



Time spent by health managers in two cultures on work pursuits: real time, ideal time and activities' importance



A working paper

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Time spent by health managers in two cultures on work pursuits: real time, ideal time and activities' importance

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Australian (n=251) and Singaporean (n=340) health managers completed a questionnaire investigating the: 1) time they spent on nine work pursuits, 2) time they thought should be spent and 3) importance they attributed to each activity. We predicted that there would be significant relationships between these three variables, particularly between 2 and 3, and that the relationships would be stronger in Singapore, a nation with strong collectivist values than in Australia, a more individualistic nation. Neither group allocated time as they thought they should. In Singapore time spent on activities and their perceived importance were significantly associated ($R=0.75$) but not in Australia ($R=0.52$). Both Singaporeans ($R=0.95$) and Australians ($R=0.88$) agreed that pursuits to which more time should be allocated were more important. There was evidence of the globalisation of health managers' work practices. Text responses explaining why they devoted more time to certain activities were similar for both groups of managers. Significant relationships were observed between the relative amount of time spent on activities by Australian and Singaporean managers, the time allocation they considered desirable, and their rated importance of managerial pursuits. Thus work practices and values of the two groups were similar.

Key words: health managers; attitudes; managerial activities, time; cross-cultural research

INTRODUCTION

Managers and time use

Time is the only economic resource common to all managers (for a copy of the IMAQ, see Oshagbemi, 1995) and the most important resource at managers' disposal (Mankins, 2004). "Remember that time is money" runs the famous aphorism of Benjamin Franklin (Franklin, 1748). Temporality is central to how much work managers accomplish for a given investment in effort, and which activities are focused on and prioritised. The present research examines the relationships between three dimensions of managerial practices and values linked to the allocation of working time.

The real-time dimension of managerial work used in this study refers to the time managers spend on various work pursuits. Although most research examining managers' use of time concerns real-time use, such research remains relatively scarce (Hales, 1986; Stewart, 1998). Carlson (1951), Mintzberg (1971), Kotter (1982) and Stewart (1967) were early investigators, conducting in-depth analysis of a small number of managers. Oshagbemi (1995) reviewed empirical work on managers' use of time. The archetypal methods of enquiry into managerial time use and task accomplishments include direct data collection, e.g. through diaries, structured observation or activity sampling, and indirect collection, chiefly through some form of questionnaires or interviews which seek estimates. Direct methods yield more reliable and valid data but are typically more time-consuming. They lend themselves to the categorisation of more mundane activities including time spent in different locations inside and outside the organisation; at the desk; on the phone; at meetings, both scheduled and unscheduled, with varying numbers of participants, and so on. To get at more complex managerial pursuits and behaviours we usually need a way to estimate real-time allocations. Here indirect methods are more useful despite their disadvantages because they establish cognitive assessments of tasks as opposed to mundane

physical activities. By this, we do not mean the theorised, abstract, higher level functional elements of managerial work such as the planning, organising, leading, coordinating and controlling functions propounded by classical management theorists (eg, Barnard, 1938; Fayol, 1949) but actual contemporary tasks that managers experience, and that are amenable to empirical examination.

Braithwaite and colleagues (Braithwaite, 2004; Braithwaite *et al.*, 2004) used content analysis of discussions in health managers' focus groups and ethnographic observations of their work activities to develop an empirically derived model of managerial work. This contains nine key managerial tasks or pursuits (see table 1). The model provides a ready schema for interrogating managerial perspectives on time use against specified activity constructs and was applied to managers' time use, both real and ideal, in the present study. Due to the difficulties of eliciting precise estimates of exact time spent on complex managerial tasks managers are asked to make global judgements on 5-point scales of magnitude of time spent. From these the relative amounts of managers' time devoted to various managerial pursuits can be estimated.

(Insert table 1 about here)

The ideal-time dimension of managerial work assessed in this research recognises that while managers allocate their time in practice to various pursuits, they have views on how they should, under ideal conditions, use their time. On examination managerial work is found to be characterised not by the orderly carrying out of predefined and prescribed functions but by discontinuity, interruption and often knee-jerk reaction to presenting issues and problems. The nature of managerial work is such that it is *ad hoc* and fragmented, and conducted at an unrelenting pace. Much of the manager's day does not proceed as planned. Thus a distinction

needs to be made between the time managers devote to various pursuits and the time managers consider they ought to spend on such activities. Little is known empirically about the distinctions managers make between the real-time work they spend on their pursuits and their estimates of the time they consider or believe they should spend. This dimension of ideal-time imports a normative, prescriptive aspect to managers' time estimates, and in effect introduces the possibility that managers may be able to make fine-grained distinctions between how much time they spend on work activities in reality and how much time they ideally believe they should spend on their work activities; a construct which we call the real-time/ideal-time distinction.

The importance dimension of managerial pursuits that we examine refers to the value managers ascribe to their various work activities. This sets up the notion that the importance managers attach to activities, like their ideal-time estimates, may not correspond with the actual time they spend on them. This is contrary to Oshagbemi's (1995) assertion that "managerial allocation of time among several activities can therefore be used to gauge the relative importance attached to these activities" (p. 19). Furthermore the normative values or pressures expressed in the ideal-time values may not correspond with managers' judgements of the importance of their various pursuits. For example, a manager may work in practice in a particular pattern, allocating time to various pursuits (real-time), think that time should be spent more appropriately (ideal-time) and believe that there are important issues or tasks that are not being tackled (pursuit-importance). We would expect a significant relationship between the last two sets of ratings viz. that managers think the activities they ought to devote their time to are those that they believe are most important. However for some managers there could be a discrepancy between, or lack of identification with, the social and organisational norms and values which influence their estimates of the time they feel they ought to spend on activities and their own personal values about the importance of these various activities.

A cross-cultural perspective

Most research into managerial use of time has been conducted in the United Kingdom and the United States. Oshagbemi (1995) argued that the globalisation of management practices suggests we should make observations of managers' time-use cross-culturally in order to benchmark cultural variation, and expose within-culture characteristics. Research into cultural differences in managerial leadership styles has been more widespread, particularly comparisons of Anglo and Asian nations. Dorfman and House (2004) discussed the cultural convergence hypothesis, arguing that "there is a substantial convergence of managerial practices, values and beliefs. This occurs as a result of interactions among organisations engaged in cross-border training, and widespread proliferation of management education programs that reflect western assumptions, values and practices" (p. 54). After comparing cross-cultural studies of organisational leadership they concluded that while there has been much convergence, "there is also a great deal of stability with respect to more fundamental aspects of both cultural practices and psychological commonalities within cultural entities" (p. 54). In the current study we examined the degree of cultural similarity in managerial time practices and judgements by comparing health managers in Australia and Singapore, nations which belong to different cultural groups.

Comparative information about these nations is available from the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project (House *et al.*, 2004) which sampled mid-level managers in 62 countries, securing their views on their practices (the way things are done) and values (the way things should be done). This translated into nine cultural dimensions, following Hofstede (1980; 2001), Triandis (1995) and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961): uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation and humane orientation.

The GLOBE findings identified ten cultural clusters of countries characterised by their similar practices and values. Australia belongs to the Anglo and Singapore the Confucian-Asian cluster. In terms of their practices these two clusters differ most in their in-group collectivism and organisational collectivism. Scores on these dimensions are higher in Confucian-Asian countries. In-group collectivism is “The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organisations or families” and institutional collectivism is “The degree to which organisational and institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action” (Javidan *et al.*, 2004, p. 30). GLOBE researchers also examined the characteristics admired in leaders. Participative and charismatic leadership are particularly endorsed in Anglo, and self-protective leadership in Confucian-Asian, countries. Charismatic leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate others and expect high performance outcomes. Participative leaders involve others in making and implementing decisions. Self-protective leaders try to ensure their own and the group’s safety and security through status-enhancing and face-saving behaviour.

Other research comparing Australian and Singaporean managers includes Harrison’s (1995) comparison of their job satisfaction and stress. On the basis of their scores on Hofstede’s (1980) dimensions of individualism/collectivism (Australians were more individualistic) and power distance (Singaporeans had higher scores) Harrison predicted and found that Singaporean managers reported less job satisfaction and more work stress than did Australians. He described Australians as having a more calculative than moral involvement with their organisations, believing they have a greater right to their private life and opinions. Pheng and Leong (2001) studied the management of a typical Singaporean, family-based construction firm and found its practices were not very different from those described in contemporary western management theories. Smith, Dugan and Trompenaars (1996) conducted a survey of the values of employees

in 43 countries. On the dimension of utilitarian involvement versus loyal involvement Singaporeans had the highest scores on loyal involvements while Australians' scores were at the middle of the dimension. The authors noted that while Singapore scored highly on collectivist values it also scored highly on several indexes of modernity.

Research aims and hypotheses

The primary research aim was to examine the degree of congruence or relationships between the three dimensions. We examined the relative amount of time health managers considered they devoted to each of nine managerial pursuits (their practices; the real-time dimension), the relative amount of time they believed ideally they ought to spend on each of these activities (their normative values; the ideal-time dimension) and the relative importance they attributed to each of the activities (includes more personal values; the pursuit-importance dimension). We predicted: Hypothesis 1 (H1) that there would be significant relationships between managers' ratings on the three dimensions but that the relationship would be greatest between ideal-time allocation and pursuit-importance. The secondary research aim was to make cross-cultural comparisons between an Anglo and a Confucian-Asian country. We predicted that: (H2) the relationships between the three dimensions would be stronger or more congruent in Singapore (which has more collectivist norms) than in Australia (which has more individualistic norms). Such cultural differences in values suggested: (H3a) there would be national differences in the relative importance attached to the nine work activities, on each of the three dimensions eg the managerial pursuits to which more time was devoted would differ in the two countries. On the other hand evidence of the cultural convergence of, or globalisation of western, management practices suggested: (H3b) there would be no significant differences between the relative rankings given by Singaporean and Australian managers to the nine work activities on the three dimensions. Observed cultural differences also suggested: (H4a) that Singaporean and Australian managers and would differ in

the reasons they gave for devoting more time to some activities than others while globalisation of management practices led to the alternative prediction: (H4b) there would be no significant difference in the reasons given by Australian and Singaporean managers for devoting more time to some activities than others.

METHOD

Samples

We enrolled 591 health managers (251 Australians and 340 Singaporeans) from a wide range of healthcare facilities. Comparisons of the two convenience samples revealed no significant differences between the professions of the national groups' members (doctors (10%), nurses (43%), allied health (17%) and other (30%)), their ages (mean=41.6 years, SD=8.4 years) or gender (34.5% males and 65.5% females). More Singaporeans had a qualification in management (62%) than did Australians (53%; $\chi^2=4.71$, df 1, $p<0.02$). Managers in both countries appear to work similar and comparatively long hours each week. While the International Labor Organization database (International Labor Organization, 2007) suggests that Singaporeans may work longer average hours per week than the average of those working in OEDC countries, recent analyses of 17 developed countries (which excluded Singapore) found that Australians worked more hours than their international counterparts (Tiffen and Gittins, 2004).

Questionnaire

The *Influences on Managerial Activities Questionnaire (IMAQ)* was developed from the nine pursuits model (Braithwaite, 2004) described above (for a copy of the IMAQ, see Braithwaite *et al.*, 2007). Participants were informed that the *IMAQ* "seeks to ascertain your views on your managerial activities." Question 1 asked them to check on nine Likert scales, ranging from 1 (Not much time) to

5 (Lots of time), “How much time do you spend on each of these management activities?” A table below each question, similar to table 1, gave fuller descriptions of these pursuits. Question 2 asked respondents to indicate “The amount of time you believe you should spend on each of these management activities” on the same scales as for question 1. Question 3 asked them to make judgements as to “The relative importance of each of these activities” on scales ranging from 1 (Not very important) to 5 (Extremely important). An open-ended question asked for a text response to the question “Why do you spend relatively more time on some management activities than others?” Demographic information was collected. The questionnaire contained additional items not covered in this article.

Procedure

Health professionals enrolled in the first-named author’s masters in health management courses in Singapore and Australia administered *IMAQs* to health managers as part of their course project requirements. Questionnaires were collated, forming the samples here.

The text responses were content analysed using grounded theory by two of the authors following procedures suggested originally by Glaser and Strauss (1968). Answers were independently coded. When coders disagreed, discussion took place to ensure appropriate classification. Coding categories for respondents’ reasons for devoting more time to some activities were: the respondent’s job requirements, the importance of the activity, the urgency of the task, external pressure applied, the time consuming nature of the activity, and a personal preference for doing these activities.

A possible problem that can affect the use questionnaires in cross-cultural research is an agreement bias when responding to Likert scales. Some cultural groups tend to give higher or lower responses or they may do so for particular topic areas (Smith, 2004). We used rank or relative scores to control

for such potential acquiescence bias problems. We also calculated t-tests for independent means comparing the national samples to examine if, and in which dimensional domains, there was evidence for such bias.

The mean responses of the two national groups to each of questions 1-3 were ranked from 1 (highest mean) to 9 (lowest mean) and rank order correlations were calculated, for each national group separately, to compare the relationships between their responses. Rank order correlations were calculated to compare Australian and Singaporean managers' responses to questions 1, for question 2 and for question 3. To compare national differences in responses to the text question a chi square analysis was performed. Significance level was set at 0.05. Some respondents did not answer the text question.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows the Australian and the Singaporean managers' ranked mean responses to the questions regarding time spent on, time that should be spent on, and the importance of various managerial activities. It also lists the results of the rank order correlations between these three dimensions for each country. In neither nation was there a statistically significant relationship between the rankings of the time managers spent on activities and the time they thought should be spent on these pursuits, though the relationship was closer in Singapore ($R=0.60$) than Australia ($R=0.47$). Among Singaporeans there was a significant correlation between rankings of the time managers spent on pursuits and their perceived importance ($R=0.75$) but these two variables were not significantly associated in Australia ($R=0.52$). For both cultural groups there was a highly significant relationship between the rankings of time that managers thought should be spent on pursuits and their perceived importance. Again the relationship was closer in Singapore ($R=0.95$) than in Australia ($R=0.88$).

(Insert table 2 about here)

Thus there was partial support for H1; only one of the three dimensional comparisons showed a significant relationship in Australia while two did so in Singapore. As expected the most significant relationship in each nation was between time that should be allocated and pursuit-importance. H2 was supported in that there were closer relationships between the rankings of the dimensions in Singapore than Australia.

(Insert figure 1 about here)

Figure 1 illustrates graphically which work pursuits contributed to the association, or lack thereof, between the three dimensions. Some of the nine managerial pursuits received similar rankings on the three dimensions while for others there was slippage which lowered correlation between specific dimensions. Figure 1 shows that in Singapore the largest discrepancy between judgments of time spent and time that should be allocated, related to planning which rose from rank 6 for real-time to 1 for ideal-time. In the Australian data there were three large discrepancies. Australians thought less time should be spent on organisational pursuits than was in fact devoted to them, but more time should be spent on planning and quality management. In both countries real-time spent on process and on data management was higher than managers thought it should be.

Among Australians the greatest ranking discrepancies between real-time allocation and activities' importance were for general organisational management (ranked higher on real-time) and quality activities (ranked higher on importance). The greatest discrepancy for Singaporeans was for planning which was ranked lower for real-time than for importance. Figure 1 shows that for no

activities was there a discrepancy of more than one rank between Singaporeans' rankings of how time should be allocated to activities and the importance of these activities. Australians considered people and financial management more important, and financial management less important, than the time they thought they ought to spend on them.

To determine which of the alternative hypotheses, H3a or H3b, was supported, rank order correlations were calculated between the rankings of Australians and Singaporean managers of 1) time spent 2) time they thought should be spent and 3) pursuit importance. There was a highly significant relationship between the relative amounts of time devoted to the nine managerial tasks in the two countries ($R=0.85$, $p<0.01$). Both groups said they spent most time on people related activities and least on data, financial pursuits and external relations (see table 2). The largest national discrepancy was between time devoted to general organisational pursuits (rank 2 in Australia and 5 in Singapore).

The rank order correlation between the national groups' ratings of how much time managers thought should be spent on the various managerial pursuits was also highly significant ($R=0.90$, $p<0.01$). Australian and Singaporean managers both thought most time should be spent on planning and least on data management. The largest discrepancy in rankings was only 2 ranks; Singaporeans' rank for time that should be spent on financial management was 6 while the Australians' rank was 8.

The rank order correlation between the importance attached to the activities in the two countries was also extremely high ($R=0.93$, $p<0.01$). Both groups thought people related tasks were the most important and general organisational management, external relations and data management were of least importance. The largest discrepancy related to quality management which was ranked higher

by Australians than by Singaporeans. These three highly significant correlation coefficients show that the work practices and values of Australian and Singaporean health managers are comparable. These findings supported H3b rather than H3a; the relative rankings of the three dimensions by the two groups of managers were similar.

(Insert table 3 about here)

Managers' text responses to the question asking why they spent more time on some activities than others are shown in table 3. There were no significant national differences between the reasons cited. These findings support H4b rather than H4a; health managers in the two cultures give similar reasons for their time allocation. The most frequent reason cited by both groups related to job requirements followed by the importance and the urgency of the task and the external pressures being exerted.

The investigation had focused on relative amounts of time as indicated by the managers' ranked scores in order to overcome possible bias in acquiescence responses. Singaporean managers' absolute, as opposed to relative, mean responses regarding time that was spent on the various managerial pursuits were higher for 7 out of 9 pursuits for the amount of time (see table 2). Australians' average rating on the nine scales was 3.00 while for Singaporeans it was 3.19 ($t=-3.98$, $df=589$, $p=0.000$). The Singaporeans average ratings were higher than those of the Australians on 8 out of 9 pursuits for the amount of time that should be spent (see table 2). The average rating for Australians was 3.23 and for Singaporeans was 3.36 ($t=-2.68$, $df=589$, $p=0.007$). As there was little evidence of differences in the actual hours worked by health managers in the two countries these responses appear to indicate cultural differences in describing working behaviour. Singaporeans' descriptions of their work time and the time they should work as longer than their Australian

counterparts' descriptions, is consistent with Singaporeans' more self-protective leadership style of status enhancing behaviour (House *et al.*, 2004). However the average importance attached to work pursuits by the Singaporeans (mean=3.77) and Australians (mean=3.76) was virtually identical.

DISCUSSION

We examined the relationship between three dimensions of the work practices and values of health managers, drawing samples from Singapore and Australia, countries representative respectively of the Confucian-Asian and Anglo cultural clusters. In both countries there was no significant association between how time is spent in reality and how managers believe they should allot their time. This echoes the findings of the GLOBE study which revealed clear distinctions between organisational practices and values in all cultural clusters. The closest association between our three dimensions was between judgements of how time should be spent and the perceived importance of managerial pursuits. This confirms existing expectations, as these are both measures of work related values. For all three relationships investigated there were closer relationships, or greater overlap, for Singaporean managers than for Australian managers. This difference in degree of congruence between dimensions was the main cultural difference identified.

The implications of relationships between the dimensions need to be considered. The degree of overlap or congruence between the domains of real-time and ideal-time spent on various pursuits could be interpreted as indicating greater efficiency; managers are spending time on tasks in the way they believe they should. A relationship between real-time and the rated importance of pursuits could be interpreted as an index of effectiveness; managers are spending time on what they consider is important. A relationship between ideal-time and the importance of activities could be interpreted as validity or integrity; managers' more normative values coincide with their judgements of what is important. By this interpretation Singaporeans' managerial work efforts vis

a vis Australians' could be described as more efficient, effective and valid. This pattern resembles to some extent the more moral relationship with their workplace that Harrison (1995) identified Singaporean managers as having compared to the more calculative relationship of individualistic Australian managers. However Harrison also found that Singaporeans reported less job satisfaction and more work stress than did their Australian counterparts. The latter group, having more calculative views of work, would find it easier to contemplate or concede that time spent on activities may bear a limited relation to the importance of these tasks. The greater congruence found between Singaporeans' work practices and values is consistent with the higher institutional collectivism that characterises Confucian-Asian countries (House *et al.*, 2004). Collectivist members of organisations see themselves as "highly interdependent with the organization. Motivation is socially oriented, and is based on the need to fulfil duties and obligations" compared to individualists who "assume they are independent of the organization" and whose "motivation is individually oriented and is based on individual interests, needs and capacities" (Gelfand *et al.*, 2004, p. 459). As yet, much remains unknown as to the actual effects and outcomes of managers in different cultures performing particular practices and holding particular values (House *et al.*, 2004). This is the focus of ongoing research in the GLOBE project, and our own work.

The finding that there was no statistically significant relationship between the way managers in either country allotted their time to the various pursuits of management and the way they thought they ought to allot such time seems to indicate how much managers are at the mercy of job demands and pressures rather than working to their preferred or ideal plan. These results also show that using managers' allotment of their time to tasks as an index of their beliefs about the importance of the pursuits cannot be substantiated particularly in the Anglo context. However the time managers think they should spend on activities is a very good index of the pursuits they judge to be important.

Most of the evidence from the between-country comparisons supports the cultural convergence hypothesis to the effect that increasing internationalisation has led to more common managerial practices across cultures. In the health sector, too, there have been considerable efforts to share ideas and policies (eg, Blendon *et al.*, 2004) and shifts towards learning from international structures and funding arrangements (see Murray and Evans, 2003). Responses of Singaporean and Australian managers were very highly correlated in terms of the real-time, of ideal-time and of pursuit-importance measures. Put simply, Singaporean and Australian health managers have very convergent views on how their work time is used, how it should be used and how important are their various managerial pursuits. When asked why they spent relatively more time on some activities than others the answers given were very similar. However the work practices of the two managerial groups, while significantly related, were less so than their ratings on the two values measures.

This research has identified similar hierarchies, in two cultures, of the relative time health managers allot, and think they should allot, to a set of managerial activities. It has also found similar hierarchies in the perceived importance of these pursuits. How common are these hierarchies among health managers in other cultures or among managers in other industrial sectors? The GLOBE study concentrated on telecommunications, financial services and food processing organisations. It identified almost no industry-effects across societies concluding that the “societal system has the most significant and strongest effect on all organizational culture dimensions measured” (Brodbeck *et al.*, 2004, p. 667).

CONCLUSION

This study showed that Singaporean and Australian health managers' reasons for spending the time they did on the nine managerial pursuits were similar. There are various pressures on health managers that force them to allocate their time in ways that are not congruent with their values; what they think they should do; and the activities they regard as most important. They identify some of these pressures as executing tasks specified by their job requirements, the urgency of tasks, and external demands. Such pressures on managers are an under-empiricised area of scholarly inquiry, and deserve further attention.

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Table 1: Definitions of the nine managerial pursuits used in the questionnaire

Pursuit	Definition
Financial	Handling budgets, finances, revenue and accounting for resource usage
People	Staffing, motivating, assigning work and tasks, delegating and disciplining
General organisational	Monitoring and running organisational facilities, buildings, equipment
Process	Dealing with systems, processes and procedures
Data	Coordinating information, data and IT
Quality	Promoting improvement via approaches such as continuous quality activities
Customer	Focusing on patients, clients and customers through marketing strategies and customer queries, issues, complaints and compliments
Strategy and planning	Developing longer term goals and objectives through strategic planning methods and models
External relations	Working on external or environmental matters, eg with external companies, suppliers and agencies

Source: Adapted from Braithwaite (2004)

Table 2: Australian and Singaporean managers' mean ratings of time spent on, time that should be spent on, and importance of nine activities; ranks and correlations

Managerial activity	Country: mean and ranked ratings					
	Australia			Singapore		
	Time spend ¹	Time should spend ¹	Activity's importance ²	Time spend ¹	Time should spend ¹	Activity's Importance ²
People	3.94 (1)	3.72 (3)	4.37 (1)	3.80 (1)	3.82 (2)	4.27 (1)
Planning	2.94 (5)	3.78 (1)	4.07 (3)	3.16 (6)	3.83 (1)	4.14 (2)
Quality	2.89 (6)	3.73 (2)	4.10 (2)	3.26 (4)	3.74 (3)	4.02 (4)
Customer	3.07 (4)	3.39 (4)	4.02 (4)	3.40 (2)	3.49 (4)	4.05 (3)
Process	3.17 (3)	3.20 (5)	3.69 (5)	3.38 (3)	3.42 (5)	3.80 (5)
Organisational	3.32 (2)	3.11 (6)	3.49 (7)	3.24 (5)	3.07 (7)	3.36 (7)
Financial	2.55 (8)	2.69 (8)	3.57 (6)	2.83 (8)	3.10 (6)	3.77 (6)
External	2.52 (9)	2.81 (7)	3.29 (8)	2.72 (9)	2.93 (8)	3.26 (9)
Data	2.65 (7)	2.64 (9)	3.20 (9)	2.93 (7)	2.85 (9)	3.28 (8)
Rank order correlation coefficients						
Time spend/ Should spend	R=0.47, p>0.05			R=0.60, p>0.05		
Time spend/ Importance	R=0.52, p>0.05			R=0.75, p<0.05		
Importance/ Should spend	R=0.88, p<0.01			R=0.95, p<0.001		

1 Rated from 1 'Not much time' to 5 'Lots of time'

2 Rated from 1 'Not very important' to 5 'Extremely important'

Table 3: Chi square analyses of Australian and Singaporean managers' text answers to question, 'Why do you spend relatively more time on some management activities than others?'

Reason		Sample			χ^2 (df 1)	p
		Australia <i>n</i> =219 ¹	Singapore <i>n</i> =253 ¹	Total <i>N</i> =472 ¹		
Job requirement	<i>Yes</i>	88 (40.2%)	120 (47.4%)	208 (44.1%)	2.50	>0.05
	<i>No</i>	131 (59.8%)	133 (52.6%)	264 (55.9%)		
Importance of task	<i>Yes</i>	33 (15.1%)	51 (20.2%)	84 (17.8%)	2.08	>0.05
	<i>No</i>	186 (84.9%)	202 (79.8%)	388 (82.2%)		
Urgency of task	<i>Yes</i>	44 (20.1%)	40 (15.8%)	84 (17.8%)	1.47	>0.05
	<i>No</i>	175 (79.9%)	213 (84.2%)	388 (82.2%)		
External pressure	<i>Yes</i>	42 (19.2%)	33 (13.0%)	75 (15.9%)	3.31	>0.05
	<i>No</i>	177 (80.8%)	220 (87.0%)	397 (84.1%)		
Task time consuming	<i>Yes</i>	15 (6.8%)	19 (7.5%)	34 (7.2%)	0.08	>0.05
	<i>No</i>	204 (93.2%)	234 (92.5%)	438 (92.8%)		
Personal preference	<i>Yes</i>	13 (5.9%)	7 (2.8%)	20 (4.2%)	2.91	>0.05
	<i>No</i>	206 (94.1%)	246 (97.2%)	452 (95.8%)		

¹ Number of respondents who gave text answers to open-ended questions

Figure 1: Rankings of Australian and Singaporean managers' mean ratings of time spent on, time that should be spent on, and importance of nine activities

