ABSTRACT

There are two objectives of this study. The first purpose is to examine the nature of convergence versus divergence of managerial attitudes of three groups of managers, Chinese managers working for Chinese firms, Chinese managers working for US firms, and American managers working for US firms in Hong Kong, toward supervisor-only appraisal and other non-traditional sources of appraisal of executive performance. These non-traditional methods include peer, subordinate, and multisource evaluation. The second objective is to explore the relationships between attitudes to supervisory appraisal and to the non-traditional appraisal sources. Two bodies of research, the concept of convergence-divergence-crossvergence and socialization theory, in addition to a review of the performance appraisal literature, provide the theoretical foundation for formulating hypotheses.

This study found a trend of convergence as to attitude to supervisory appraisal. As regards attitude to the non-traditional evaluation approaches, a definitive trend of divergence or convergence was not detected. Results indicated that the idea of executive appraisal was more supported in US firms than in Chinese firms. Moreover, subordinate evaluation was more accepted than peer evaluation in US firms. This study also found that attitude to supervisory appraisal was significantly related to attitudes to the non-traditional sources of rating.
These results imply that the transference of the practice of supervisory appraisal from US multinational corporations to their subsidiaries in Hong Kong is feasible while some modifications of the appraisal practice need to be made in Chinese firms to align with their values and culture. Furthermore, if an American firm attempts to incorporate an appraisal source in addition to supervisory appraisal, subordinate evaluation is recommended. Chinese firms are not ready at this stage to install any non-traditional appraisal systems. Finally, this study has demonstrated that attitude to supervisory appraisal is related to attitudes to other non-traditional approaches. This provides some direction for the development of theories of appraisal that take into account source of evaluation.