would it be? Please explain why.

The fourth question was developed to identify any individualistic or collectivistic characteristics attributable to the respondents:

4. If you had to choose between A. voicing an opinion that went against your fellow team members or B. remaining silent to keep harmony which would you choose? Please explain why.

These questions were administered one month after the quantitative questionnaires and were distributed and returned in the same manner.

Data Analysis

Quantitative - Questionnaire Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the returned questionnaires. A total of sixteen individuals-- seven Japanese team members and nine American team members-- responded to each of the forty questions posed in the questionnaire. The mean scores and standard deviations of each group were calculated for each of the forty questions as well as for each of Larson and LaFasto's eight teamwork effectiveness dimensions (see Table 2 - 9 and Appendix C-K).

Qualitative - Interview Survey Analysis

The researcher then developed four open-ended, short answer questions to address those teamwork effectiveness dimensions that differed most, between the Japanese respondents and the American respondents, in mean scores. These open-ended questions were then analyzed and interpreted in an effort to understand how the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism influence the teamwork effectiveness dimensions. Glaser and Strauss (1979) approach qualitative analysis as a constant comparative method where no predetermined categories or given order are identified. These researchers advocate qualitative analysis for the

purpose of creatively repackaging data, allowing a crystallization and articulation of recurrent themes, each of which contribute to meaning and sense-making.

Once the researcher had typed the responses to these open-ended questions verbatim into a personal computer, and once copies of the data were printed out, the tripartite qualitative analysis proceeded thus: (1) the researcher reviewed each individual statement looking for repeat key words and recurring themes; (2) as the researcher identified these words and themes, each statement was assigned a numerical notation or label that indicated the presence of that theme; and, (3) a heading--summarizing distinguishing features or characteristics--was assigned to each theme.

As a final process of validation, two people other than the researcher--one a company operations and communications director with a recent M.B.A, the other a graduate student in speech communication--reviewed, discussed, and agreed upon the emergent themes.

CHAPTER III

Results

The contents of this chapter include an analysis of both the quantitative data and the qualitative data obtained in this case study. The first section, which focuses on the quantitative data, includes pertinent demographic information and the results of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) Team Excellence Instrument questionnaires. The second section includes a description of the results of the qualitative data obtained through the open-ended, short answer responses.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Demographics

The demographic data was gathered and analyzed in order to furnish a descriptive overview of those two teams studied. Seventy-one percent of the Japanese team respondents were male and 29% female, while 66% of the American team respondents were male and 33% female (see Table 1).

Each of those responding customer service team members has at least some college level education. Twenty-nine percent of the Japanese respondents have at least one year of college education, but no baccalaureate degree, while the remaining 71% are college graduates. Forty-four percent of the American respondents have at least one year of college

education, but no baccalaureate degree, while the remaining 55% are college graduates. One of the American team members--representing 20% of those American respondents who have graduated college--has a masters' degree (see Table 1). At least on the surface, both teams seem to share a similar level of education, although this does not account for any disparities in the standards of the respective educational systems.

The descriptive data were then analyzed to determine the length of time served by each responding employee in her or his given employing organization. Forty-three percent of the Japanese have been with their organization for between two and four years, 29% for between eleven and thirteen years, and 29% for between fourteen and sixteen years. Thirty-three percent of the Americans have been with their organization for two months, 44% for four months, 11% for between seven and twelve months, and 11% between two and four years (see Table 1). The Japanese team members have clearly been employed by their current employer for much greater periods of time than the American respondents. This simple finding might impact the results of this case-study.

The descriptive data were further analyzed to determine the length of time served by each responding employee in her or his particular customer service team. Fifty-seven percent of the Japanese employees have been with their team for between two and four years, 29% for between eleven and

thirteen years, and 14% for between fourteen and sixteen years. Thirty-three percent of the American employees have been with their team for two months, 44% for four months, 11% for between seven and twelve months, and 11% for between two and four years (see Table 1). As with the time served with the employer data, the Japanese team members have clearly belonged to their team for much greater periods of time than their American counterparts. This, too, might impact the results of this case-study.

Team Excellence Instrument

Of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) three Team Excellence Instruments, this case-study employed that instrument which measures the eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness from a team members' perspective (see Appendix A). The responding members of both teams were asked to rank their own team with regard to those eight dimensions. Each of those eight dimensions was split into several questions, and each of those questions could be answered in one of four ways: true (4 points); more true than false (3 points); more false than true (2 points); and false (1 point). If the respondent felt that a particular question most applied to her or his team, s/he answered true; if s/he felt that a particular question least applied to her/his team, s/he answered false.

This researcher does not consider Larson and LaFasto's eighth dimension--Principled Leadership--suitable for the purposes of this study. As there are only two group leaders involved--one in each country--the employment of this dimension might compromise their ensured confidentiality. Although this eighth dimension was statistically analyzed, the researcher chose not probe further with open-ended questions for the above mentioned reason.

The researcher then calculated the means and the standard deviation for each of the seven remaining dimensions--and for each of the component questions that combine to form those dimensions--for each group. These means and standard deviations appear in Table 2.

Dimension 1: Clear, Elevating Goal

The mean response scores to the combined 'Clear, Elevating Goal' dimension questions were 3.38 for the Japanese team (JPTM) and 3.54 for the American team (AMTM) (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.88 for the JPTM and 0.58 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 3.

Dimension 2: Results Driven Structure

The mean response scores to the combined 'Results Driven Structure' dimension questions were 3.29 for the JPTM and 2.72 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.71 for the JPTM and 0.77 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 4.

Dimension 3: Competent Team Members

The mean response scores to the combined 'Competent Team Members' dimension questions were 3.43 for the JPTM and 3.06 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.63 for the JPTM and 0.89 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 5.

Dimension 4: Unified Commitment

The mean response scores to the combined 'Unified Commitment' dimension questions were 3.24 for the JPTM and 2.63 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.70 for the JPTM and 0.79 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 6.

Dimension 5: Collaborative Climate

The mean response scores to the combined 'Collaborative Climate' dimension questions were 3.29 for the JPTM and 2.72 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.66 for the JPTM and 0.91 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 7.

Dimension 6: Standards of Excellence

The mean response scores to the combined 'Standards of Excellence' dimension questions were 3.14 for the JPTM and 3.07 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.73 for the JPTM and 0.92 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 8.

Dimension 7: External Support and Recognition

The mean response scores to the combined 'External Support and Recognition' dimension questions were 3.16 for the JPTM and 2.25 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

The standard deviations for this dimension--when taken as a whole--were 0.72 for the JPTM and 1.06 for the AMTM (see Table 2).

For the mean scores and standard deviations recorded on each of the individual component questions that comprise this dimension, see Table 9.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Open-Ended, Short Answer Questions

Once the results of the quantitative analysis had been compiled, four open-ended questions were administered to each of the members of both teams. These open-ended questions were designed to generate qualitative data that might assist in the explanation of any noted differences extant between the two teams regarding those four dimensions in which the mean scores of the Japanese team and the American team varied most greatly, one from the other.

A summary of those common themes that emerged from the responses to the four open-ended, short answer questions-- those clearly developed ideas shared by two or more of the respondents on any given team--follows:

(1.) Please list the most important reasons why you enjoy or why you do not enjoy being a member of this team.

All sixteen respondents answered this question.

Japanese Responses

Every one of the seven Japanese respondents indicated that they enjoyed being members of their team. Three themes emerged from their responses: (1) freedom; (2) responsibility; and (3) external respect and recognition. An analysis of these three themes follows.

Theme 1: Freedom

Four out of seven of these respondents employed the word freedom when listing the reasons that they enjoyed being members of their team; they enjoyed the freedom that their team was given when working on assigned projects; they enjoyed the freedom that team members had to succeed within the team; and, they enjoyed the freedom that they had to focus on those duties that each individual felt s/he could

handle best. Indeed, one Japanese respondent wrote that "this team is freedom!"

Theme 2: Responsibility

Two out of seven of these respondents employed the word responsibility when addressing this question. They indicated that team members were both allowed "responsibility and authority" when performing their tasks and assigned duties.

Theme 3: External Respect and Recognition

Three out of seven of these respondents indicated that they enjoyed the respect and recognition given to members of their team by those outside of that team. One of these three enjoyed being "popular with others" from outside the group.

American Responses

While four out of nine of the American respondents indicated that they always enjoyed being members of their team, the five other respondents indicated that sometimes they enjoyed their membership and sometimes they did not.

Although no common themes emerged from those four members who always enjoyed their membership, several common themes emerged from those respondents who indicated that sometimes they enjoyed their membership and sometimes they did not. Due to their apparent ambivalence, their responses were broken down into two categories: themes that emerged

from that part of their responses that indicated their enjoyment and themes that emerged from that part of their responses that indicated their non-enjoyment.

Two themes emerged from those parts of the ambivalent responses that indicated that they sometimes enjoyed being a team member: (1) liking the job; and (2) personal rewards. An analysis of these two themes follows.

Theme 1: Liking the Job

Four out of five of these ambivalent respondents indicated that "I like my job here." However, each one of these four 'likes,' was followed by an "on the other hand" or a "but."

Theme 2: Personal Rewards

Two out of five of these respondents noted that team membership was personally rewarding. For one of them, the reward was "to know that I did the best that I could even though for some people it was not good enough." For the other it was "I feel a sense of completeness." They each added that larger issues prevented them from being unqualifiedly enthusiastic about their membership on the team.

Three themes emerged from those parts of the ambivalent responses that indicated that they did not always enjoy being

a team member: (1) lack of respect between team members; (2) lack of external respect and recognition; and (3) lack of available resources. An analysis of these three themes follows.

Theme 1: Lack of Respect Between Team Members

Two out of five of these respondents noted a marked lack of respect between team members. One felt that "others project the attitude that they know what is best for the team and demand that others do their jobs properly," and the other wrote that "sometimes other team members are disrespectful to their fellow team mates."

Theme 2: Lack of External Respect and Recognition

Two out of five of these ambivalent respondents bemoaned the lack of external respect for and recognition of their team. Their responses indicate that while outsiders are only too quick to jump on their mistakes and omissions, they rarely offer their support when support is needed or their congratulations when congratulations are due. One member put it succinctly: "This team has a problem because the 'powers that be' do not recognize some group members' hard work."

Theme 3: Lack of Available Resources

Two out of five of these respondents indicated that they are less than happy with the resources allocated to their team. One noted that "it is hard to do this job when the proper tools are not available," while the other complained that "we do not have enough resources or members to be a functioning team."

(2.) When your team discusses important issues, what are you more concerned with: A. putting aside your personal interests and ideas for those of the group or B. putting aside the interests and ideas of the group for those of your own? Which one would you choose and please explain.

All sixteen respondents answered this question.

Japanese Responses

Every one of the seven Japanese respondents chose answer A: s/he would put aside her or his personal interests and ideas for those of the group. Two distinct themes emerged from their responses: (1) importance of group issues; and (2) overlapping of ideas. An analysis of these two themes follows.

Theme 1: Importance of Group Issues

Five out of seven of these respondents indicated that individuals should focus on the goals and concerns of the team, rather than on personal issues. One of these five wrote that "our team's interest is most important for me." This focus on the team's interests, they believed, would enhance team success, while the opposite would hinder team effort.

Theme 2: Overlapping of Ideas

Two out of seven of these respondents indicated that their personal interests and ideas exactly coincided with team interests and ideas. They noted an overlapping of values between their personal interests and their being members of the team; in fact, "they are sometimes the same."

American Responses

While two out of nine of the American respondents indicated that they would second their personal interests and ideas to those of the team, four others indicated that they would second the interests and ideas of the group to their own, and the remaining three were ambivalent.

While no unified theme or themes emerged from those two respondents who chose answer A--they would put aside their personal interests and ideas for those of the group--one

theme emerged from those four respondents who chose to answer B--they would put aside the interests and ideas of the group for those of their own. That theme was individualism.

Theme 1: Individualism

Three out of four of these respondents indicated a greater concern for their own needs, goals, and eventual success than for those of their team. They held that there is only one way for a team to accomplish things: bring personal issues into the open and then build a team plan that encompasses and satisfies those personal issues. They feel that only once personal issues are understood and accommodated can the team begin to function properly. One wrote that "I was hired into the team for my individuality and ideas," while another wrote that "I always put my interests first."

Two themes emerged from those three respondents who responded in an ambivalent manner: (1) organizational concerns; and (2) individualism. An analysis of these two themes follows.

Theme 1: Organizational Concerns

Three respondents felt that the team's purpose was to accomplish goals that most benefitted the greater organization as a whole. They insisted that the sole purpose

of the team was to advance business, and not to take the form of "a social event." However, this theme was mitigated by such individualistic concerns as this: "When [personal issues arise], one has to fight for what they think is best for them."

Theme 2: Individualism

Three respondents felt that personal ideas and interests cannot be readily disentangled from team ideas and interests. They indicated that if a team issue negatively impacted a team member on a personal level, that member should enjoy the right both to challenge the team's ideas and interests, and to forward their own ideas and interests. These respondents believe that as a member's personal issues loom larger, that member will tend to lose sight of the team's goals. They held that although everybody needs a job, that job should not be allowed to constantly infringe upon personal interests. This ongoing and confused balancing act between the concerns of the organization and the concerns of the individual may be summed up thus: "If [my best interests] mean putting my ideas before those of the group, I will. If they mean putting the group's interests before mine, I will."

(3.) *If you could change one thing in order to help this team function more effectively, what would it be? Please explain why.*

All sixteen respondents answered this question.

Japanese Responses

While two out of seven of the Japanese respondents indicated that there is nothing that they would change in order to help their team function more effectively, one clear theme emerged from those five Japanese respondents who indicated that they would make a change: (1) computerization. An analysis of this theme follows.

Theme 1: Computerization

Each one of the five Japanese respondents who indicated that they would make a change, noted that they would like to have a personal computer system at their desk so that they could better document information. They felt that a personal computer would allow them improved control over both the communication process and workflow; they also felt that it would allow them to better trace task accomplishments.

American Responses

Every one of the nine American respondents indicated that they would make a change. Two themes emerged from their responses: (1) training; and (2) reward/incentives program.

Theme 1: Training

Six out of nine of these respondents wrote that they felt that the training process was the one thing that they would change in order to improve the functioning of their team. They believe that training would facilitate the rapid assimilation of new team members, by helping them to become accustomed to both the implicit and the explicit team rules. They indicated that such training would serve to unify the team: "communication will improve with adequate training."

Theme 2: Reward/Incentive Program

Three out of six of these respondents suggested that they would instigate a reward program that incorporated both rewards for team accomplishment and rewards for personal accomplishment. They stated that "this program would reward hard work and would probably bring up the missing connectedness of this team," while creating "a clear comprehension of tasks for the group".

(4.) *If you had to choose between A. voicing an opinion that went against your fellow team members or B. remaining silent to keep harmony, which would you choose? Please explain why.*

All sixteen respondents answered this question.

Japanese Responses

Every one of the seven Japanese respondents answered B: they would remain silent to keep harmony. One theme emerged: (1) harmony. An analysis of this theme follows.

Theme 1: Harmony

Each of these seven Japanese respondents indicated that harmony--and, by derivation, unity--must be maintained at all costs. An harmonious team will be better able to make decisions, to achieve goals, and, therefore, to succeed. One respondent wrote that "harmony must be kept, because it is the way it has to be."

American Responses

Eight out of nine of the American respondents answered A: they would voice an opinion that went against their fellow team members. Only one American respondent indicated that s/he would choose to remain silent in order to maintain

group harmony. Two themes emerged from those eight respondents who chose answer A: (1) group efficiency; and (2) individualistic concerns.

Theme 1: Group Efficiency

Six out of eight of these respondents indicated that the voicing of personal opinions enhances team effectiveness. They believe that this is the most efficient way to resolve outstanding issues. One of these six believes that the "team sometimes needs others to be forthcoming in their ideas. It helps generate ideas". Another believes that when s/he voices her or his opinion, "the other persons on the team know what I am thinking and it will stop any annoying things from happening that I do not agree with."

Theme 2: Individual Concerns

Four out of these eight respondents indicated that they would voice their opinion if and when their opinion varied from, or was in conflict with, the group's opinion. One of these four said this: "I would say something if [the opinions of the group] differed from my personal opinions."

CHAPTER IV

Discussions and Conclusions

For the sake of clarity, this chapter is divided into three distinct sections: first, the writer lists the limitations of this case-study; second, she discusses the similarities and differences found in this case-study, and draws conclusions based upon those findings; and, third, the writer recommends some possible areas of future research.

Limitations

The reader of this case-study must consider several limitations when interpreting the results.

First, the fact that this case-study was based on a survey of very few team members prevents the researcher from claiming definitive results--differences between the two teams--and drawing broad conclusions.

Second, as this case-study was limited to two organizations operating within a specialized field--high quality industrial tool manufacturing and distribution--the results gleaned and conclusions drawn cannot be assumed to apply to all American and Japanese business organizations.

Third, the reader must consider the important fact that, on average, the Japanese respondents have served with both their team and the parent company for far longer than the American respondents. The researcher worked on the assumption that a long-time team member might better understand both the parent company's and the team's purpose, goals, standards, and communication patterns. Moreover, that member might better trust and confide in others whom s/he has worked with for an extended period.

Fourth, the reader must consider for him or herself the validity of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) scale. The nature of this tool might, for example, allow respondents to articulate inaccurate perceptions--whether consciously or otherwise--regarding themselves, their own team membership, and their fellow team members.

Fifth, although the Japanese respondents assured the researcher of their fluency in English, they might have misunderstood both the nuances and cultural implications of at least some of the questions, and might, therefore, not have answered in an entirely accurate manner.

Sixth, as mentioned above, the researcher doesn't consider Larson and LaFasto's eighth dimension--Principled Leadership--suitable for the purposes of this study. As there are only two group leaders involved, the employment of this dimension might compromise their ensured confidentiality. Although this eighth dimension was briefly

analyzed, the researcher chose not probe further with open-ended questions for the above mentioned reason.

And, seventh, due to the necessarily limited nature of this case-study, the researcher will limit her conclusions to those four dimensions that yielded the greatest variation between mean scores: Dimension 2: Results Driven Structure; Dimension 4: Unified Commitment; Dimension 5: Collaborative Climate; and Dimension 7: External Support and Recognition.

Discussions and Conclusions

"We need to know how the activities of people can be coordinated and their efforts brought together" (Larson and LaFasto, 1989a, p. 15).

Whether or not one supports the concept, teamwork, as a business strategy, looms inevitably large in the future. As the twenty-first century fast approaches, work tasks become ever more specialized; thus, it is readily apparent that few individual employees will ever again perform their role in a vacuum. This simple truth yields ramifications that are, at once, both psychological and economic. On a psychological level, it is essential to employee satisfaction that workers are not separated from the fruits of their labor; for, those who become separated tend to suffer from that kind of alienation that is both socially and economically destructive. And, on a purely economic level, it is increasingly important that managers organize their workers

in a manner that will ensure the thriving and efficient initiation, continuation, and completion of any given process. As described in the introduction, successfully synergistic teamwork deals with both of these ramifications. First, it allows team members to feel pride in every stage of the process rather than in just their own solitary--and often seemingly insignificant--contribution. Second, successfully synergistic teamwork thus helps to ensure the profitable initiation, continuation, and completion of a team's assigned task. Fisher (1991) notes that "synergy offers corporations the greatest single possibility for strengthening effectiveness through mobilizing human resources" (p. 48).

This researcher believes it possible that either one of the two teams studied in this survey might exhibit a greater cohesion than the other, and thus a greater tendency to perform in a synergistic manner. She agrees with Fisher (1991) in holding that whichever team does perform in a more synergistic manner will be the most optimally efficient of the two teams.

The researcher employed Larson and Lafasto's (1989a) eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness questionnaire as a quantitative measure of the presence in each team studied of those elements deemed necessary to an optimally functioning team. She then developed two qualitative tools--the demographic survey and the open-ended, short answer questions--to generate data that might assist in the

explanation of any noted differences extant between the two teams regarding the eight teamwork effectiveness dimensions. With the aid of these tools, the researcher hoped to address the three research questions posed at the end of Chapter I:

1. What, if any, similarities are there between the Japanese team and the American team in light of Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness?
2. What, if any, dissimilarities are there between the Japanese team and the American team in light of Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness?
3. What, if any, influences do the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism exert on the differences found between the two teams on Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness?

Similarities Between the Two Teams

With regard to research question 1, the exact similarities were few. Indeed, the application of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness instrument--providing quantitative data--revealed that the Japanese respondents and the American respondents scored the same on only three of the forty component questions that comprise it: the design of our team is determined by the results we need to achieve rather than by extraneous considerations (appendix E, question 5); as a team, we

embrace a common set of guiding values (appendix H, question 20); our leader does not dilute the team's efforts with too many priorities (appendix K, question 31).

As the qualitative data was gathered to help explain any *dissimilarities* between these two teams, it provided no help in addressing the few *similarities* discovered.

Dissimilarities Between the Two Teams

With regard to research question 2, the dissimilarities were many. The application of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness instrument revealed that on 33 of the remaining 37 component questions these particular Japanese team members indicated a greater degree of teamwork effectiveness present in their team than did these particular American team members.

The result of the quantitative questionnaire revealed that the two teams differed most on four dimensions: Dimension 2: Results Driven Structure; Dimension 4: Unified Commitment; Dimension 5: Collaborative Climate; and Dimension 7: Results Driven Structure, and the answers to the open-ended, short answer questions revealed interesting cultural explanations.

Results driven structure.

Dimension 2 measures what Larson and LaFasto (1989b) define as "a team design which is determined by the objective to be achieved and supported by clear lines of responsibility, open communication, fact-based judgement and methods for providing individual performance feedback" (p. 4).

The Japanese team members' overall scores on the results driven structure dimension indicated that they felt that it was more present in their team than did the American team members in their team. The Japanese and Americans did, however, score the same on the eighth of the questions that comprise this dimension. This outcome might indicate that these particular Japanese team members are relatively more aware of the goals that their team was set up to achieve-- when compared to the American team members questioned in this case-study--and that they are relatively more aware of the need to target their efforts toward those goals. The Japanese respondents seem to be relatively aware of their goals, relatively content with the tools that they are given to achieve those goals, and relatively determined to succeed as a team.

Question 3 of the open-ended, short answer questions-- If you could change anything in order to help this team function more effectively, what would it be? Please explain why--was developed as a qualitative, explanatory partner to

both this dimension and dimension 5--collaborative climate. The researcher hoped that at least some of the components of dimension 2 would feature among the responses to this question; they did. While two out of the seven Japanese respondents said that they would change nothing about their team, the other five indicated that they would be able to work more efficiently toward better results with the help of a personal computer system. Again, none of the Japanese cited human problems of the type that would hinder either team performance or results. Alternately, every one of the American respondents suggested a change. Six out of nine of the Americans indicated the need for improved training of new team members. This indication is reflected in this particular dimension as a lack of goal orientation: the American respondents feel that if new members receive better training, they will be better able to contribute toward team results. The other three argued that a program of fiscal rewards would help to inject a drive toward results into the team, possibly implying that if there was enough incentive for them to do so, they would be only too happy to produce the desired results.

The results prompt this researcher to conclude that, when compared to the American team members studied, the Japanese respondents believe that the structure of their team is relatively well oriented toward producing desired results. This is reflected in the way that each member seems to be

clear as to her or his role within the team and in the way that each member appears to be satisfied with both the team's communication system and the team's decision making process. Alternately, the American respondents seem to be more concerned with personal issues than they are with either the eventual success or failure of their team endeavor. These results might reflect the relatively harmonious nature of Japan's collectivistic culture; however, it is of great importance to recall that they may also reflect the simple fact that this particular Japanese team has been working together as a team for a substantially greater time than has this particular American team.

Unified commitment.

Dimension 4 is designed to measure the presence of a unified commitment in a team. Larson and LaFasto (1989b) deem that unified commitment is present in a team when "the achievement of the team goal is a higher priority than any individual objective and inspires a willingness for members to devote whatever effort is necessary to achieve team success" (p. 4).

The Japanese team members' overall scores on this dimension indicated that they felt that unified commitment was more present in their team than did the American team members in their team. The Japanese respondents explained that personal success would be best served by the unselfish, unified promotion of team goals.

Question 2 of the open-ended, short answer questions--
When your team discusses important issues, what are you more concerned with: A. putting aside your personal interests and ideas for those of the group? or B. putting aside the interests and ideas of the group for those of your own? Which would you choose and please explain why--was developed to highlight any cultural explanations for the findings of this dimension. Five out of the seven of the Japanese respondents stressed the primacy of group harmony, while the other two stressed an overlapping of their personal interests with the interests of the group. Both of these themes indicate that the Japanese respondents are able to subjugate their personal interests to those of the group for the purposes of group success. They should be able to work as one harmonious unit. Alternately, only two out of the nine American respondents indicated that they would place the interests of the group above their own interests. One of these two notes that although s/he was an American, s/he was born into a particular sub-culture that placed more emphasis on the notion of community than does mainstream America; the other gave as her/his motivation a dedication to the parent organization, rather than to the group. Among those seven American respondents who were less likely to place the team interests ahead of their own was a feeling that team plans should be built around their personal needs. As each of these individual members most certainly has different

personal needs, it is more difficult to imagine this particular American team ever voluntarily committing to a unified goal within a business setting than it is imagining this particular Japanese team doing the same.

These results prompt this researcher to conclude that, when compared to the Americans studied, the Japanese respondents believe that their team is relatively unified in its commitment to attain its goals. This is reflected in the apparent willingness of the Japanese respondents to second their own ambitions to the interests of their team and, thus, to the interests of the parent organization. And, the responses to question 2 suggest that this willingness derives from deeply ingrained cultural and philosophical collectivistic roots that stress the merits of harmony and warn against the evils of self-promotion. The American respondents, however, seem relatively less willing to second their own interests to those of their team in order to promote unified commitment. Rather, most of these respondents would only endorse team plans when they happened to coincide with their own interests. This attitude might be identified as individualistic, and is, thus, indicative of the rugged individualism that has long been among the most highly self-praised of American characteristics.

Collaborative climate.

Dimension 5 is designed to measure the presence of a collaborative climate in a team. According to Larson and LaFasto (1989b), a collaborative climate is one "which embraces a common set of guiding values, allowing team members to trust each other sufficiently to accurately share information, perceptions, and feedback" (p. 4).

The Japanese respondents' overall scores on this dimension indicated that they felt that collaborative climate was more present in their team than did the American team members in their team. The Japanese and Americans did, however, score the same on the fourth of the questions that comprise this dimension. This outcome might indicate that the Japanese respondents seem to be relatively more comfortable collaborating in teams than are the American respondents. When taken as a group, these Japanese team members appear to be relatively more likely to trust each other, to help each other, and to rely on each other than are the American respondents. Both sets of respondents indicated that they share a common set of guiding values with their team mates.

Question 3 of the open-ended, short answer questions-- If you could change anything in order to help this team function more effectively, what would it be? Please explain why--was developed to further elucidate the results of both this dimension and dimension 2--results driven structure. While two out of the seven Japanese respondents said that

they would change nothing about their team, the other five indicated that they would be able to better communicate with, and thus collaborate with, their fellow team members with the help of a personal computer linked to a network. None of the Japanese cited human problems. The American respondents do not seem to be as satisfied with their team as do the Japanese respondents; indeed, every one of them suggested a change. In identifying the need for improved training of new team members, six out of nine of the American respondents implied that better training would enhance their team's ability to collaborate as a unit. The other three argued that a program of fiscal rewards would help to inject an air of "connectedness" into the team, possibly implying that if there was enough incentive for them to do so, they would be only too happy to collaborate more fully with their team mates.

Although question 1 of the open-ended, short answer questions--Please list the most important reasons why you enjoy or why you do not enjoy being a member of this team--was developed with dimension 7--external support and recognition--in mind, one of the themes that emerged from the American respondents pertains to dimension 5. Two out of five of the Americans who answered that they do not enjoy being a member of their team noted a marked lack of respect between team members. Effective collaboration cannot flourish in an atmosphere of mutual disrespect. This may

reflect a spirit of rugged individualism; it may reflect an impossible clash of personalities; or, it might simply reflect the fact that this particular American team has been together in its present shape for a relatively short period of time.

The results of this dimension might lead this researcher to conclude that the ability to collaborate with others is a collectivistic behavior that is highly valued in Japanese culture. This is reflected in the trust that the Japanese respondents seem to have in the abilities and work ethic of their team mates, and the willingness that they claim to have to help those team mates. Again, this is symptomatic of a culture that encourages such collectivistic concepts as mutual respect and community. Alternately, the American responses to this dimension indicate a relative tendency toward self reliance, a relative distrust and disrespect of others, and a relative pursuit of personal reward.

External support and recognition.

This dimension is designed to measure the amount of external support and recognition that team members feel is given to their team. Larson and LaFasto (1989b) broadly define this dimension as "the presence of the necessary

resources and external support required to accomplish the team's objectives, including the appropriate forms of recognition and incentives" (p. 5).

The Japanese respondents' overall scores on this dimension indicated that they felt that external support and recognition was more present in their team than did the American team members in their team. This result might indicate a greater sense of pride in their being team members. When compared with the American respondents, these Japanese employees felt that their team was allotted a relatively fair amount of resources, that their team was rewarded relatively well for its achievements, and that their team was relatively well respected by those outside of the team.

Question 1 of the open-ended, short answer questions-- Please list the most important reasons why you enjoy or why you do not enjoy being a member of this team--was developed to highlight any cultural explanations for the findings of this dimension. All of the Japanese respondents explained that their team was free to perform, that they were allowed responsibility and given authority, and that they received external respect and recognition. This might, of course, be due to simple fact that most well intended attempts to collaborate in a group are viewed as socially responsible collectivistic actions in Japan and thus deserving of such external support and recognition. Alternately, some of the

American respondents noted a lack of external respect for, and recognition of, their efforts, an eagerness to criticize their mistakes from without, and a dearth of resources. That the longer established American respondents complained at the lack of care taken in appointing new members to the team, might indicate that either senior management does not attribute great importance to the team's success or failure, or that senior management does not understand what it takes to make a team perform well.

The results gleaned lead the researcher to conclude that successful cooperative effort is a valued component of, at least, this particular Japanese team. This is reflected in the relatively fair amount of resources, trust, and independence granted to the Japanese team by their parent company's senior management. Furthermore, the answers to the accompanying open-ended, short answer question indicate that either this external support and recognition might derive from deeply ingrained cultural roots that emphasize the rewards of harmony and mutual respect, while dismissing strife and individual egos as wasteful, or from the relatively large period of time that this team has been together. Alternately, the researcher notes that no such high value appears to be attributed to teamwork in the case of this particular American team. Indeed, those American team members who responded positively seemed almost surprised

that "this group works together in a civilized manner" and gave individualistic reasons for enjoying team membership, such as personal rewards or liking the job.

Explanation of the Differences

The disparities that exist between these two teams may also be explained by any or all of the following:

Length of time served with the organization/team.

It is apparent, from the demographic data collected, that an imbalance exists in the amount of time that each of these teams has served together as teams. This disparity, in itself, could account for the dissimilarities revealed in the results of this survey.

On the one hand, the Japanese team members have served between as little as two years and as long as sixteen years with both their team and their organization. Thus, they have the chance to be thoroughly used to working with their team mates. In addition, employees that, assuming free choice of employment, have been with any organization for as long as sixteen years might reasonably be considered to be loyal to the aspirations of that organization. On the other hand, the American team members have served between as little as two months and as long as only four years with both their team and their organization; moreover, a majority of the American team members have worked for the organization for less than

four months. No team that has spent so little as a team could or should expect to function as a truly cohesive unit.

Ethnic homogeneity/heterogeneity of the respective teams.

Simply stated, the Japanese team members are all ethnic Japanese, born into a society that remains, to a very large degree, ethnically homogeneous. These employees would have grown up in homes that speak the same first language, that worship in a similar manner, and that observe most of the same mores. They would have attended similar schools and have harbored similar life expectations. Each of these factors may be assumed to contribute to the satisfaction with which these Japanese team members seem to respond to their particular teamwork situation.

The American team, however, is composed of several different ethnicities. The team members were born into a society that is as ethnically diverse--heterogeneous--as could be imagined. Among the American team members, six-out-of-the-nine respondents surveyed indicated their ethnic background: one African-American, one German-American, one Iranian-American, one Mexican-American, one New York City born Puerto-Rican, and one Chilean born, Spanish speaking, naturalized American. Thus, it may be fairly claimed that the majority of these team members grew up in homes in which different first languages might have been spoken, different

forms of worship were observed, and different mores were followed. They might have attended very dissimilar schools and have harbored dissimilar life expectations. Each of these factors may be assumed to contribute to the apparent dissatisfaction with which these American team members seem to respond to their particular teamwork situation.

Influences of cultural dimensions.

It is, however, the answer to research question three that proved to be the most enlightening. A fourth and final open-ended, short answer question was developed by the researcher in the hope that it might help to identify any individualistic or collectivistic tendencies attributable to the respondents: If you had to choose between A. voicing an opinion that went against your fellow team members or B. remaining silent to keep harmony which would you choose? Please explain why.

Every one of the seven Japanese team members claimed that s/he would remain silent to maintain group harmony. This unanimous response suggests that the maintenance of group harmony is a value held in high esteem by these particular Japanese team members.

Alternately, only one American claimed that s/he would, likewise, remain silent to maintain group harmony: and, even then, s/he indicated that s/he would voice his or her opinion in certain circumstances. Two themes emerged among the remaining eight American respondents who argued both that the

expression of personal opinions enhances team performance and that the expression of individual concerns was of prime importance. These responses suggest that the maintenance of group harmony is not of prime concern to these particular American team members.

The Japanese workers surveyed perceive that their team is more effective than do their American counterparts when it comes to working in a cooperative milieu. As noted above, those Japanese responses to each of the four-out-of-eight teamwork effectiveness dimensions selected as the focus of this study indicated that this particular Japanese team exhibits a greater sense of what we might call "team-ness" than did the American responses. Thus, it might be said that this particular Japanese team is relatively more effective--more of a coherent 'team' according to Larson and Lafasto (1989a)--than this particular American team; indeed, it might be inferred that within the limitations noted above Japanese culture might have better prepared these particular Japanese respondents for teamwork than did American culture for these particular American respondents. In addition, the open-ended, short answer questions uncovered several--perhaps culturally-derived--attitudes that contribute to the cohesion of this Japanese team: an emphasis on the views, needs, and goals of the team as a whole; a willingness to cooperate with their fellow team mates; and, an emotional attachment to both their team mates and the eventual success or failure of their

team. Alternately, the American respondents expressed attitudes that might hamper the cohesion of their team: an emphasis on self reliance; a limited tolerance of their team mates; and, a tendency to be most concerned with fulfilling their individual needs.

Further, more comprehensive research might confirm that the results of this study may best be explained in light of the cultural values of individualism--the 'I' identity--and collectivism--the 'we' identity.

Triandis et al. (1986) define individualism as consisting in three primary factors: an emphasis on self reliance; a low concern for in-groups; and, a distance from in-groups. They define collectivism as also consisting in three primary factors: an intense emotional attachment to the in-group; a readiness to cooperate with the in-group members; and, an emphasis on the views, needs, and goals of the in-group rather than of oneself. They further suggest that while individualism is associated with the tendency to be most concerned with the ramifications that one's own behavior will have on one's own needs, interests, and goals (Triandis et al., p. 158), "collectivism is associated with the tendency to be more concerned about the consequences of one's behavior for in-group members and to be more willing to sacrifice personal interests for the attainment of harmony and collective interests" (p. 159).

In light of this, the Japanese team members studied presented values consistent with collectivism, while the American team members studied presented values consistent with individualism. It would seem that these consistencies derive from each team's respective cultural situation, and that the Japanese respondents are predisposed to cooperative endeavor--teamwork--by the nature of the cultural milieu in which they were raised. Indeed, the harmonious influence of Confucianism pervades Japanese society in much the same manner as the individual centered Judeo-Christian influence pervades American society:

Confucians...strongly believe that the dignity, autonomy, and independence of the person need not be based on individualism. To define our personhood or our selfhood through human fellowship (with others) does not undermine our individuality but instead recognizes the self-evident truth that human beings reach their highest potential through communication and communal participation with other human beings. Confucian humanism advocates that the world is redeemable through human effort, and that we can fully realize ourselves (or attain ultimate salvation) by self-cultivation. The Confucian view of personal development can be visualized as an open-ended series of concentric circles, because the Confucian idea of the self is not built on the idea of individuality as the core of the person (unlike the Judeo-Christian sense of the soul or the Hindu sense of *atman*). Rather, in Confucianism, the self is always understood as the center of relationships. This open-ended series of concentric circles points to an ever-extending horizon. A person's growth and development should never be viewed as a lonely struggle, for it involves participation in a large context of human-relatedness (Tu, 1993, p. 205).

Even though this Confucian societal influence could stand alone as an explanation of these particular Japanese respondents' more positive reaction to their practice of teamwork, it is further compounded when one considers that Buddhism, too, has left a deeply engraved imprint on Japanese culture. This Buddhist influence seems more relevant when one considers it in juxtaposition to the Judeo-Christian influence that permeates American society. Whereas the latter emphasizes that personal salvation is the ultimate goal of the individual person, soul, or self, the former emphasizes the opposite: "It is the realization of 'No-Self' that constitutes enlightenment or realization" (Abe, 1993, p. 76). Indeed, as T. O. Ling (1977) notes, an adherence to the basic doctrines of Buddhism might explain the Japanese team members' apparent ability to cooperate unselfishly in that it promotes "an emphasis on a wider community of being where the notion of *anatta* [selflessness] could be strengthened, and where a common life could be enjoyed which reduced the need for personal possessions and hence personal identity to a minimum" (p. 128).

Considering the most limited nature of this case-study, the researcher is satisfied with the performance of Larson and LaFasto's eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness tool, and hopes that it will be further tested in more

comprehensive studies. Such future research and reflection might confirm that the ability of an employee from any given culture to participate in a workplace team reflects the dominance of either collectivistic or individualistic characteristics within that culture.

Recommendations for Future Research

As noted above, no previous studies have been found that deal with the similarities and differences in teamwork effectiveness characteristics that exist between a Japanese team in Japan and an American team in the United States, in light of collectivistic versus individualistic cultural dimensions. However, and as noted, the researcher considers it important that Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness should be employed--in combination with a series of open-ended, short answer questions--to probe further in this direction.

Future research should attempt to describe and catalog exactly which collectivistic factors of Japanese culture--if any--combine to prepare Japanese workers for cooperative employment. Such research should be performed in light of Larson and LaFasto's (1989a) eight dimensions of teamwork effectiveness, and would consider every component of Japanese society, from the home to the temple and from the school to

the workplace: Do Japanese children play in a more cooperative manner than American children? Do Japanese families share their personal secrets, one-with-another, more than their American counterparts? Does Japanese religious worship tend to be a more collectivistic pursuit than American worship? And so on, and so forth. Alternately, future research may also consider if Japanese culture, under the ever increasing influence of an American cultural invasion, is turning away from traditional harmony toward more westernized individualism. Such research might reveal several lessons that American business may learn from the Japanese experience.

Likewise, similar future research should attempt to describe and catalog exactly which individualistic factors of American culture--if any--combine to prevent American workers from functioning comfortably in a cooperative employment environment. Such research should identify those ways in which American workers might be ill prepared to work in teams and might be used to identify alternative workplace strategies.

Future research should employ a number of different elements. First, a larger sample size of both smaller and larger teams will allow for more significant quantitative conclusions and for greater accuracy in generalizing about a

given population. Second, a focus on teams that work in a series of different occupations will allow researchers to investigate if the complexity of a task, the nature of an industry, or the philosophy of an organization influence teamwork effectiveness. Third, other combinations of countries should be compared to investigate the effect economic or cultural factors exert on teamwork effectiveness. Fourth, and perhaps of paramount importance, the length of time an employee serves as either a member of an organization or of any particular team must be further investigated in hope of understanding the role that duration of employment plays in teamwork effectiveness: Is a team that stays together for a long period more effective? How about one that plays together? Should financial or status rewards be paid now to ensure that a team stays together in hope of future success? And so on, and so forth.

Each of these dimensions should be investigated individually and in a series of differing combinations, to both further test and expand upon Larson and LaFasto's teamwork effectiveness measurement instrument, and to increase our understanding as to how teams function and what it is that makes them function optimally.

In short, this case-study has, within its limited confines, served to confirm the validity of Larson and LaFasto's work, while pointing out areas that might--must--be

improved. Teamwork has always played an integral role in western civilization, from the Athenian Polis to the American Super Bowl; but, this study must serve as a red flag, indicating the importance of teamwork in the post modern industrial-commercial workplace and highlighting the importance of future investigation.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Respondents

<u>Gender</u>	<u>JPTM</u>	<u>AMTM</u>
Male	71%	66%
Female	29%	33%
 <u>Academic Level</u>		
1-4 Years of College	29%	44%
College Graduate	71%	44%
Masters' Degree	0%	1%
 <u>Time in Organization</u>		
2 Months	0%	33%
4 Months	0%	44%
7-12 Months	0%	1%
2-4 Years	43%	1%
11-13 Years	29%	0%
14-16 Years	29%	0%
 <u>Time on Team</u>		
2 Months	0%	33%
4 Months	0%	44%
7-12 Months	0%	1%
2-4 Years	57%	1%
11-13 Years	29%	0%
14-16 Years	1%	0%

TABLE 2

Mean Scores

Dimensions of Team Excellence

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. Clear, Elevating Goal			
JPTM	42	3.38	0.88
AMTM	522	3.54	0.58
2. Results-Driven Structure			
JPTM	56	3.29	0.71
AMTM	72	2.72	0.77
3. Competent Team Members			
JPTM	28	3.43	0.63
AMTM	36	3.06	0.89
4. Unified Commitment			
JPTM	21	3.24	0.70
AMTM	27	2.63	0.79
5. Collaborative Climate			
JPTM	28	3.29	0.66
AMTM	36	2.72	0.91
6. Standards of Excellence			
JPTM	21	3.14	0.73
AMTM	27	3.07	0.92
7. External Support and Recognition			
JPTM	50	3.16	0.72
AMTM	63	2.25	1.06
8. Principled Leadership			
JPTM	91	3.43	0.56
AMTM	117	2.81	0.77

TABLE 3

Mean Scores

Dimension 1: Clear, Elevating Goal

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 1.			
JPTM	7	3.71	0.76
AMTM	9	3.56	0.53
Question 2a.			
JPTM	7	3.71	0.49
AMTM	9	3.56	0.53
Question 2b.			
JPTM	7	3.00	0.58
AMTM	9	3.56	0.73
Question 2c.			
JPTM	7	2.86	1.07
AMTM	9	3.56	0.73
Question 3.			
JPTM	7	3.71	0.76
AMTM	9	3.78	0.44
Question 4.			
JPTM	7	3.29	1.25
AMTM	9	2.89	0.60

TABLE 4

Mean Scores

Dimension 2: Results-Driven Structure

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 5.			
JPTM	7	3.00	0.00
AMTM	9	3.00	0.50
Question 6.			
JPTM	7	3.57	0.53
AMTM	9	3.22	0.97
Question 7a.			
JPTM	7	3.71	0.49
AMTM	9	2.33	0.50
Question 7b.			
JPTM	7	3.43	0.53
AMTM	9	2.44	0.53
Question 7c.			
JPTM	7	3.14	1.07
AMTM	9	2.44	0.73
Question 7d.			
JPTM	7	2.71	0.49
AMTM	9	2.56	0.53
Question 8.			
JPTM	7	2.71	0.76
AMTM	9	2.33	1.00
Question 9.			
JPTM	7	4.00	0.00
AMTM	9	3.44	0.53

TABLE 5

Mean Scores

Dimension 3: Competent Team Members

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 10.			
JPTM	7	3.57	0.53
AMTM	9	3.33	1.00
Question 11.			
JPTM	7	3.29	0.76
AMTM	9	3.00	0.87
Question 12.			
JPTM	7	3.57	0.53
AMTM	9	2.78	0.83
Question 13.			
JPTM	7	3.29	0.76
AMTM	9	3.11	0.93

TABLE 6

Mean Scores

Dimension 4: Unified Commitment

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 14.			
JPTM	7	2.71	0.76
AMTM	9	2.44	0.73
Question 15.			
JPTM	7	3.43	0.53
AMTM	9	3.00	0.87
Question 16.			
JPTM	7	3.57	0.53
AMTM	9	2.44	0.73

TABLE 7

Mean Scores

Dimension 5: Collaborative Climate

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 17.			
JPTM	7	3.43	0.53
AMTM	9	2.22	0.67
Question 18.			
JPTM	7	3.29	0.76
AMTM	9	2.67	0.87
Question 19.			
JPTM	7	3.43	0.53
AMTM	9	3.00	1.00
Question 20.			
JPTM	7	3.00	0.82
AMTM	9	3.00	1.00

TABLE 8

Mean Scores

Dimension 6: Standards of Excellence

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 21.			
JPTM	7	3.29	0.49
AMTM	9	3.33	1.12
Question 22.			
JPTM	7	3.14	0.69
AMTM	9	3.11	1.05
Question 23.			
JPTM	7	3.00	1.00
AMTM	9	2.78	0.44

TABLE 9

Mean Scores

Dimension 7: External Support and Recognition

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>SD</u>
Question 24.			
JPTM	7	3.57	0.53
AMTM	9	2.00	1.12
Question 25.			
JPTM	7	2.86	0.69
AMTM	9	2.11	1.17
Question 26.			
JPTM	7	3.29	0.49
AMTM	9	2.22	0.83
Question 27a.			
JPTM	7	2.86	0.69
AMTM	9	2.22	0.97
Question 27b.		3.43	0.53
JPTM	7	2.56	1.01
AMTM	9		
Question 27c.			
JPTM	7	2.43	0.79
AMTM	9	2.22	0.97
Question 27d.			
JPTM	7	3.71	0.49
AMTM	9	2.44	1.51

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEAM ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Team Assessment Questionnaire

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE	
Clear, Elevating Goal				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1. There is a clearly defined need— a goal to be achieved or a purpose to be served —which justifies the existence of our team.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2. The significance of our team goal is appealing:
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a. Our purpose is noble and worthwhile;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	b. Our goal represents an opportunity for an exceptional level of achievement;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	c. Our goal challenges individual limits and abilities.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	3. There are clear consequences connected with our team's success or failure in achieving our goal.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4. Our goal is compelling enough that I can derive a worthwhile sense of identity from it.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE	
Results-Driven Structure				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5. The design of our team is determined by the results we need to achieve rather than by extraneous considerations.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	6. Each member's relationship to the team is defined in terms of role clarity and accountability.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	7. Our communication system has:
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a. information which is easily accessible;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	b. credible sources of information;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	c. opportunities for team members to raise issues not on the formal agenda.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	d. methods for documenting issues raised and decisions made.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	8. We have an established method for monitoring individual performance and providing feedback
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	9. Our decision-making process encourages judgments based on factual and objective data.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE
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Competent Team Members

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	10. Team members possess the essential skills and abilities to accomplish the team's objectives.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	11. Each individual on the team demonstrates a strong desire to contribute to the team's success.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12. Team members are confident in the abilities of each other.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	13. Team members are capable of collaborating effectively with each other.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE
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Unified Commitment

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	14. Achieving our team goal is higher priority than any individual objective.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	15. Team members believe that personal success is achieved through the accomplishment of the team goal.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	16. Team members are willing to devote whatever effort is necessary to achieve team success.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE
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Collaborative Climate

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	17. We trust each other sufficiently to accurately share information, perceptions, and feedback.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18. We help each other by compensating for individual shortcomings.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	19. We can trust each other to act competently and responsibly in performing our individual tasks.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	20. As a team, we embrace a common set of guiding values.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE
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Standards of Excellence

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	21. Our team has high standards of excellence.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	22. We require each other to perform according to our established standards of excellence.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	23. Our team exerts pressure on itself to improve performance.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE
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External Support and Recognition

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	24. Our team is given the resources it needs to get the job done.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	25. Our team is supported by those constituencies capable of contributing to our success.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	26. Our team is sufficiently recognized for its accomplishments.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	27. The reward and incentive structure is:
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a. clearly defined;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	b. viewed as appropriate by team members;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	c. tied to individual performance;
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	d. tied to team performance.

TRUE	MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	FALSE
------	----------------------	----------------------	-------

Principled Leadership

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	28. Our leader articulates our goals in such a way as to inspire commitment.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	29. Our leader avoids compromising the team's objective with political issues.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	30. Our leader exhibits personal commitment to our team's goals.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	31. Our leader does not dilute the team's efforts with too many priorities.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	32. Our leader stands behind our team and supports us.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	33. Our leader is fair and impartial toward all team members.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	34. Our leader exhibits trust by giving team members meaningful levels of responsibility.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	35. Our leader provides our team members with the necessary autonomy to achieve results.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	36. Our leader is willing to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	37. Our leader presents challenging opportunities which stretch out individual abilities.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	38. Our leader recognizes and rewards superior performance.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	39. Our leader is open to new ideas and information from team members.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	40. Our leader is influential in getting outside constituencies—industry, board, media, the next level of management—to support our team's effort.

APPENDIX B

OPEN-ENDED SUEVEY QUESTIONNAIRE AND
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Your honest responses to these questions will be extremely helpful. To ensure confidentiality, your responses will be summarized along with the responses of others to ensure confidentiality.

1. Please list the most important reasons why you enjoy OR why you do not enjoy being a member of this team.

**2. When your team discusses important issues, what are you more concerned with:
A. putting aside your personal interests and ideas to those of the group? or
B. putting aside the interests and ideas of the group to those of your own?
Which would you choose and please explain why.**

Demographic Information

Please respond to the following demographic questions.

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

What is your ethnic background? _____

What is your native language? _____

What is your place of birth? _____

How long have you been with this organization? _____ Year(s) _____ Month(s)

How long have you been a member of this team? _____ Year(s) _____ Month(s)

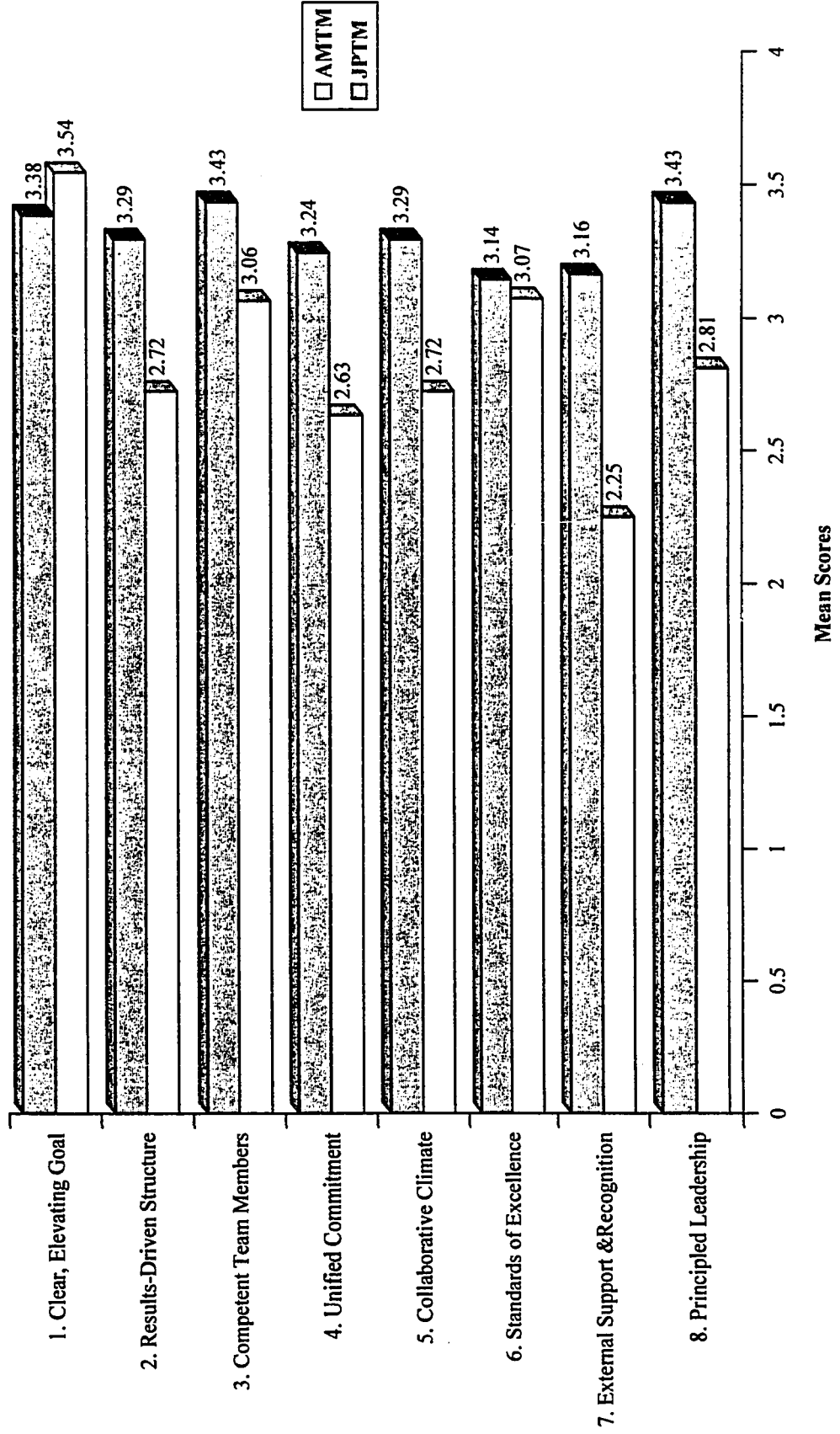
What is your education level?

- _____ 1 -2 years of college
- _____ 3 - 4 years of college
- _____ College Graduate
- _____ Masters' Degree
- _____ Other

APPENDIX C

DIMENSIONS OF TEAM EXCELLENCE

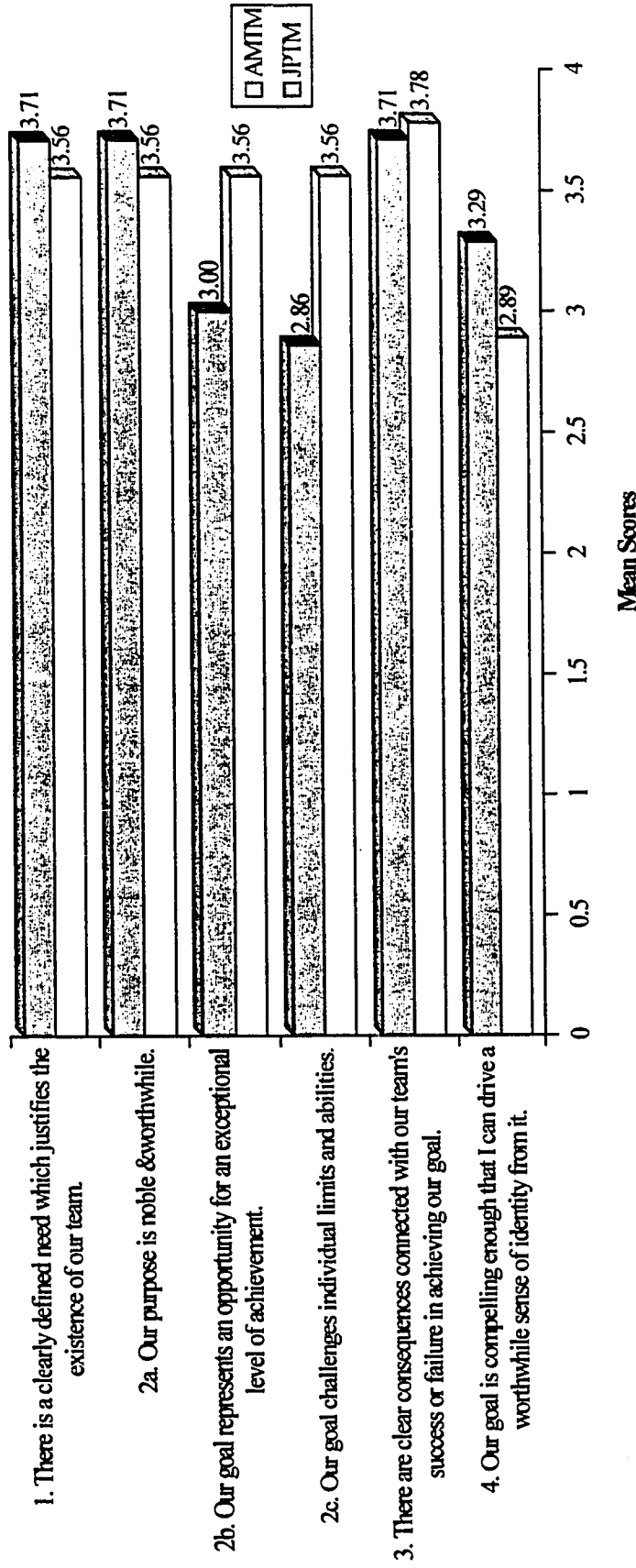
DIMENSIONS OF TEAM EXCELLENCE



APPENDIX D

DIMENSION 1: CLEAR, ELEVATING GOAL

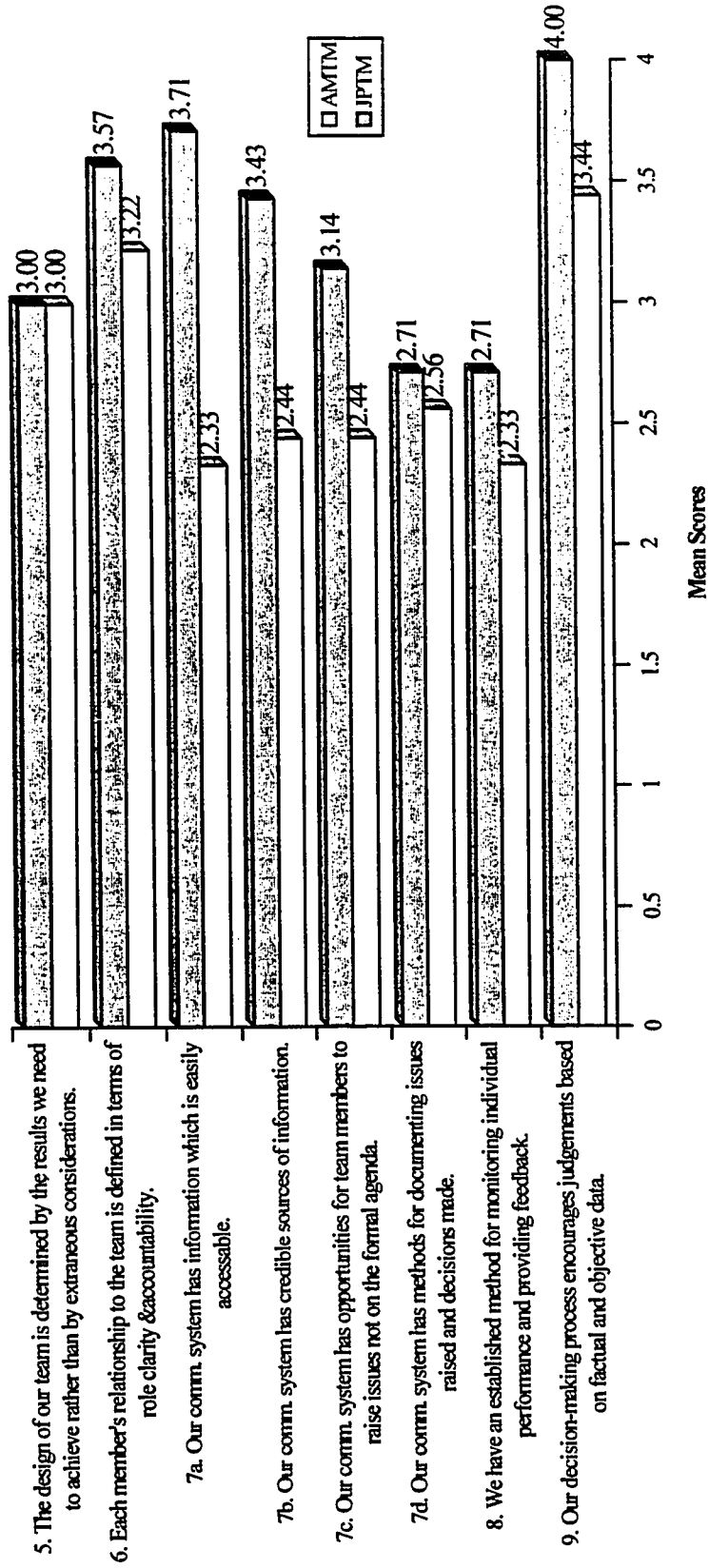
DIMENSION 1: Clear, Elevating Goal



APPENDIX E

DIMENSION 2: RESULTS-DRIVEN STRUCTURE

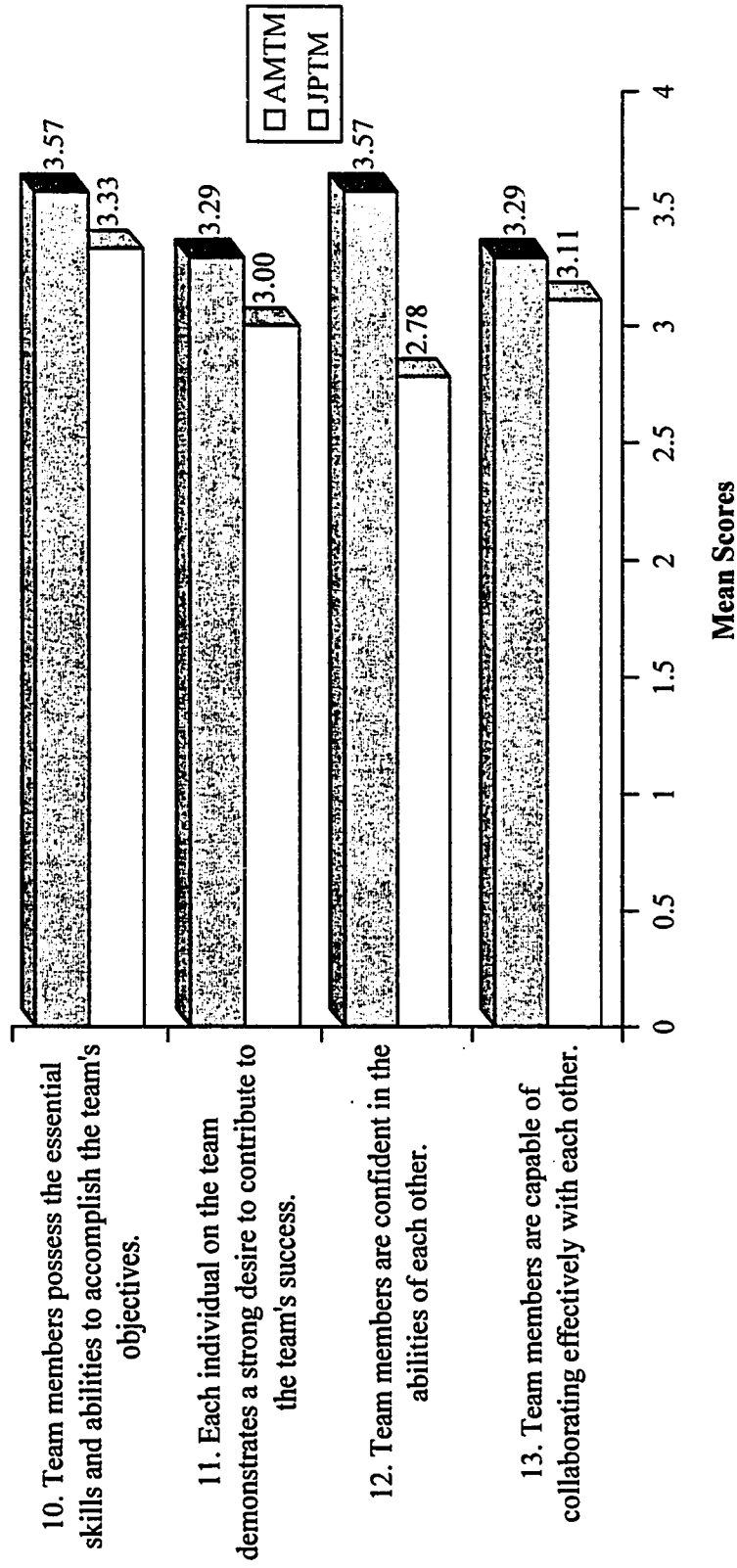
DIMENSION 2: Results-Driven Structure



APPENDIX F

DIMENSION 3: COMPETENT TEAM MEMBERS

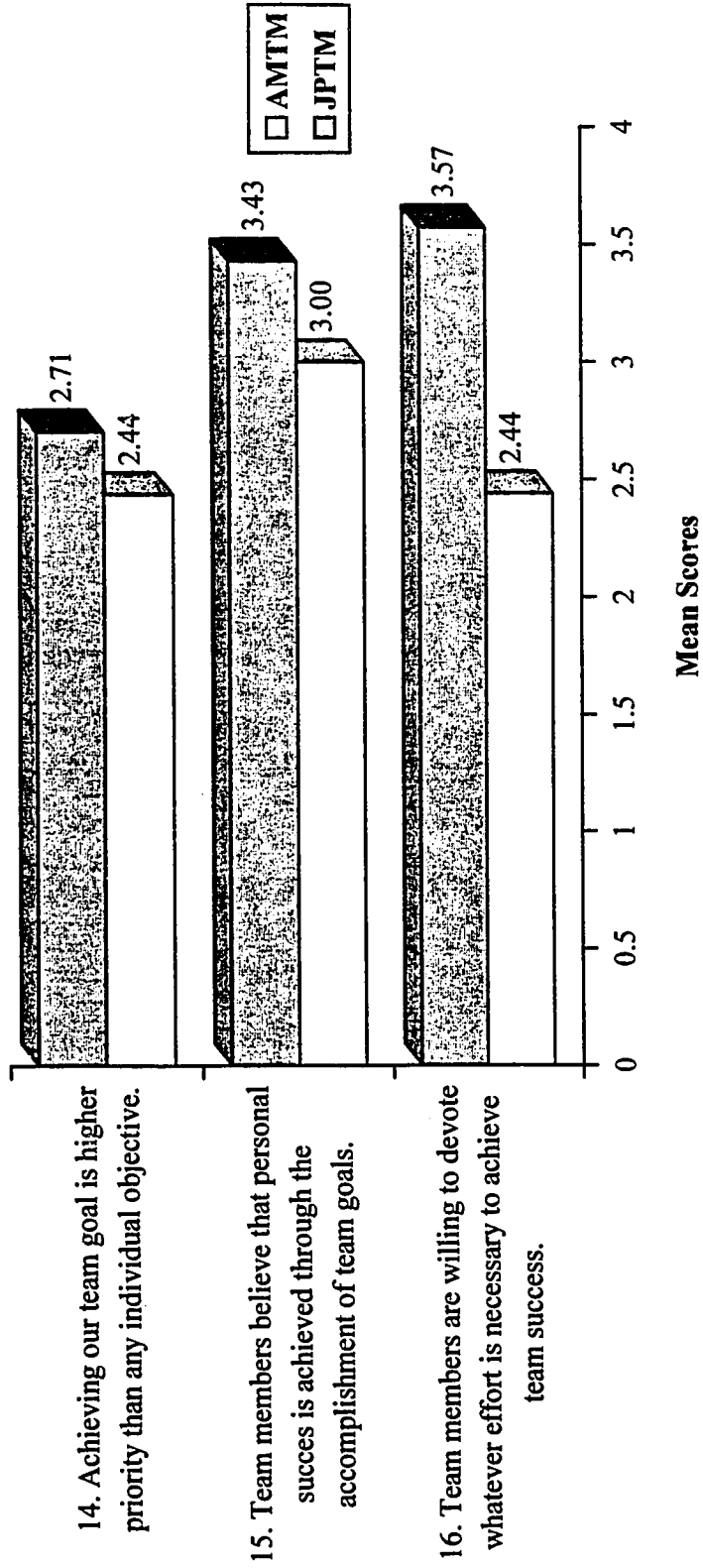
DIMENSION 3: Competent Team Members



APPENDIX G

DIMENSION 4: UNIFIED COMMITMENT

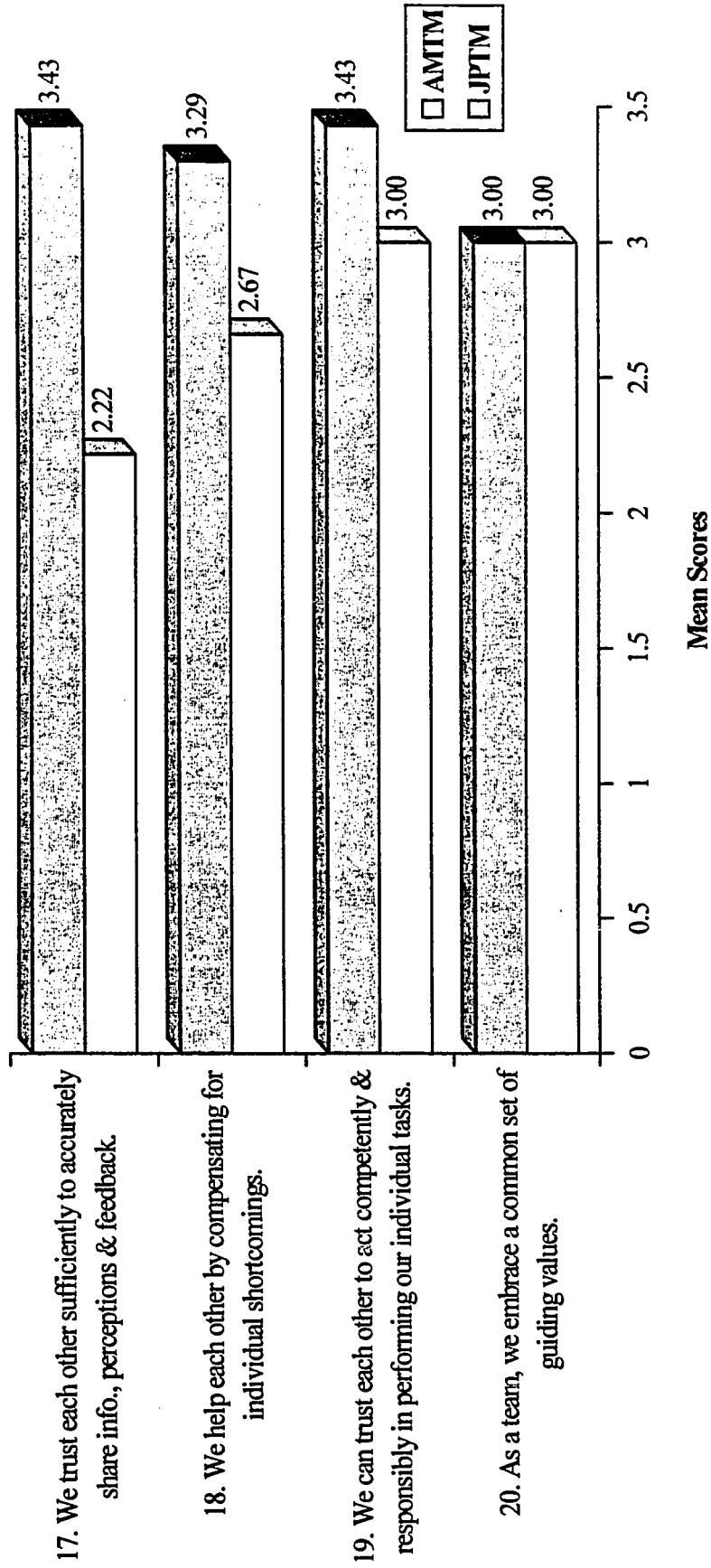
DIMENSION 4: Unified Commitment



APPENDIX H

DIMENSION 5: COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE

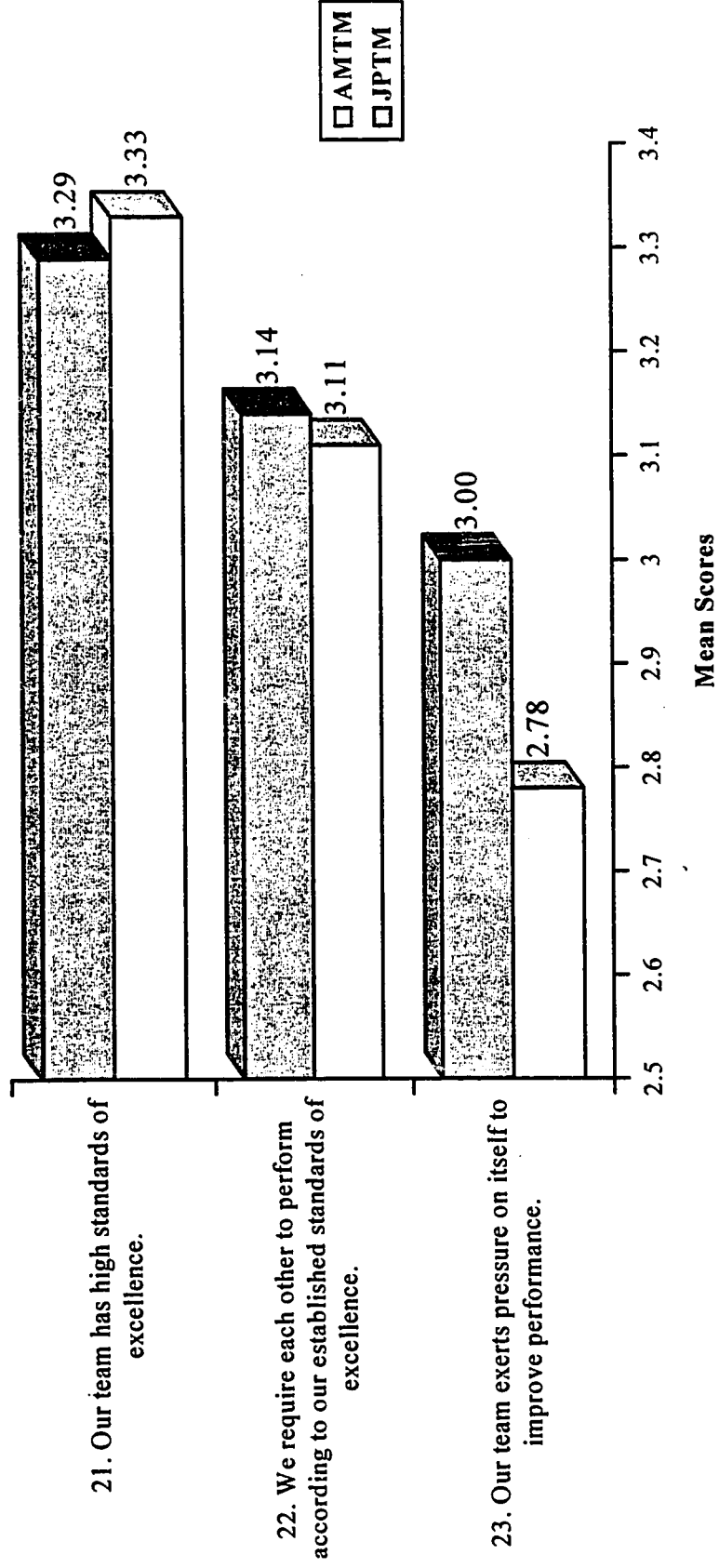
DIMENSION 5: Collaborative Climate



APPENDIX I

DIMENSION 6: STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

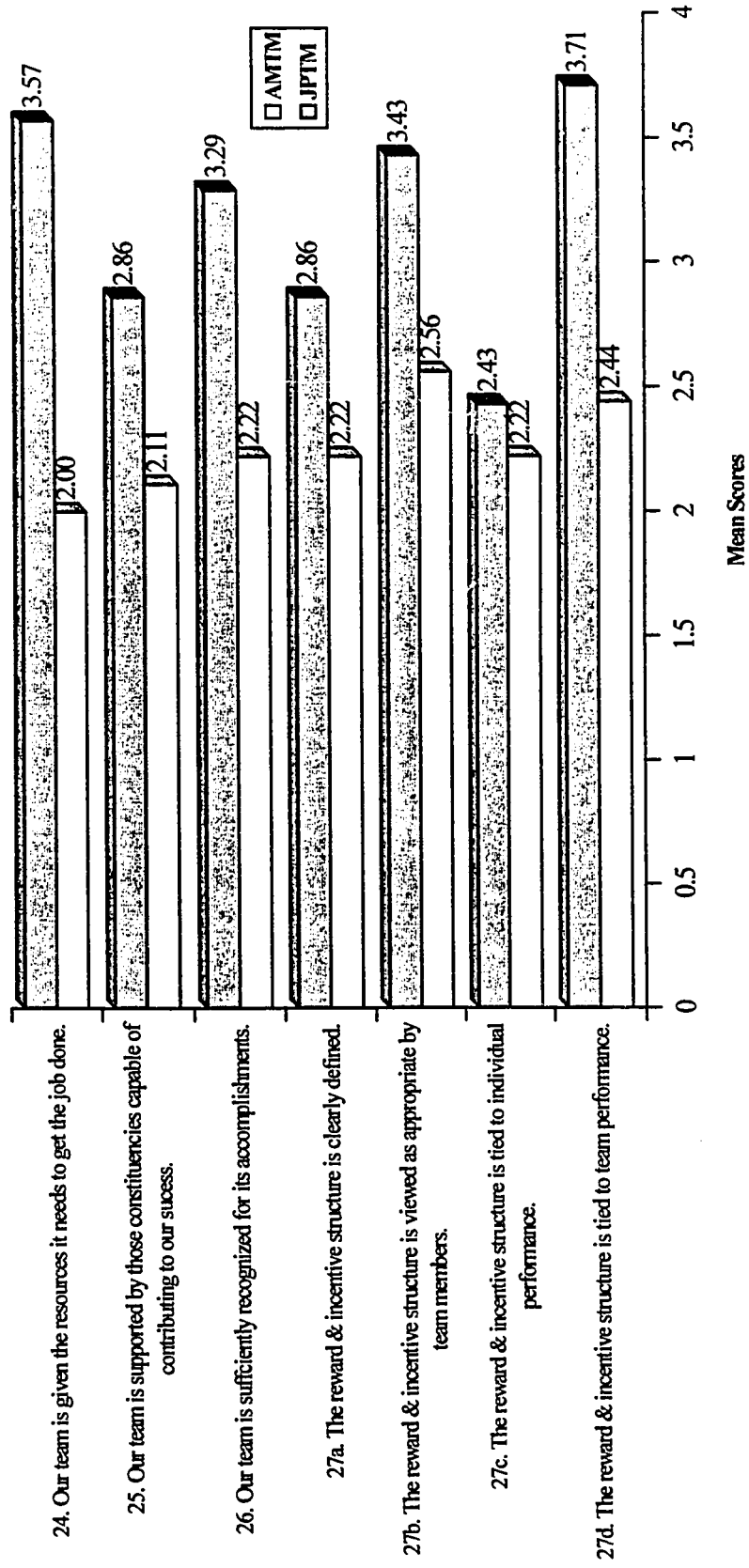
DIMENSION 6: Standards of Excellence



APPENDIX J

DIMENSION 7: EXTERNAL SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

DIMENSION 7: External Support and Recognition



APPENDIX K

DIMENSION 8: PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP

DIMENSION 8: Principled Leadership

