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Where are they going? Case of British and Japanese Human Resource Management

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Introduction

As Carney et al. (2009) and Pudelko (2009) point out, with the recent global financial crisis and globalisation, many organisational management practices are transitioning dynamically. This is further evidenced by wide acceptance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in management practice. CSR addresses broad areas of organisations and society, and one of the key areas is its emphasis on stakeholders' expectations (Aguinis et al. 2012; Geva 2008). Employees are considered primary stakeholders (Bauman and Skitka 2012; Phillips 2003) and they are scarce and valuable resources given our current ageing population (Guest et al. 2003). It is argued that one of the key challenges that organisations face in the modern period is to achieve competitive advantage through long-term sustainability, along with 'responsible competition' (Saeed et al. 2012). To do so, it is imperative to utilise these valuable and scarce resources well (Barney 1995). In this paper, we explore the extent to which employee management styles are converging/diverging as a result of CSR and the nature of institutional factors behind this convergence/divergence. From the institutional theory perspective, the transition is due to increasing global societal pressure resulted from globalisation and rapid technological development; further, such pressure leads organisations to converge upon common models or behaviours, regardless of their national boundaries (DiMaggio et al. 1983, 1991; Meyer 2008; Jepperson 2001; Meyer et al. 1977, 1997; Scott 1987). However, others argue that despite the transition, divergence would occur due to different societal and cultural values, which cause them to have different national business systems (NBS) (Whitley 1994; Hall and Soskice 2001). Such debates around convergence and divergence also appear in the CSR field, though they are relatively new. CSR infrastructures, such as UN Global Compact and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), among many other CSR consultancies, show signs of convergence (see Waddock 2008). Meanwhile, Matten and Moon (2008) show that diversity occurs as a result of differences in NBS. However, these debates have been largely based on the Western perspective of CSR. A majority of CSR international infrastructures are originated in the US or Europe, and as Wang and Juslin (2009) pointed out, they do not coordinate well with the Chinese business system because they are established without serious consideration of how well their systems can be associated with the Eastern business systems, which are very different from the West.

Expanding Wang and Juslin's argument, this paper contributes to the convergence/divergence debate through examinations and comparisons of Human Resource Management (HRM) in one Western nation and one Eastern nation (the UK and Japan) after the introduction of CSR, and explores the extent of their convergence/divergence. Many studies have been done on understanding Japanese management and its international comparison (Beechler et al. 1996; Dore 1973; Hatvany et al. 1981; Jacoby 2005; Keely 2001; Kopp 1994; Morris et al. 2000; Oliver and Wilkinson 1992; Tayeb 1994), due to Japanese economic success that earned much praise in the 1980s (before its downfall in 1990s), as well as its significant impact on the UK's HRM in the past. However, given that both Japan and the UK are the leading contributors to CSR, along with the US (Wang and Juslin 2009; Lee and Choi 2002), it is worth revisiting them. Furthermore, while the two nations share very different NBS (compartmentalised vs highly coordinated) and societal-cultural background (individualism vs collectivism) (Whitley 2000; Hofstede 2001), they both participate in various Western-developed international CSR infrastructures, such as UN Global Compact, GRI, and ISO 26000. Thus, these two nations can be argued as ideal environments to measure the

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3 extent of convergence/divergence, and (more importantly) to understand institutional
4 influences supporting or impeding any changes. In order to assist this paper, the research
5 capitalises primarily on NBS. Though institutional theory and NBS accept the influence of
6 institutional environments on organisations, there is a key difference. As implied at the
7 beginning, institutional theory emphasises global diffusion of practices as a result of global
8 isomorphic pressures through coercive, mimetic, and normative process (DiMaggio et al.
9 1983, 1991). NBS, on the other hand, points out that there is an historically grown
10 institutional framework, which also includes societal-cultural institutions, and influences
11 businesses that operate within it (Whitley 1994; 2000). It acknowledges the institutional
12 differences between nations and business systems, and further allows comparison of two
13 nations by identifying key points of contrast between the business systems (Matten and Moon
14 2008). Therefore, it is particularly useful in cross-national comparison, in contrast to
15 institutional theory, which shows weakness in explaining how practices are interpreted
16 elsewhere (Tempel and Walgenbach 2007). Thus, it can be understood as an ideal model to
17 measure the extent of convergence/divergence of HRM in the two nations after the
18 introduction of CSR.
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22 With this in mind, in the following section, CSR will be introduced, with a focus on HRM
23 using the existing literature, which will be followed by a review of NBS as an analytical
24 framework. A brief overview of NBS and HRM in the UK and Japan will follow, and then a
25 description of methodology, presentation of data results, and discussion. Finally, the
26 limitations to this research will be outlined, as well as possible recommendations for future
27 research.
28

29 Literature Review

30 CSR and HRM

31
32 The CSR doctrine argues that corporations carry certain responsibilities to society as well as
33 to their stakeholders, and should act accordingly to benefit society and contribute towards
34 social development (Carroll 1979; Margolis et al. 2003; Garriga et al. 2004; Godfrey et al.
35 2007; Beurden et al. 2008; Crane et al. 2008). However, its philosophical and conceptual
36 aspect resulted in a lack of a framework and guidance for managers as to how to behave, and
37 much attention has been paid to defining the responsibilities they carry, and the extent of such
38 responsibilities. As a result, various different definitions and models emerged, which can be
39 categorised as follows: instrumental, political, ethical, and integrative (Garriga et al. 2004).
40 However, through constant study and improvement, amongst these four theoretical groups,
41 the integrative approach appears to have gained prominence, as it attempts to integrate ethical
42 responsibilities into corporate organisations' economic responsibilities, and several models
43 were developed within this approach (Geva 2008; Garriga et al. 2004). This concept of
44 integrative theories of CSR is well-embedded in the following definition of CSR:
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46

47 *Context-specific organisational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders'*
48 *expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance.*
49 (Aguinis et al. 2012, p. 933)
50
51

52 The term 'stakeholder' is from stakeholder theory and was introduced by Freeman, who
53 identified stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the
54 achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Phillips 2003, p. 120). They can be
55 categorised into two types: normative, understood as entities that share direct moral
56 obligations with the organisation; and derivative, who may not possess direct influence over
57 the organisation's actions (and vice versa), but can affect the normative stakeholders. Thus,
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3 the given definition argues that CSR should meet the expectations of these stakeholders,
4 while integrating all responsibilities of a corporate organisation into its decision-making
5 process, which includes moral responsibility.
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8 Based on this logic of CSR, HRM and CSR are highly inter-related. As argued previously,
9 employees are considered normative stakeholders directly relevant to organisations'
10 operations. Employees can act as agents to direct organisations to behave socially responsibly
11 (Aguilera et al. 2007), while perceiving, evaluating, judging and reacting to organisations'
12 CSR practices as stakeholders (Rowley and Berman 2000; Rupp et al. 2006). Moreover, as a
13 part of its moral obligations towards its stakeholders, organisations are expected to ensure the
14 quality of employees' working life (job quality, work-life quality, and working life) as well as
15 labour standards and equal opportunities (Cooke and He 2010). Such high levels of
16 interaction are also supported by other evidence: socially responsible companies can appear
17 more attractive to potential employees, resulting in competitive advantage (Turban and
18 Greening 1997; Albinger and Freeman 2000); and employees are more committed to, and
19 satisfied with, their jobs (Brammer et al. 2007). Figure 1 presents that socially responsible
20 HRM practices and HR practices can promote firm's CSR practices and vice versa. This
21 consequently affects the CSR outcome and enhances the HR outcome, both influencing and
22 assisting the other (Cooke and He 2010). This suggests that by adopting socially responsible
23 HRM practices, organisations can achieve social responsibility and competitive advantage,
24 and through combining CSR and HRM, long-term sustainability (Sharma et al. 2009).
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26

27 [Insert Figure 1 Here]
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29
30 While the link between CSR and HRM is established, what are socially responsible HRM
31 practices? First is systematic communication with employees to understand employees' needs
32 and promote employee participation and engagement in organisations' CSR efforts (Cooke
33 and He 2010). Second is training, which can create ethical labour standards. Inyang et al.
34 (2011) found that employees are more likely to respond when training programs incorporate
35 CSR objectives; and when they are trained on CSR policy and projects, they are more likely
36 to perceive CSR as important. Third is diversity management to promote equal opportunities.
37 Diversity is becoming increasingly important in organisations in our current multicultural
38 society (Jamali and Dirani 2014). Therefore, diversity, responsibility, and HRM should not be
39 considered separately, but as key components of organisations' CSR efforts (Jonsen et al.
40 2013).
41

42
43 The literature indicates that socially responsible HRM can sustain competitive advantage
44 with much evidence of inter-relations between HRM practice and increased productivity,
45 improved efficiency, and increased firm value (Guest et al. 2003; Bjorkman et al. 2007;
46 Guthrie 2001; MacDuffie 1995; Huselid 1995). However, there are also some clear
47 differences identified between different business systems' HRM models. With globalisation,
48 it can often be seen that companies operate across national boundaries, and it has become
49 almost impossible to apply home practices abroad without concern for local conditions. For
50 instance, Japanese firms moving into the Chinese market alter their business models to fit
51 local conditions (see Buckley and Horn 2009). Organisations appear to be no longer looking
52 to simply adopt the 'best practice model', but instead are looking for ways to create 'best fit'
53 practice models through integration and combination, causing differences in HRM practices
54 (Stravrou 2010; Pudelko 2009; Stiles 2009). As the study of Stravrou et al. (2010) shows,
55 exploring HRM and firm performance in Europe from the NBS perspective, there are certain
56 differences in HRM practices based on their business systems. This indicates that East Asian
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3 companies may not be settled with application of the Western model of CSR, which was
4 formed based on the Western business system, but rather adopt the core concept of CSR into
5 their existing business models, causing possible divergence. This is further supported by
6 'crossvergence theory' of Ralston (2008) and Jamali and Neville (2011). They both argue that
7 convergence or divergence does not occur separately, but socio-cultural aspects and business
8 ideology / global convergence and local divergence interact together to form complex hybrid
9 system. Therefore, as Aycan (2005) and Gerhert and Fang (2005) point out, it is important to
10 understand the relationship between socio-cultural and institutional factors and HRM practice.
11 This is what makes NBS the most appropriate theoretical framework for the purpose of this
12 study. NBS does not take a resource-based view or human capital theory, but focuses on how
13 human capital is managed. It sees HRM as a collective outcome of institutional settings, such
14 as labour market structure, training and education mechanisms, and unions (Morgan et al.
15 2005; Whitley 2000), which are influenced by societal and cultural norms.
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18 **NBS as analytical framework**

19 NBS and institutional theory share the same concept, which is that organisations adapt to
20 institutional environments. However, unlike institutional theory, which emphasises global
21 diffusion of practices through isomorphic pressures, NBS focuses on institutional pressures at
22 national level and the effect on organisations (Tempel and Walgenbach 2007; Amable 2003).
23 NBS argues that a 'dominant' pattern of ownership systems, inter-firm relations, and
24 employment relations in a given country can differ depending on its institutional frameworks
25 (political, financial, education and labour, and cultural systems), and therefore can lead to the
26 formation of distinctive business systems (Whitley 1994, 2000; Jamali and Neville 2011;
27 Matten and Moon 2008; Tempel and Walgenbach 2007). Such systems emerge over time in a
28 national market economy due to the institutional settings that pressure market organisations
29 or firms to behave in certain ways (Whitley 2007). The fundamentals of NBS lie in historic,
30 societal and cultural norms (Hasegawa et al. 2009); the institutional settings of a nation are
31 devised by people (North 1990) based upon society's social norms to regulate and create
32 behaviour patterns that are predictable according to the social norms (Hasegawa et al. 2009;
33 Whitley 1994, 2000). Chong (2000) argues that social norms can be understood as 'accepted'
34 conventions and regulations that have emerged from values, both formally and informally:
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38 *Social norms and values establish ideal forms of behaviour, assign priority to different points*
39 *of view and ways of life, and affect individual choice by coordinating expectations and*
40 *increasing the attractiveness of certain alternatives over others. They are manifest in all*
41 *walks of life: in our personal relationships, families, churches, schools, places of employment,*
42 *at social functions, on the street, and in the marketplace.*
43

44 (Chong 2000, p. 5)
45

46 Institutions established based upon this notion of social norms, therefore, can be understood
47 as cognitive, normative, and behavioural systems of a society (Scott 1987), which sets formal
48 and informal "rules of the game in a society" (North 1990, p. 3), including "rules,
49 regulations, norms, and understandings" (Morgan et al. 2005, p. 3), which influence "forms,
50 outcomes, and dynamics of economic organisations" (Morgan et al. 2005, p. 3) through
51 constraining or enabling certain patterns of behaviour. Therefore the outcome of such a
52 framework is ideal business systems specific to a society, sector, or nation, and as a player, an
53 organisation is likely to act within the rules and accept certain aspects of the society's norms,
54 making them behave differently from other firms of different social backgrounds (Whitley
55 1994, 2000; Hasegawa et al. 2009; Sako 2006; North 1990). Based on the identified
56 institutions and societal-cultural norms, key business system characteristics become evident:
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3 primary means of owner control (direct, alliance, market contracting); extent of ownership
4 integration of production chains; extent of ownership integration of sectors (ownership
5 system); extent of alliance coordination of production chains; extent of collaboration between
6 competitors; extent of alliance coordination of sectors (inter-firm relations);
7 employer-employee interdependence; and delegation to, and trust of, employees
8 (employer-employee relations) (Whitley 2000). Whitley (2000) argues that these key
9 characteristics determine the types of business systems: fragmented, coordinated industrial
10 district, compartmentalised, state organised, collaborative, and highly coordinated.
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13 Relating the foregoing to the research questions raised in this paper, NBS provides the most
14 suitable analytical base to capture the complexities of institutional relations with HRMs of
15 two different contexts that share very different societal-cultural backgrounds, and the extent
16 of their convergence/divergence. Due to the nature of CSR, it is important to consider the
17 social aspects of an organisation; and in an international context, such social values/concepts
18 differ from nation to nation, which will cause them to function differently, and this also
19 applies to HRM systems. As NBS argues, there are institutions, either formal or informal, that
20 allow certain types of HRM system to function in an economy and enable certain types to
21 operate better and more efficiently than in other economies, due to their distinctive societal
22 characteristics and institutional settings. Ignjatovic et al. (2003) reach a similar conclusion,
23 that certain HRM practices appear appropriate in one culture, but less so in another. Aycan
24 (2005) also shows a moderating effect of cultural, institutional, and structural factors on
25 HRM practices among countries. In addition to the empirical support, NBS argues that there
26 are two institutions that exert influence on HRM: work organisations or professional
27 associations such as trade unions or enterprise unions, education and training systems
28 (Morgan et al. 2005; Whitley 1994, 2000). In the case of the former, the strengths of those
29 organisations can determine the level of communication and extent of managerial control i.e.
30 strict discipline or an encouragement of responsibility (Preuss et al. 2009; Whitley 1994). The
31 latter determines employers' perceptions of their responsibility to provide training as well as
32 their approach towards training (Hyman 2004; Preuss et al. 2009; Whitley 1994). A
33 combination of the two institutional effects, consequently, shapes one's position within the
34 labour market (Hyman 2004; Preuss et al. 2009). Thus, based on this logic of NBS, HRM
35 practices emerge as a result of institutional settings that are created or established under the
36 influence of societal and cultural norms.
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41 However, societal and cultural norms are not fixed factors: they can change or be pressured
42 by external shocks such as globalization or a crisis (Human Resource Management
43 International Digest 2009). Moreover, changes in institutional settings can also occur, not
44 necessarily due to the changes in societal and cultural norms but through external pressure,
45 and can exert pressure on existing societal and cultural norms (Morgan et al. 2005). In
46 relation to this paper, the introduction of CSR as an external shock or external pressure has
47 brought certain changes about in institutional settings. As identified in the previous section,
48 in order to be understood as socially responsible, HRM practices require systematic
49 communication, training and education with integrated CSR objectives and diversity
50 management. Whilst institutions such as work organisations or professional associations can
51 be considered institutional settings for systematic communication, training and education
52 remains another HRM-related institution. However, equal opportunities and/or diversity
53 management were not considered institutional requirements prior to CSR. This is a
54 consequence of changes in societal norms, brought by globalization and rapid societal
55 changes. Hence, based on the argument of previous section on CSR-HRM and the logic of
56 NBS, a new framework to assist CSR-HRM research based on NBS can be structured (Figure
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2), synthesized as the core analytical framework for this study.

[Insert Figure 2 Here]

Figure 2 captures the complexity of institutional pressure on HRM practices while incorporating CSR; this allows comparison against another contexts. There are five HRM related institutional settings: state, cultural system, work organisation, education and training, and diversity. All of these can be influenced by or influence national historic, societal, and cultural norms. Based upon the norms and institutional settings, an organisational shape emerges. Among the five institutional settings, diversity, education and training, and work organisation are highly inter-related with socially responsible HRM practices. In other words, the three institutional settings are directly connected to organisations' socially responsible HRM practices, which consequently affect firms' CSR and HR outcomes. Thus, by understanding the three key institutional settings, it is possible to answer the main question that this paper addresses, which is whether there is a convergence or divergence in HRM practices after CSR from two very different contexts, and importantly the extent of the institutional role in supporting or impeding convergence/divergence. Based upon this, the following two research questions can be derived:

1. To what extent is convergence/divergence occurring in the two very different contexts?

2. Which of these three institutions are causing or impeding convergence/divergence?

The framework presented in Figure 2 can be very useful in analysing and understanding convergence/divergence of British and Japanese HRM practices, as it captures an overview of a context's HRM in relation to CSR with understanding of the complex nature of institutional influence on national HRM practice. Moreover, it allows comparison of two different contexts (the UK and Japan) at a national level within the same framework. As Carney et al. (2009) argue, as a result of globalization, the recent Global Financial Crisis and the declining economy of Japan, the reality of HRM practice is transitioning dynamically. While the transition certainly includes wide adoption of CSR at a global level, understanding the transition and extent of convergence/divergence and institutional pressure can contribute to ongoing debates in CSR-HRM convergence and divergence discourse (Jamali and Neville 2011; Matten and Moon 2008; Preuss et al. 2009; Zhao 2014).

Methodology

Though Stravrou et al. (2010) has revealed the existence of differences in HRM practice among European countries as a result of their different business systems, along with other studies (e.g. Ignjatovic et al. 2003; Aycan 2005), the important question is whether such differences apply to East Asia. Therefore, the UK and Japan are chosen for the purposes of this paper, largely due to the significant differences between the two nations in terms of business system and societal-cultural context, which are of polar types.

Data sample and profile

The study adopted a case study based on a theoretical sampling method to select cases, which implies that the cases are selected not only because of their representativeness and richness in data, but also because they fit the theoretical purpose of the paper (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt et al. 2007). Based on this, the researcher selected six cases in order to maximise the manageability of the data, supported by Eisenhardt (1989) and Perry (1998).

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4 The first two cases were selected due to their size (judged by their income levels based on
5 Global Fortune 500 in 2012) and their position in the nation's economy, along with their
6 traditional value within the business system. As a result, Companies A and 1 are selected.
7 Company A is one of the top three companies in the UK in terms of income; one of the oldest
8 companies; and the third-largest Multi-National Corporation (MNC) in the world in its sector.
9 Company 1 is the largest trading company of a *keiretsu* group, which has been understood as
10 the central figure in the traditional Japanese business system. Moreover, based on the
11 FTSE4GOOD index in 2012, both organisations are among the top CSR performing
12 companies in their respective nations. Therefore, the two organisations' contributions to their
13 national economies, their historic value and their performance in the CSR field in their own
14 nations mean they should be regarded as representative cases for the two nations.
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18 The next two cases were selected from the mid-range income group. Their historic value and
19 industrial sectors were considered important in the selection procedure. Whilst the service
20 sector's contribution to the UK's GDP accounts for 78%, the financial sector plays the
21 dominant role within the service sector; as of 2013, it is the largest contributor to the UK's
22 GDP and GDP growth. Therefore, Company B is selected, because it is one of the oldest
23 financial institutions in the UK; it has always been a British company; and it has its own
24 uniqueness by going through the largest transition since the Global Financial Crisis in 2007.
25 Moreover, it was once regarded as one of the top socially responsible companies in the UK
26 prior to the crisis, and is now pushing hard on CSR issue as a part of its recovery. Unlike the
27 UK, the Japanese business system and economic development has largely been focused on
28 manufacturing and advanced technology. However, much previous research was based on its
29 manufacturing industry i.e. the automobile industry, despite the fact that its electronic goods
30 industry is the largest industrial sector. Therefore, Company 2 was selected, as it is one of the
31 oldest electronics company in Japan at mid-range income level, with focus on providing both
32 household and industrial electronic goods, unlike its counterparts. It is also the company that
33 brought customer-related CSR approaches to Japan, and is regarded as one of the top
34 performing organisations in terms of HRM-related CSR, like Company B, based on CSRHub.
35 Thus they carry both historical and socio-cultural aspects of Japanese business systems, while
36 being understood as better CSR performing organisations over their counterparts.
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39
40 Unlike the previous four cases (A, B, 1, and 2), the last two cases were selected based on
41 their ownership structures i.e. privately owned. A nation's economy is formed with various
42 ownership types of businesses, and privately-owned companies play an important role. This
43 implies that privately-owned companies must be regarded as another representative group of
44 a nation's business system. Moreover, a privately-owned company's management is largely
45 affected by the owners' perceptions, vision, and ideology of management rather than the
46 institutional settings. Therefore, difference in ownership structures can result in possible
47 different approaches to HRM practice, and thus it is important to consider ownership
48 structure as another theoretical category for this paper's purposes. The UK has the
49 third-largest share of global pharmaceutical R&D and is regarded as the most productive
50 manufacturing industry in the UK with the highest Gross Value Added (value of goods and
51 services produced by the industry). Company C is the only privately-owned enterprise in the
52 industry, but also the UK's largest privately-owned enterprise. In Japan, the beverage and
53 food industry has a very large market share. Company 3 is the oldest and largest
54 privately-owned company in this sector, and the largest wholly privately-owned enterprise in
55 Japan.
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3 The qualities and historical values of each case as well as its CSR element led the researcher
4 to believe that they are appropriate for the purpose of this study. They each carry certain
5 distinctive features of each business system and 'social legitimacy'. Thus, it can be argued
6 that they are suitable cases to be representative of the two nations.
7

8
9 [Insert Table 1 Here]

10 11 **Data collection method**

12 Data collection was carried out in three stages: 1) qualitative methods, involving observations
13 and semi-structured interviews with experts, senior managers of each case, and employees in
14 both formal and informal settings; 2) archival research using publicly-available documents,
15 data and company reports (including Nikkei Weekly newspapers, organisations' Annual
16 Reports, Sustainability Reports, the Economist, etc.); 3) corroborating the data with a third
17 party who is an expert in both UK and Japanese companies' CSR management to ensure
18 validity. This was conducted through three hours of interviews, and unlike the other
19 interviews with experts or senior managers, questions were designed to confirm findings
20 from the previous two datasets. During the preliminary phase, background information
21 collection and archival research were conducted to gather data on Japanese and British
22 historical, cultural, and social contexts; the researcher was further able to acquire data on
23 what the selected cases claim to be practicing in terms of employment relations. Interviews
24 with the senior managers of each case and fellow researchers with expertise in that nation's
25 business system were carried out, and gathering information through observation. This
26 process allowed the researcher to gather data that cannot be gained from the existing
27 literature. Interviews were conducted in semi-structured formats to enhance the
28 information-gathering capability; these lasted approximately two to three hours, allowing the
29 interviewer and participants freedom to elaborate on their interpretations while maintaining
30 the broad themes of the interview, which were based on the three key elements in CSR-HRM
31 mentioned in the literature review, as follows:
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35 **1. Employee expectation measurement (systematic communication):** as was argued, trade
36 unions' influence can be an important determinant for a company's strategic choices
37 regarding HRM (Whitley 2000; Wallis et al. 2005). In a nation where trade unions are strong,
38 they are more likely to be involved in a company's employee management and can establish
39 strong employer-employee relationships; however, if the trade unions are decentralised, the
40 reverse may occur. Therefore, understanding how an organisation communicates with its
41 employees would allow the researcher to understand the role of trade unions in terms of
42 HRM practice at firm levels; and further assist in determining the nature of
43 employer-employee relationships.
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46 **2. Training:** training and education is one of the key institutional settings that influences a
47 nation's HRM practice (Whitley 1994). As indicated in the literature review, the level of CSR
48 incorporation into the existing training scheme affects the employees' perception of the
49 organisations' CSR outcomes. In a nation heavily reliant on the internal labour market (as in
50 Japan), training is firm- or industry-specific to raise competitive advantage of both
51 organisations and employees (Matsuzuka 2002). On the other hand, in individualistic cultures
52 like the UK, training is more role-specific and outcome-oriented (Aycan 2005; Stravrou et al.
53 2010). Therefore, understanding the current nature of training can be a key determinant in
54 identifying both labour market systems and employee management of an organisation,
55 generalist or specialist.
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3 **3. Diversity:** This does not only refer to gender diversity, but also diversity in ethnicity and
4 nationality. This variable is selected to help identify the nature of the labour market system,
5 with the assistance of another variable. As argued, the collectivist nature of Japanese society
6 has created an environment where the workplace is regarded as an extension of family, which
7 is not a familiar concept to those in individualist states (Tayeb 1994; Ueda 2011). Further, in
8 addition to the 'stickiness of the Japanese society' (Salsberg et al. 2011), low mobility of
9 employees and the 'lifetime employment' created by internal labour market system are more
10 likely to discourage diversification and individualisation of employees (Sako and Sato 1997),
11 creating an unfriendly environment for foreign employees. However, given that society is
12 becoming multicultural as a result of globalisation, diversity is also understood as degree of
13 equal opportunities to employees and being socially responsible. Therefore, as Figure 1
14 indicated, measuring the level of diversity is another essential step to understand a business
15 system's convergence/divergence in terms of CSR-HRM.
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19 Using semi-structured interviews based on these three themes raises the possibility for the
20 researcher to obtain unexpected knowledge and further expand the data in regards to
21 employee management. Therefore, the interview questions remained within the three themes,
22 but the questions were varied and flexible depending on the responses. Every interview was
23 recorded by a voice recorder, with the participants' permission. Interviews were conducted in
24 English; however, in Japan, due to the language barrier, one interview was carried out in
25 Japanese in the presence of an interpreter, though the researcher remained in charge of the
26 session, whilst the others were conducted in English. In the last phase, a data validity check
27 was performed i.e. the transcribed data were double-checked with the participants and
28 interpreter. Further archival research and an interview with a neutral party were also carried
29 out. A neutral perspective on both Japanese and British business systems and management is
30 important to this study, as it can check the validity of data and balance data that might be
31 biased. To find an expert who can provide a neutral perspective, the authors contacted the
32 Japanese Chamber of Commerce in the UK, who introduced an organisation that advises
33 Japanese companies that wish to operate in the UK on their CSR management and policies.
34
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36 **Data analysis**

37 In order to understand 'characteristics of language' and discover regularities in the sheer
38 volume of qualitative data, content analysis and grounded theory analysis were used through
39 coding analysis. The content analysis serves to transform the attributes in the text into objects
40 through systematic coding mechanisms (Berg et al. 2012; Bauer et al. 2000). With the aid of
41 grounded theory analysis that allow 'the discovery of regularities', it allows new information
42 to arise from the text or conversation, and become usable for research purposes. This makes it
43 imperative for this research, as the majority of the data collected are in the form of text from
44 archival research and interviews. Coding allows a large amount of descriptive data to become
45 manageable and systematic; and further, a possible emergence of new theoretical prepositions
46 or new insights that the researchers may not have been aware of prior to data analysis can
47 occur (Douglas 2003). Each response from the interviews was labelled by theme and coded
48 according to specific thematic values. Such themes and labels are based on the concepts or
49 categories surfacing from the actual responses and comments without enforcing
50 pre-determined thematic values. Any similar comments or responses regarding the same issue
51 were also labelled under the same thematic codes. For example, any responses regarding
52 'female employee promotion policies/actions' were labelled under a common theme ('actions
53 to promote gender diversity') and coded accordingly (e.g. 1-G-A refers to comments relating
54 to Company 1's attempts to promote gender diversity). The data processed through this initial
55 procedure were further analysed through axial and selective coding. They were to collect
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3 comments and responses that fall under the same or different thematic codes and attempt to
4 connect them to form a story, whether it is negative or positive, as Table 2 shows.
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6 [Insert Table 2 Here]
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8 The analysed data produced from content analysis to grounded theory were put together and
9 tested through cross-case analysis. The cases for this research were selected through
10 theoretical sampling and have unique characteristics; therefore they provide different settings
11 and conditions, which create an environment to test the extent of convergence/divergence as
12 well as institutional roles in convergence/divergence of the two countries' CSR-HRM
13 practises based on the framework in Figure 2, the outcomes of which are presented in the
14 next section.
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17 Findings

18 With globalisation and increased information availability resulting from rapid technology
19 advancement, boundaries and roles of organisations have become much broader (Tulber et al.
20 2006). As a result, various international organisations were introduced, exerting regulatory
21 forces, causing transitions in institutional settings to occur (Carney et al. 2006). Thus, it has
22 been argued that institutions are increasingly becoming more homogenous because there is
23 now pressure from levels greater than national level, through coercive, mimetic, and
24 normative process (DiMaggio et al. 1983, 1991), which results in organisational behaviours
25 becoming more homogenous than ever (DiMaggio et al. 1983, 1991; Meyer et al. 1997).
26 However, the findings show rather mixed results.
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30 Expectation measurement (Systematic communication)

31 Traditional approach

32 In terms of employee expectation measurement, all six cases show similar approaches and
33 their methods can be categorised into two modes: general survey/questionnaire, and formal
34 meetings between employees and their superiors. The former is undertaken on a regular basis,
35 either annually or quarterly depending on the company, whilst the latter is conducted as
36 formal meetings between the employee/union representatives and the board members, or
37 employees and senior level officers of the same division, all of which are undertaken on a
38 regular basis.
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42 In Company A, the employee survey is conducted on a global scale every year, and 90% of
43 employees respond. The sets of questions are divided into two, based on their purpose. The
44 survey aims to acquire information on employee expectations and monitor their performance
45 over the past year. For these purposes, Company A uses two different standards to analyse
46 the results of the survey: one standard measures to what extent employees have been acting
47 within the company's CSR settings, and the other addresses any possible issues the
48 employees have in relation to the company's CSR policies. Similarly, Company B uses a
49 survey as the main tool to communicate with their employees. Surveys are conducted
50 regularly in two forms: an annual survey that targets the whole population, to which 81% of
51 employees respond; and smaller surveys of 15% of the population every quarter. The purpose
52 of both surveys is to receive employee feedback on the company's actions, CSR-related areas,
53 and any other issues. Unlike the two companies where the surveys are done across the group,
54 Company C allows each business within the group to perform their own survey as they think
55 suitable. This generates more manageable datasets and outcomes than global surveys.
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3 Nonetheless, the surveys of each business are conducted annually, and the response rate is
4 high (96% from the UK businesses), and they measure employee satisfaction and their views
5 on the business.
6

7 As pointed out, such annual surveys also occur within Japanese companies. However, their
8 approaches are largely centred around their own unions e.g. the staff union of Company 1.
9 Data analysis reveals that each case studies' staff union plays a key role regarding CSR
10 actions, or indeed any other policy. In the case of Companies 1 and 2, the annual employee
11 surveys are conducted by their staff union. Company 2's senior manager of CSR division
12 responded that "*we do have [a] union survey every year with about 200 questions*".
13 Company 3, however, takes an extensive approach compared to the other two. Instead of a
14 regular survey, each employee is surveyed with a supervisor-subordinate interview four times
15 a year. In addition, at the beginning of every year, group-level interviews are undertaken to
16 gain better understanding of how they feel about their job and working environment.
17 However, when all three companies were asked if they express their opinions freely, their
18 responses were that they would not speak badly of their own company in general even if they
19 have issues. This is in contrast to the British company's employee, who responded "*we feel*
20 *free to say anything*". Such a difference is further shown from a Company 2 employee
21 revelation: "*[I] feel scared to ask ... supervisors*".
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25 Round-Table communications

26 The second method of gathering data on employees' expectations is formal meetings between
27 employees and the senior officers. As these are formal gatherings, they are undertaken
28 regularly in the presence of board members and CEOs. However, there are also smaller or
29 casual gatherings that allow employees to raise their voices, which occur either inside or
30 outside the workplace, and have become widely popular with the growth of information
31 technology. Such movements and changes are well presented in all three cases from the UK.
32 In the case of Company A, they prefer to be in dialogue with their employees directly, rather
33 than hearing from their agents. Therefore, they employed two sets of roundtable sessions with
34 the employees, which involved employee representatives and senior officers, managers, and
35 the CEO. These employee representatives do not require any qualifications but votes from
36 fellow employees, regardless of their position or length of service. They discuss their views
37 of the company's policies or practices, or express concerns on behalf of colleagues to their
38 senior managers and CEO. Such sessions are not restricted by which nation the offices are
39 located in. Each employee representative gathers with the members of executives at least
40 once a year to discuss their concerns, which gives both employees and senior managers the
41 opportunity to understand employees' expectations by hearing ideas from different
42 backgrounds. Company B has a similar approach. They hold various forms of conferences for
43 employees at different levels so that they can raise their opinions. Each division has its own
44 divisional conferences as well as smaller forms, which occur more frequently. The divisional
45 conferences happen at least once a year, and there are quarterly meetings with 400-500
46 people. In addition, instead of setting up their own employee networks across Europe, they
47 work together with social agencies as well as employee representative organisations, such as
48 trade unions, works council, and other employee representative bodies. Company C also has
49 cross-national employee representatives' dialogue sessions every year.
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54 The Japanese companies' formal meetings between employees and the management once
55 again are organised at their enterprise union level. In Company 1, their staff union holds
56 meetings with their branch unions to discuss their concerns regarding the workplace as well
57 as the company's conduct. Such meetings are frequent, 20-30 times a month, at various levels
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3 in different scales regardless of their divisions or units. Any key concerns raised are then
4 addressed at the formal meeting between their representatives and the top management of the
5 group, which includes the president, and this is performed twice a year. The way that
6 Company 2 communicates with their employees is not much different from Company 1:
7 group level and labour-management level gatherings occur three times a year, while unit level
8 meetings occur on a more frequent basis. Company 3 also has various council meetings
9 organised between the management and labour union, which are topic- or issue-oriented, on a
10 regular basis (once or twice a year), and they also collect employee feedback on a personal
11 basis via interviews between the superiors and subordinates, as mentioned earlier, carried out
12 four times a year.
13

14 Training

15 Specialist Approach and its incorporation of CSR training

16
17 Using terminology derived from Whitley (2000) terminology, British training can be
18 understood as a 'specialist' approach. In other words, training is role-specific and
19 performance-oriented (Aycan 2005; Stravrou et al. 2010; Whitley 1994, 2000). This is also
20 reflected in the response from Company A's senior manager to a question about how the
21 company supports employees if they wish to receive further training unrelated to their roles:
22 "no, no, it's got to be relevant to our industries, it's got to be relevant to the jobs they are
23 doing". In contrast, Company B showed that they perform a limited level of job rotation as a
24 part of their training. Though it was limited to branches-branches/HQ-subsubsidiary rather than
25 roles, this still indicates some level of transition occurring in the British training system. In
26 the UK the three cases show that employees have a certain degree of freedom in choosing the
27 course, and they are free to receive further training their own expenses out of office hours.
28 The training provided is generally related to the businesses or industries the companies are in,
29 and the employees can choose what they think would be beneficial to them or their career
30 advancement, as the following response from Company A's CSR manager shows:
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35 *We provide trainings from MD2 level to degree level, but it is not in some specific area. So it*
36 *would be down to individuals... when it goes up into higher studies of education, it is down to*
37 *employees to apply to do what they see fit. Then it's approved all by senior management.*
38
39

40 Format of CSR training under specialist approach

41 Training is provided in two different forms and is of two different kinds: classroom settings
42 and online; mandatory or optional. Interestingly, however, they do not provide CSR-specific
43 training. Although they do provide basic mandatory training on important issues, such as
44 ethics, business conduct, and integrity issues, they are largely relying on on-the-job training,
45 community engagement activities encouraged by the companies, and online distribution of
46 information on those specific areas. Upon entering the company, employees receive regular
47 mandatory training related to the work they do, and this includes how they should be
48 conducting business responsibly, and what they should consider while they are doing their
49 jobs and making decisions. For instance, if one is working in HR, he/she will be trained in
50 diversity, employee well-being, importance of their expectations etc. Hence, in a way this
51 becomes job-specific CSR training. Regarding CSR-related training, Company B's senior
52 manager of CSR division responded as follows:
53

54 *[I]s it important to us that everybody knows the definition of sustainability? No. Is it*
55 *important to us that people are thinking long-term, making [the] right decisions, putting the*
56 *customers higher than what they do? Yes.*
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3 *[T]o us, it's not really [about] people knowing what sustainability is or what sustainability*
4 *stands for. It's more about how can we influence the organisation and make sure that kind of*
5 *responsible behaviour and actions are taking place.*
6

7
8 This shows that they believe it is not imperative to have formal classroom training in CSR
9 specifically, because the concepts of CSR are all embedded in each job description. Thus,
10 they are promoting CSR through embedding its concept into the business all-around, rather
11 than 'injecting' the idea.

12 Generalist approach and its incorporation of CSR training

13
14 Thus, while the UK appears to have integrated CSR training into existing job/role-specific
15 training, the Japanese cases show that they are also maintaining 'job rotation' training and
16 including CSR-specific training. In terms of distinctive features of their training mechanisms,
17 each responded with '*job rotation*', which has been another traditional Japanese policy,
18 known as the *ringi* system. Such a system is regarded as a generalist approach, in contrast to
19 the UK's specialist approach, as the Nikkei Weekly 2011 September edition describes it. This
20 is further supported by Figure 3, which is the training structure of one of the case companies.
21

22
23 [Insert Figure 3 Here]

24
25 As Figure 3 shows, except for management training, role-specific training can be selected by
26 employees based on their own preferences, and role-specific training only occurs once they
27 reach a senior management position.
28

29 Form of CSR training under Generalist approach

30
31 Due to these traits of the Japanese employee training structure, their CSR training cannot be
32 integrated into job training, as British companies do. Therefore, when employees join the
33 companies, they receive separate CSR-specific training. All three cases show that this is
34 mandatory, and upon completion, assessments are undertaken to qualify for training. This is
35 conducted in two different settings. Companies 1 and 3 provide web-based training for CSR
36 (so-called e-learning), whereas Company 2 used a classroom setting. Furthermore, various
37 material on CSR is frequently distributed to the employees to raise awareness, including
38 magazines, pamphlets, or handbooks. However, archival research also revealed that other
39 than the above-mentioned OJT training and the typical *ringi* system approach, off the job
40 training (Off-JT) (JILPT 2014/5) is gaining significance due to increasing international
41 competition and institutional pressure resulted from globalisation. Though limited, JILPT
42 describes its aim as to provide theoretical, additional knowledge, and specialised skill sets;
43 however, this was yet to be seen from the three cases. Recent studies have also shown a
44 decline in the number of lifetime employees mainly due to an increase in demand for atypical
45 workers and non-regular employees, shifting to service industry, a decrease in the birth-rate
46 and an ageing society (see Keizer 2008; Suzuki 2010; JILPT 2004/5). According to JILPT
47 (2014/5), employers show a preference for employees that can bring immediate impact to the
48 companies, especially with specialised skill sets. Such changes in both areas may indicate the
49 possibility of Japanese organisations moving away from their traditional generalist approach
50 and their typical lifetime employment. This is further supported by the following response
51 from an employee who has moved job three times:
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55 *It used to be considered to be taboo to switch the companies you work for, but now it is not so*
56 *much, especially with foreign companies.*
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3 However, two cases conflict with this statement. For instance, Company 1's employees'
4 average time at the company in 2011 was 18.9 years, and Company 3's was 15.4 years; and
5 the training is currently focused on training regular employees (*sogo shoku*), implying that
6 despite changing trends in valuing non-regular employees (*ippan shoku*) as well as employees
7 with specialised abilities, there are still certain areas remaining traditional.
8

9 10 **Diversity**

11 In probing organisations' HRM practices in relation to diversity, another element of
12 socially-responsible HRM practices, respondents struggled to give direct reasons, but rather
13 presented their organisations' actions in response to diversity issues.
14

15 Gender Diversity

16 The UK shows a balanced diversity ratio based on OECD data; however, as of 2012 at
17 Company A, 20% of the top management, 22% of senior management, and 24% in
18 middle-level management are female. In the case of Company B, 33% manager positions,
19 27% of senior managers, and only 19% at executive level are filled by women. This is
20 surprising, as female participation is high in the UK. When the interview respondents were
21 prompted, they calmly stated that they are aware of the issue and attempting to improve the
22 situation. Another respondent from company B, however, argued that "*I think those women's*
23 *priorit[ies] change and their priority is their family and having that time in their life to*
24 *pursue looking after their family as oppose[d] to pursuing getting on to the next scale or level*
25 *of management.*" And "*I am a woman, but I do feel a lot of women prioritise ... family over*
26 *career progression.*" Such responses indicate a possible priority change in women; however,
27 no respondents were able to give definite answers, despite the majority of UK respondents
28 being female. Japan, however, showed more severe problems. During the interviews it was
29 discovered that there are certain strata in job status known as *ippan shoku* (non-regular
30 employees) and *sogo shoku* (regular employees); and in Japan it is common knowledge that
31 more males are able to find regular employment than females. One of the employee
32 participants from Company 3 stated that "*I joined this company six years ago, and at that*
33 *time [there were] seventy new workers, 45 male and 25 female, and amongst the 25 female*
34 *only three made [it] to sogo shoku*". This indicates difficulties for females to achieve a
35 certain level in their career, discouraging them to pursue a career at all. This is further shown
36 from an expert's interview, who argued that it is not just an organisational issue, but a social
37 issue. The Nikkei weekly of 29 August 2011 showed only 43% of women who are available
38 to work are willing to do so. In addition, only 25% of the employees of Company 1 are
39 female, 18% for Company 2, and Company 3 shows a little less than 15%. The expert further
40 added that "*Japanese women do not have the concept of working for their career, but their*
41 *main objective is to find a good husband and settle down*", showing persistent gender
42 diversity issues resulting from the traditional male-dominated society.
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47 Diversity regarding foreign employees

48 Similar problems exist in terms of foreign employees in Japan. Unlike the multicultural
49 society of the UK, foreign employees in Japan have experienced a phenomenon known as the
50 'glass ceiling'. As has been pointed out, their high level of collectivism hardly allows
51 outsiders into their community; as for foreigners, unless they are fluent in Japanese, it is even
52 more difficult for them to penetrate such close-knit networks. For instance, managers from
53 foreign branches require constant communication with their headquarters, but it is generally
54 conducted in Japanese, thus created little appetite for non-Japanese managers (Black et al.
55 2010). When all three case companies' respondents were prompted they all responded "*we*
56 *are trying to improve the situation*". This is also further supported by the JILPT 2014/5
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3 survey, which shows that numbers of foreign workers are gradually increasing; however,
4 67.2% of employers said they have no plans to employ foreign employees, and even the
5 remaining employers responded that the main pre-condition was not their skill but their
6 ability in Japanese. This is also reflected in the following response from Company 2's CSR
7 team leader:
8

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10 *[t]here is a barrier, communication barrier. Our top management know that it is very*
11 *important to know (learn) how to speak English, and everybody outside speaks English too.*
12 *They are realising the situation. Well ... maybe [in] 2-3 years' time [it will get better]*
13

14 Policies and practices to promote diversity

15 However, there are also some signs of improved use of external labour market as well as
16 providing a better environment for foreign employees by both the state and organisations. For
17 instance, the Japanese government has set a national objective to promote the intake of
18 foreign employees; and Company 1 has introduced a separate training scheme for foreign
19 employees to meet their needs, while introducing a policy to encourage communication
20 within the company via English and Japanese. To address the gender diversity issue, all three
21 companies are introducing various benefits and flexible working hours for their female
22 employees. In the UK, on the other hand, companies set up various policies or workshops to
23 promote gender diversity. For example, Company A have a strict policy that they hire new
24 employees in a 50:50 gender ratio, and try to maintain the ratio at different levels by
25 encouraging their managers or team leaders to promote/hire more women when the ratio is
26 less than 50%. Company B sets up workshops to enhance their career advancement as well as
27 providing support and training to other female employees by senior employees.
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31 **Discussion and Conclusion**

32 **Discussion of findings**

33 As Adhikari et al. (2010) point out, "*National Culture is an important factor shaping*
34 *employment relation systems – a factor that directly or indirectly influences work-related*
35 *cultures*" (Adhikari et al. 2010, p. 2425). Such a claim is further supported by many studies
36 that have identified differences in various NBS systems and HRM resulting from societal,
37 cultural, and institutional setting differences (see Salsberg et al. 2011; Dore 1986; Tayeb
38 1994; Stiles 2009; Sako 1996, 2006; Sako and Sato 1997; Westney 1996; Whitley 1994, 2000,
39 2007; Amable 2003; Hall and Soskice 2001; Morgan et al. 2005; Stravrou et al. 2010). The
40 evidence also shows strong support for such logic of NBS. The fact that all cases show the
41 use of the language of CSR indicates that there is a certain level of convergence. Furthermore,
42 Japanese cases' responses to a question on their reasons for applying CSR ("*because our*
43 *partner companies want us to*" and "*because everyone is doing it*") also confirm that the
44 global institutions' coercive and mimetic isomorphic pressures are in play. However, the
45 findings also revealed contrasting results at a micro level.
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49 As argued in the earlier section, relations with institutional pressures and organisations are
50 complex, which requires understanding of organisations, national institutional pressure, and
51 global institutional pressure. The framework in Figure 2 was utilised due to such reasons, and
52 it is possible to discuss the extent of convergence/divergence of the two nations' HRM
53 practices (RQ1) and institutional pressure behind the change (RQ2), using Figure 2. In the
54 framework, it was argued that work organisations, education and training, and diversity are
55 key institutional factors in forming National HRM system. The three key institutional factors
56 influence socially-responsible HRM practices and HR practices to support CSR activities,
57 which consequently affect the CSR outcome of organisations. The presence of work
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3 organisations, in particular, is an institutional factor that can determine the degree of
4 systematic communication within organisations, promoting employee involvement as well as
5 alignment of employees' needs with CSR policy. Japanese enterprise unions' importance and
6 key roles in employee participation and communication largely remains. It still serves a hub
7 function that connects employer and employee, promoting communication between them. On
8 the other hand, the UK, argued to have weak work organisations (Whitley 2000), shows
9 greater change compared to the previous individualist approach. Though their unions remain
10 weak, a new form of work organisation has been established. Regular round-table meetings
11 between senior management and employee representatives, more committed employees, and
12 employee representative meetings are very similar to Japanese enterprise unions and how
13 they operate. This indicates possible convergence in institutional settings, or at least it does
14 not impede convergence of the two nations' CSR-HRM. However, training and education
15 remain unchanged. While this affects ethical labour standards and decent work (i.e. socially
16 responsible HRM practices), the UK maintains its specialist approach and Japan its
17 traditional generalist approach. The British training system incorporates CSR training into
18 job-specific training, rather than CSR-specific training, while Japanese training remains in a
19 classroom setting with assessments at the end, which can be seen as an extension of their
20 generalist education system. Although Japanese cases show training through e-brochure or
21 pamphlets, it does not appear to be training but informing their employees, which seem
22 symbolic rather than substantive change. Amongst the three institutional settings, diversity
23 appear to be the greatest problem of all, especially for Japan. In contrast to the UK's balanced
24 approach to diversity and promoting equal opportunities, which flows from Britain's
25 multicultural society, Japan still shows a high level of collectivist behaviour with low levels
26 of foreign and female employees. This does not mean that they are not promoting equal
27 opportunities: findings suggest they have established various policies and actions to promote
28 suitable work environments for both foreign and female employees. However, there is no
29 clear evidence that they have had positive impacts on diversity issues, though they may
30 suggest the possibility of convergence in policies. These existing differences between the two
31 national CSR-HRM systems indicate that it is not safe to conclude that their CSR-HRM
32 systems are converging. Indeed it is true that the UK's utilisation of employee representatives
33 as well as direct dialogue between senior managements and employees appear somewhat
34 similar to the Japanese enterprise union system. However, the very fact that the other two
35 institutional settings remain the same shows that they have not yet converged, despite the
36 wide use of language of CSR suggesting convergence at a macro level.
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42 Why do such differences at micro level occur in spite of the convergence at macro level? This
43 can be answered with RQ2, which suggests institutional pressure may encourage/impede
44 convergence/divergence of two very different nations' CSR-HRM systems. It has become
45 evident that multiple institutional levels exert influence over their CSR-HRM systems in
46 complex ways, as presented in Figure 2. The global institutional pressure has led both nations
47 to pursue CSR, and incorporate CSR into their existing HRM models. The national
48 institutional pressure leads organisations to operate CSR-HRM that fits the society, as argued
49 by the NBS, and organisations respond to these pressures. As stated previously, the UK
50 operates based on individualistic institutional settings, whereas Japanese institutional settings
51 lie in collectivism. The cases selected have a long history and reflect business system
52 characteristics, and their legitimacy is based on national societal-cultural norms. Thus, the
53 differences between the two cultural systems' institutional pressures play a significant role in
54 the divergence of CSR-HRM at a micro level. The UK's specialist approach, which
55 incorporates CSR training into their existing role-specific training, and the Japanese
56 generalist approach, which provides separate CSR training along with other general job
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3 training in classroom settings, assessments, e-brochures and pamphlets, are clear evidence
4 that national institutional pressures based on their individualist/collectivist societal-cultural
5 norms are more salient than the global institutional pressure. This includes the large numbers
6 of trade unions in the UK, Japanese enterprise unions, and the glass ceiling as well as the
7 gender imbalance in the workforce resulting from the male-dominated society in Japan.
8

9
10 In sum, convergence of CSR-HRM occurs at a macro level due to coercive and mimetic
11 global institutional pressure, but because of greater salience of national institutional influence
12 there is divergence of CSR-HRM at a micro level in societies that share contrasting societal
13 contexts. In other words, there is no universal form of CSR-HRM practice, but rather mixed
14 forms of CSR-HRM, which is established through interactions between global institutional
15 pressure that cause convergence and national institutional pressure (NBS) that cause
16 divergence (Jamali and Neville 2011). The complex interaction and institutional influence on
17 convergence/divergence of HRM have been identified and diagnosed with the aid of the
18 framework developed (Figure 2). Common use of the language of CSR, changes in work
19 organisation institutional settings of the UK, and Japanese attempts to improve organisational
20 policies and actions regarding diversity are showing evidence of convergence as a result of
21 global institutional pressure. However, unchanged training and education institutional
22 settings (generalist and specialist), levels of female labour participation and a hostile
23 environment for foreign employees in Japan, in contrast to the UK's, show divergence caused
24 by greater salience of local institutional pressure and societal-cultural norms i.e.
25 individualism and collectivism, and institutional settings established upon these norms (see
26 Table 3). This finding supports both Jamali and Neville (2011), and Matten and Moon (2008),
27 who emphasised global institutional pressure that drives convergence, but simultaneously
28 divergences are triggered by the differences in NBS. Furthermore, the findings present that
29 societal-cultural norms will continue to influence the local institutional settings and are
30 regarded as more salient over the global institutional pressure, despite ongoing globalisation
31 (Table 3), which also support the 'crossvergence' argument of Ralston (2008) and Jamali and
32 Neville (2011). These norms are deeply rooted in organisations and their behaviours as well
33 as their institutions, and they will continue to influence CSR-HRM in different contexts.
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37 [Insert Table 3]
38

39 Conclusion

40 This study provides a comparative institutional analysis, based on NBS, of the extent of
41 convergence/divergence of CSR-HRM in two different societal-cultural contexts, and the
42 institutional role in this change. Global pressure has led the two nations' HRM to converge to
43 a certain extent, despite the differences between the two societies. However, due to those
44 differences in their societal-cultural norms and institutional settings (NBS), they also show
45 divergences. Understanding the complexities in the institutional relations with national HRM
46 of two different societal contexts could not have been done without the assistance of the
47 proposed framework in Figure 2. Drawing on Jamali and Neville (2011), the paper
48 incorporated Whitley's (1994) concept of NBS with Cooke and He's (2010) concept of
49 CSR-HRM's relationship to compile an institutional framework for CSR-HRM research. It
50 positions organisations as the central unit of analysis, and allow researchers to understand
51 complex interactions of institutional pressure at any level in any context. With its assistance,
52 the paper was able to confirm that the convergence of the two national CSR-HRMs resulted
53 from the mimetic and coercive isomorphism caused by global institutional pressure. However,
54 at the same time, the local institutional pressure (i.e. NBS) appears to be deeply rooted in
55 their operations and institutional settings, and is thus more salient in diversity and education
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3 and training areas, and showing diversified HRM in the two nations. As a result, it can be
4 concluded that CSR-HRM in two different societal contexts are not uniform or standardised,
5 but convergence and divergence co-exist due to their differences in NBS, resulting in the use
6 of 'best-fit' models of HRM (Pudelko 2009; Stiles 2009) as well as indication of possible
7 'crossvergence' at global level.
8

9
10 In terms of practical implications, this paper strongly argues that it is important for
11 organisations to understand their societal-cultural context before pursuing CSR upon entering
12 a new organisational field. For example, Japanese society shows low female labour
13 participation, and their *sogo shoku* and *ippan shoku* classifications discourage women further
14 from pursuing careers. Therefore, providing various forms of benefits to female employees
15 may not be enough to encourage women to participate. However, Company A's (UK) policy
16 of a 50:50 gender ratio for new employees may be a better practice for a nation that suffers
17 from similar social issues like Japan, as it forces organisations to provide equal opportunities
18 and gives assurance to females as well as encouraging them to participate. Thus,
19 understanding the national institutional settings and societal-cultural norms, it becomes
20 possible to take appropriate actions, which can promote a stronger CSR-HRM outcome.
21 CSR-HRM does not need to converge: integration of convergence and divergence may suit
22 organisations in a more competitive way. Each national context and set of norms and values
23 is different. A HRM that worked well in one context may not work well in another, as each
24 NBS has its own distinctiveness that allow certain mechanisms to be more appropriate.
25 Therefore, through understanding local values and norms that are consistent with CSR, it
26 becomes possible to form more systematic and 'best-fitting' models of CSR-HRM for the
27 context.
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31 CSR is not yet well standardised, and therefore much effort has been paid to present
32 frameworks or guidelines to promote convergence of CSR. Wang and Juslin (2009) argued
33 that CSR is a concept derived from the West, and its understanding is not well established in
34 the East, thus an Eastern form of CSR may be necessary. However, this paper argues that it is
35 not necessary, but it is important to understand the complexity of institutional relations with
36 organisations' CSR-HRM, which include global HRM institutional pressure, national
37 societal-cultural values and norms, national HRM institutional pressure, and responses from
38 organisations. When the complexity of these relationships is understood, more systematic and
39 stronger forms of CSR can be realised. This paper provides an overview of the institutional
40 pressures and relationships in terms of CSR-HRM from two very different NBS contexts,
41 using the institutional framework introduced. However, it can further improve by making two
42 additions. As pointed out in Figure 2, global institutional pressure can affect the national
43 HRM institutional framework, which also can influence the existing norms, as shown by the
44 converged institutional settings. Therefore, when the global institutional pressure becomes
45 more salient than the existing national HRM institutional framework, the changes in the
46 relationships can be measured again using Figure 2. Furthermore, future research should
47 consider small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They are equally important national
48 economic contributors, and share a bigger global market than MNCs. Therefore the addition
49 of SMEs will certainly strengthen the quality of the study.
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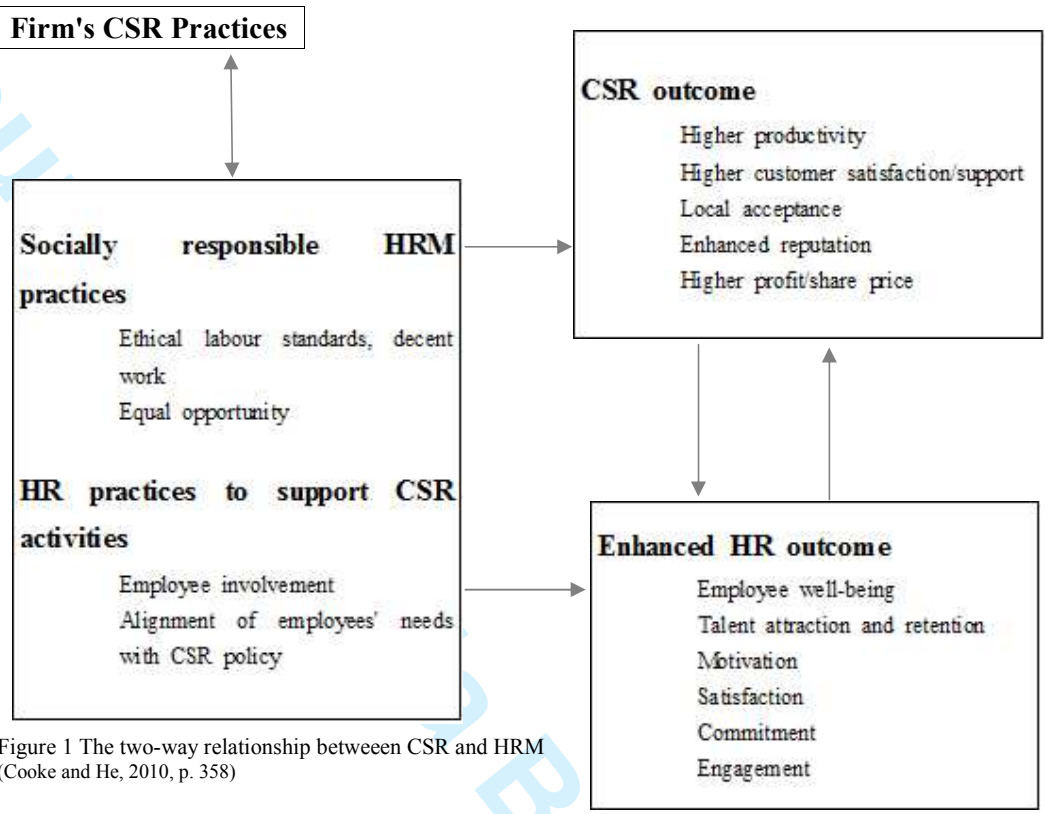


Figure 1 The two-way relationship between CSR and HRM (Cooke and He, 2010, p. 358)

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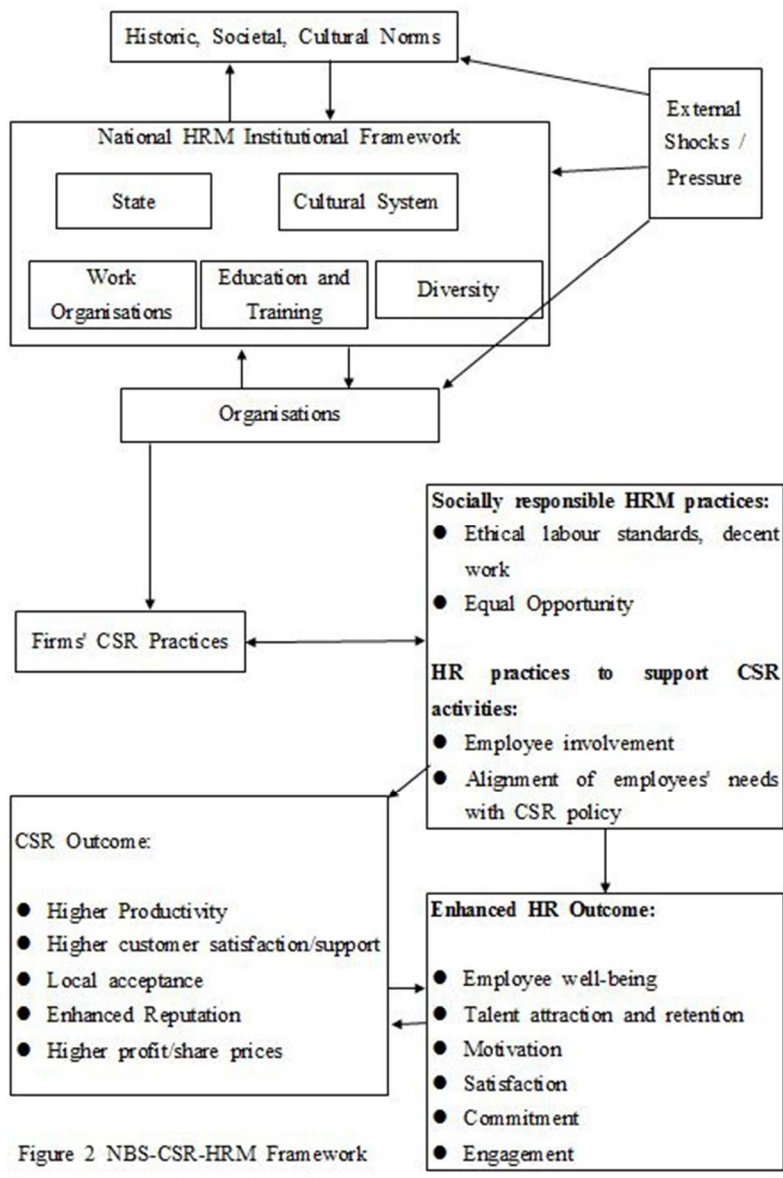


Figure 2 NBS-CSR-HRM Framework

NBS-CSR-HRM Framework

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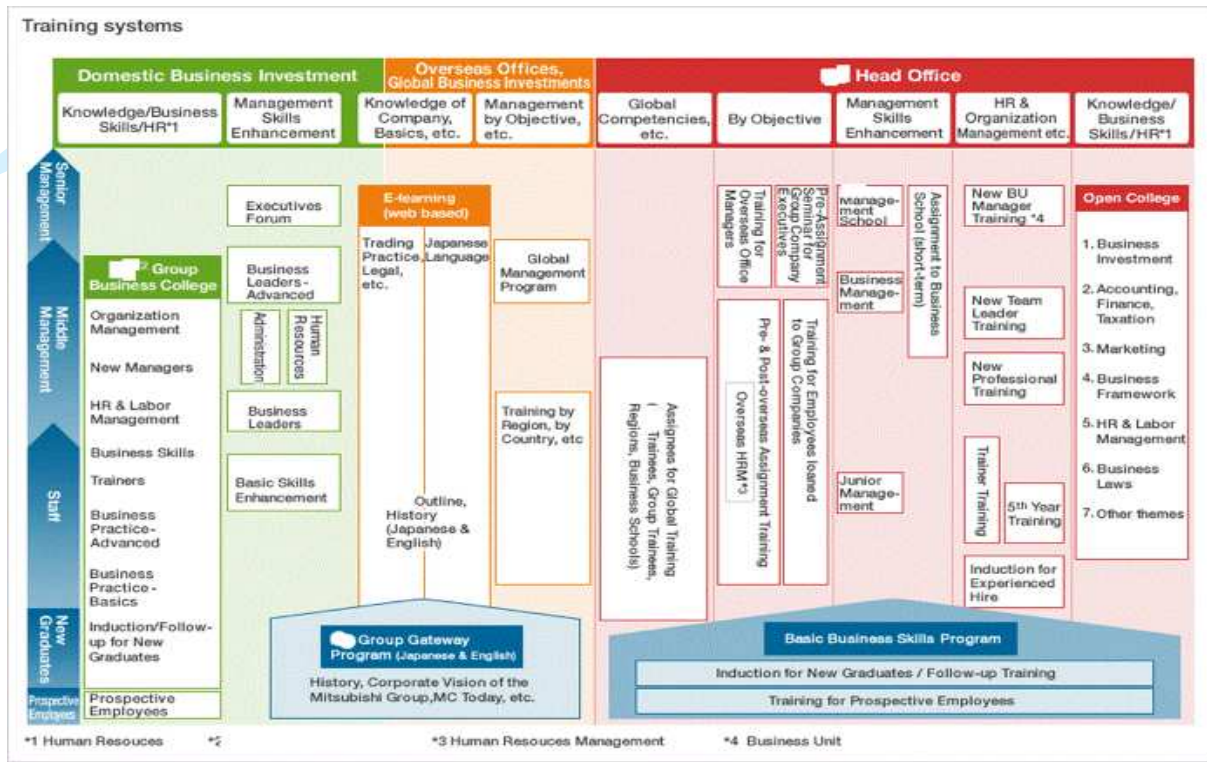


Figure 3 Japanese Company's training mechanism

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Table 1 Case Profile

| | UK | | | Japan | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| | Company A | Company B | Company C | Company 1 | Company 2 | Company 3 |
| Revenue (\$mil) | Top Range | Mid-Range | Mid-Range | Top Range | Mid-Range | Low Range |
| No. of employees | 80,000+ | 100,000+ | 100,000+ | 60,000+ | 100,000+ | 20,000+ |
| Type | Publicly listed | Publicly listed | Privately owned | Publicly listed | Publicly listed | Privately owned |
| History (established year) | 1982 | 1727 | 1984 (Privately owned since 2006) | 1954 | 1899 | 1899 |
| Note | One of the largest corporations in the UK | One of the largest financial organisations globally that has been owned by the UK holders | The largest privately-owned enterprise in the UK Turned private through M&A, showing the distinctive business culture of the UK | One of the oldest <i>keiretsu</i> companies in Japan Formerly played the central role in <i>keiretsu</i> network | One of the oldest electronic companies in Japan Only original electronic company that operates in both general and household markets | One of the oldest and largest privately-owned companies in Japan M&A never occurred, unlike in the UK |

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Table 2 Coding procedure of data

| Code | Theme | Comments |
|--------|----------------------|--|
| B-D-EM | Employee measurement | ... we have ... over 40 trade unions ... employee representative bodies |
| B-D-EE | Employee Engagement | We listen to our people in a variety of ways including focus groups, opinion surveys and conferences |
| B-D-ED | Employee measurement | Nearly 100,000 people shared their views in our annual employee opinion survey. |

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Table 3 Convergence and divergence of British and Japanese CSR-HRM

| | Institutional change |
|--------------------|---|
| Convergence | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common use of the language of CSR show global institutional pressure's coercive and mimetic isomorphism• Increased use of work organisations that is similar to Japanese enterprise unions for effective communication (UK)• Introduction of various forms of policies and practices to promote diversity (Japan) |
| Divergence | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National societal-cultural values and norms are deeply rooted in their operations• UK's specialist approach and Japanese generalist approach in training and education remain strong• Japan largely relies on their enterprise unions in communicating with employees• 'Glass ceiling' and lack of female labour participation still remain in Japan despite their efforts |

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