



Survey of Assessment Centre Practices Around the World

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Backdrop

On the one hand...

- It is crucial for companies that are operating in an international context, to increase their knowledge about the AC use in different countries.

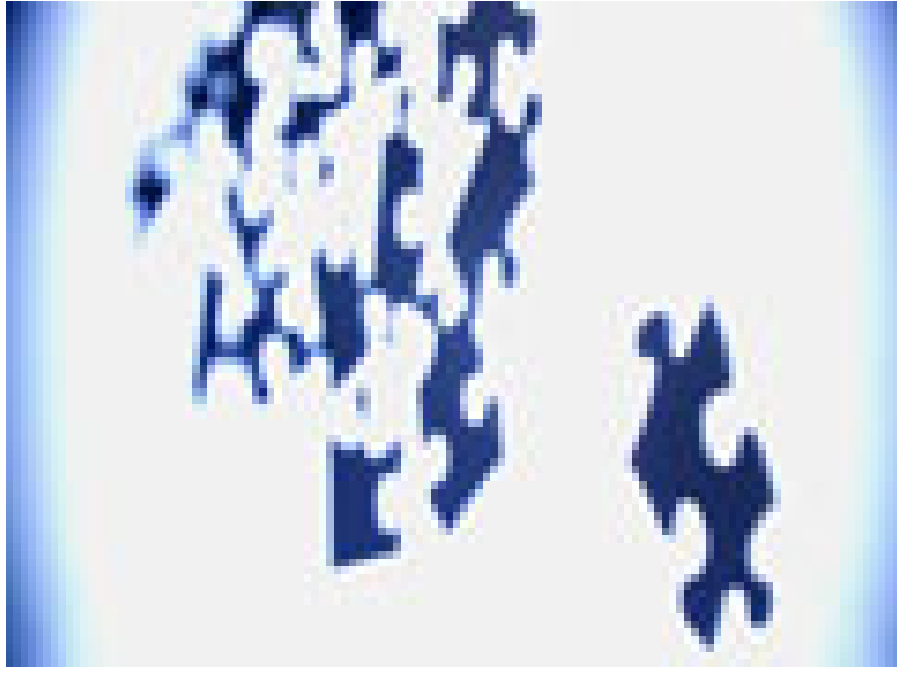
On the other hand...

- So far, there are less empirical studies about current AC practices around the world and cross-cultural differences in the AC use.

Why Is Knowledge About The Cross-Cultural AC Use Important?



- ◆ To be successful in a hypercompetitive environment, an international acting organization has the **balance** the opposed requisitions of **stability and change**.
- ◆ Efforts to balance the conflict between stability and change are reflected in the AC use:
 - Need for a **culture specific AC design**
 - Need for **culture unspecific** standardization of the AC





Previous Surveys on the AC Use



- ◆ Spychalski et al. (1997)
 - Data only for U.S.
- ◆ Data collection in 1990
- ◆ Kudisch et al. (1999)
 - Collapsed results across countries
- ◆ Krause & Gebert (2003)
 - Data only for Germany, Switzerland, and Austria



Purposes of Our Study

*Description
of the AC use*

*Compare practice
with 'Guidelines'*

*Identify cross-
cultural differences*

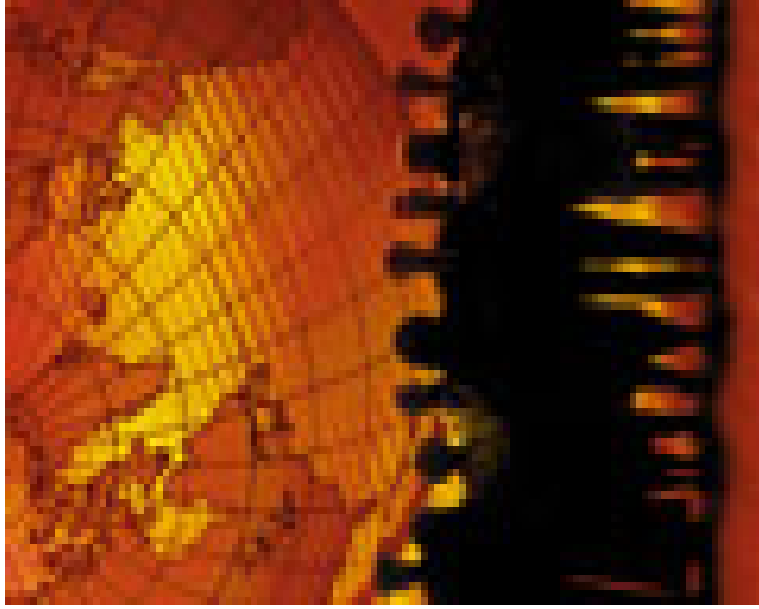
*Explain cross-
cultural differences*

Objectives of the Study



Methodology

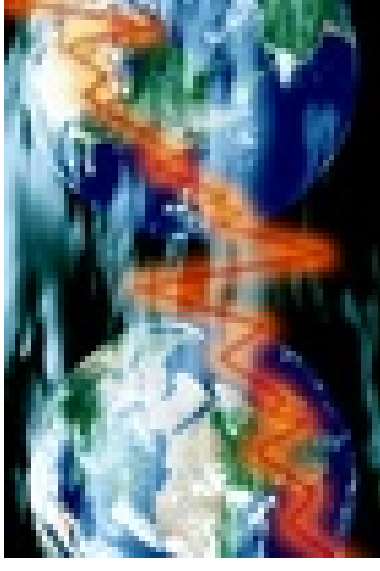
- ◆ Online Survey ($N = 176$ Items) was completed by HR experts of Fortune 500 companies
- ◆ Recruitment Strategies:
 - Letters or email messages were sent
 - ◆ to attendees at previous meetings of the International Congress on Assessment Center Methods
 - ◆ individuals in academia, organizations, and consultancies
 - Copies of the surveys were distributed at SIOP and Academy of Management Meeting.





Methodology

- ◆ Responses were received from $N = 97$ organizations
 - $N = 45$ West Europe (WE)
(United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, France, Netherlands)
 - $N = 52$ North America (NA)
(U.S., Canada)
- ◆ Data came from a variety of organizational sizes and sectors of the economy
- ◆ Duration of AC use comparable (West Europe: since 1979, North America: since 1978)





Results: AC Design

◆ Guidelines considered? ◆ Systematically revisions?

West Europe ($N = 45$): 89%

North America ($N = 52$): 93%

West Europe ($N = 45$):

Every 2-3 years: 57%

North America ($N = 52$):

Every 2-3 years: 30%

◆ Job analysis conducted?

West Europe ($N = 45$): 89%

North America ($N = 52$): 95%

◆ Fit with the procedures of the given company?

- Use of standard AC developed elsewhere: 5% WE/18%NA
- Adaptation of a standard AC to this division: 23%WE/ 26% NA
- Development entirely according to this division's own needs: 72% WE/ 56% NA

◆ Duration of AC

West Europe ($N = 45$):

1-2 days: 87%

North America ($N = 52$):

0.5-1 day: 63%



Results: Job Analysis Techniques

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Job description**	41%	76%
Interview with job incumbents	39%	56%
Interview with supervisor	59%	54%
Questionnaire to job incumbents**	14%	41%
Observation of job incumbents**	7%	31%
Critical incident technique	36%	27%
Questionnaire to supervisor	16%	29%
New competency model*	43%	20%
Existing competency model*	39%	20%
Workshop or teamwork*	36%	15%

* $p < .05$, ** $p < 01$.



Results: Dimensions

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Communication	98%	90%
Problem solving	84%	90%
Organizing and planning	73%	83%
Influencing others	75%	61%
Consideration/Awareness of others**	80%	49%
Drive**	70%	37%

** $p < 01$.



Results: Exercises

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Role-playing	88%	78%
Presentation***	92%	58%
In-basket	35%	55%
Planning exercises	40%	48%
Situational interview	48%	48%
Group discussion***	90%	45%
Case study***	78%	38%
Background interview	48%	40%
Fact-finding	20%	33%



*** $p < 001$.



Results: Exercises

- ◆ Organizations in NA use less exercises (76 % use 3-5 exercises) than organizations in WE
- ◆ Group discussions...
 - Conducted with a designated leader? 5% WE, 12%NA
 - Content of discussion:real life problem? 61% WE, 59% NA
 - Conducted with assigned roles? 36% WE, 14% NA
- ◆ Exercises are...
 - All separate and distinct: 46% WE, 21% NA
 - Related: 38% WE, 62% NA
 - All integrated: 16% WE, 17% NA



Results: Other Diagnostic Methods

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Knowledge tests	15%	30%
Skill/ability tests	20%	30%
Personality tests	25%	20%
Biographical questionnaire	23%	10%
Work sample tests	10%	15%
Intelligence test (GMA)	20%	10%
Graphology	3%	0%



Results: New Technology

- ◆ Can some exercises be completed on the web? 7% WE, 8%, NA
- ◆ Computers used? 58% WE, 56% NA
- ◆ If computers are used, how are they used?
 - Writing reports: 46% WE, 31% NA
 - Presentation of exercises: 22% WE, 31% NA
 - Scoring of dimension: 38% WE, 18% NA
 - Classification of behavior: 11% WE, 10% NA
 - Behavioral checklists: 14% WE, 8% NA



Results: Assessor Characteristics

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Line managers***	93%	44%
Internal Human Resource experts***	75%	37%
External Human Resource experts	20%	34%
External psychologists	32%	15%
Internal psychologists**	43%	12%
A participant's direct supervisor	7%	10%
Works council	5%	2%

** $p < 01$, *** $p < 001$.





Results: Criteria Considered in Selecting the Observer Pool

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Organizational level***	89%	54%
Functional work area*	80%	54%
Sex	20%	29%
Race***	--	27%
Ethnicity**	--	17%
Educational level	18%	24%
Age	11%	7%

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



Results: Methods of Observer Training

Practice in West Europe (N = 45) Practice in North America (N = 52)

Lectures	88%	60%
Discussion	83%	85%
Video demonstration/Camera	31%	28%
Observe other assessor	38%	25%
Observation of practice candidates	28%	58%

- ◆ Duration of training sessions: 0,5 to 1 day in WE (77%) and NA (64%)
- ◆ Evaluation of the qualities of observational and rating skills of each observer after the training? 33% WE, 57% NA
- ◆ Certification after completing observer training? 15% WE, 14% NA



Results: Types of Information Provided to Participants

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
About objective of the AC	88%	73%
How the results will be used*	78%	53%
About the kind of exercises	50%	65%
The storage and use of data***	55%	18%
About the staff/observers	63%	48%
How individuals are selected**	55%	25%
What recommendations will be made*	43%	23%
How feedback will be given*	80%	55%
The possibility of reassessment*	25%	10%

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



Results: Data Integration Process



Practice in West Europe ($N = 45$) Practice in North America ($N = 52$)

Assessor discussion to consensus	38%	42%
Combination of discussion and statistical aggregation	56%	47%
Statistical aggregation	5%	8%
Voting	--	3%



Results: Feedback

- ◆ Most common: oral *and* written feedback (64% WE, 46% NA)
- ◆ When do participants receive feedback?
 - Directly upon completion in WE 54%
 - More than one week after the AC in NA 58%
- ◆ Who gives feedback?
 - Observer 70% in WE
 - Employee of the personnel department (33%)
or external expert (30%) in NA
- ◆ What information includes feedback?
 - Behaviors observed on each dimension in each exercise: 63% WE, 60% NA
 - Overall dimension ratings across the exercises: 65% WE, 53% NA
 - A final overall assessment rating across all dimensions*: 73% WE, 50% NA
 - Ratings on each dimension in each exercise: 43% WE, 40% NA





Results: Evaluation of Participants Reaction

	Practice in West Europe (N = 45)	Practice in North America (N = 52)
Fairness*	51%	28%
Usefulness of the AC**	49%	21%
Acceptance of the AC***	64%	18%
Feelings during the AC procedure**	54%	18%
Communication of the results**	41%	13%
Accuracy of the feedback*	33%	13%
Transparency of the AC procedure***	56%	10%
Stress perception during the AC***	51%	5%
Transparency of the appraisal process***	38%	5%
Acceptance of the feedback**	41%	8%
Acceptance of the company*	13%	0%

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



Results: Evaluation of the AC

Practice in West Europe (N = 45) Practice in North America (N = 52)

Evaluation of...
Objectivity
Reliability
Criterion validity
 Predictive
 Concurrent
Content validity
Construct validity

32%
36%
43%
32%
63%
40%

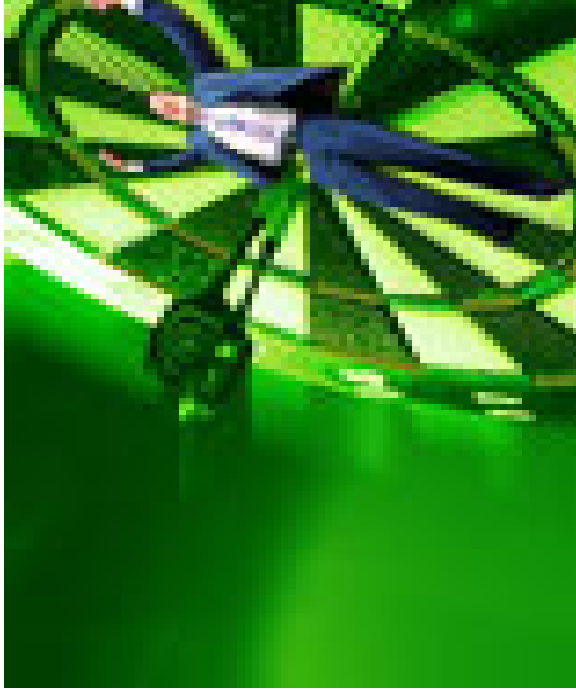
52%
71%
32%
21%
79%
40%





Study Limitations

- Limited sample size
- No purely random samples
- Only one respondent for most of the organizations



Thanks!