
Gauging the Impact of Country-Specific Values on the Acceptability of Global Management Accounting Principles

David R. Borker¹

Abstract:

The implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in many countries brings with it the necessity to upgrade and further train in-company private accountants to comply with these new external reporting requirements. As part of this process, it is assumed that company accountants will also be expected to perform the internal management accounting functions of the firm in a more efficient and effective manner in accordance with internationally recognized best practices. The full range of management accounting activities includes cost and profitability analysis and reporting, decision support analysis, and a variety of activities relating to the planning and budgeting process. It has previously been observed that a country's cultural and accounting values can have an impact on the success of its IFRS implementation. (Borker D. R., 2013) Furthermore, a more recent study indicates the likelihood that Global Management Accounting Principles (GMAP) as currently proposed by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), may also be found more or less acceptable based on country specific cultural and accounting values. (Borker D. R., Manuscript) This paper addresses the possible impact of such values on the management accounting activities of a firm. Specifically, it examines the potential impact on GMAP acceptability by different countries. Using Hofstede cultural values (Hofstede, 1980), and a set of accounting values based on Gray's original work (Gray, 1988), expanded to include other socio-cultural factors, (Borker D. R., 2014) an analysis is conducted based on a worldwide twelve-country sample. Management Accounting standards, discussed here, are based the Global Management Accounting Principles proposed the AICPA and CIMA. Results of the analysis indicate that cultural and accounting values of individual countries may have a differential impact of the acceptability and success of firms in implementing international management accounting standards.

Key Words: *Global Management Accounting Principles, International Financial Reporting Principles, Culturally Based Accounting Values*

JEL Classification: M40

¹ Professor, Department of Economics, Finance and Management, Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY, David.Borker@mville.edu

1. Introduction

In 2014, the AICPA and Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) published a draft document entitled *Global Management Accounting Principles*, including the subtitle *Effective management accounting: Improving decisions and building successful organisations* (AICPA and CIMA, 2014a). The draft was accompanied by a shorter checklist (AICPA and CIMA, 2014b) and a document on essential tools of the Global Management Accountant (AICPA and CIMA, 2013). This publication represents the most significant step to date toward establishing and integrated set of international accounting standards regarding the objectives of management accounting professionals. (Borker D. R., Manuscript) The standards are closely tied to CIMA's professional certification program for the Chartered Global Management Accountant. It should be noted that, with regard to methodology, there is considerable overlap between the professional tools cited in this document and the best practices cited by the Institute of Management Accounts (IMA) in its professional handbooks and teaching materials for the certification Certified Management Accountant. What distinguishes the CIMA/AICPA document is that it develops a set of key concepts and principles that Global Management Accounting Principles (GMAP) in much the way the IASB established concepts and standards for external financial reporting.

According to its authors, the purpose of the document is to support top executives and the Board of Directors in benchmarking and improving their management accounting systems, providing a reference for all management accountants to check that they are adding value for their internal and external customers, helping organizations to make better decisions, to respond appropriately to the risks they face and to protect the value they generate. (AICPA and CIMA, 2014a) An underlying theme throughout the document is the key role of management accounting and the management accountant in helping organizations to achieve sustainable success using appropriate and continually refined tools, techniques and diagnostics and people skills to help organizations assess the effectiveness of their management accounting functions and identify areas for improvement.

The document describes four global management accounting principles and fourteen Practice Areas of Management Accounting to which principles are applied and for which related skills and tools are required on a comprehensively updated basis.

Four Global Management Accounting Principles

The four principles, which are noted to be “continuous” rather than “sequential” in nature, are cited below along with their connected subheadings:

- **Communication provides insight that is influential**
 - strategy development and execution is a conversation
 - communication is tailored
 - communication facilitates better decisions

- **Information is relevant**
 - information is the best available
 - information is reliable and accessible
 - information is contextual
- **Impact on value is analysed**
 - simulations provide insight into options
 - actions are prioritised by their impact on outcomes
- **Stewardship builds trust**
 - accountability and credibility
 - sustainability
 - integrity and ethics

These broad principles, as described in the document, paint a picture of the management accountant as a capable and reliable key analyst, diagnostician and communicator within the organization who is influential in the creation of value for the organization and its many stakeholders.

Fourteen Practice Areas

1. Cost transformation and management
2. External reporting
3. Financial strategy
4. Internal control
5. Investment appraisal
6. Management and budgetary control
7. Price, discount and product decisions
8. Project management
9. Regulatory adherence and compliance
10. Resource management
11. Risk management
12. Strategic tax
13. Treasury and cash management
14. Internal audit

Consistent with the broad objectives of the four principles, the above practice areas cover a broad range of key strategic, tactical and operational functions of management. In the descriptions of the practice areas, reference is frequently made to value creation, sustainability and accountability to the many shareholders of the organization. In order to carry out the objectives of the management accounting principles in these various practice areas, reference is made to long list of tools and techniques that is intended to be continuously updated and refined. That list is not cited in its entirety here but comprises a wide range of skills associated with accountants and other financial professionals from the areas of governance and risk management, strategic planning and execution, performance management and measurement, planning and forecasting, product and service delivery, and value recognition. Some concrete examples from these areas are CGMA Ethical

Management Reflection Checklist, The Balanced Scorecard – including operational dashboards, KPIs – financial and non-financial, Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB), Cash Flow Modelling, Activity-Based Costing (ABC), Quality Management Tools – including TQM, Six Sigma, Cost of Quality and EFQM, and Value Chain Analysis. The list reflects skills and tools from many management disciplines, emphasizing the multidisciplinary focus that the management accountant is expected to take. (AICPA and CIMA, 2014a)

Reaction to GMAP

It is obvious that the GMAP broad view of the management accountant as a central management player fusing accounting, financial analytical and other skills sets to create value in the organization contrasts with narrower traditional views of management accounting as concerned primarily with cost analysis/reporting and budgeting. Some critics question the broad set of objectives and expectation that management accounting should have be accountable for issues of value creation and multidisciplinary analytical methods. They see GMAP as an attempt to force all organizations to follow the path of Wall Street and multinationals corporations toward efficiency and sustainable success. (Masztalerz, 2014) Others have viewed GMAP as the natural product of the evolution of management accounting professional organizations (CIMA and IMA) toward a fusion of accounting and financial management skills as comprising a single activity essential to supporting decisions within the organization. (Borker D. R., Manuscript) Borker specifically cites similarities between IFRS and GMAP in terms of the emphasis of both on the cultural accounting values of professionalism, optimism, flexibility, and transparency, as well as, stewardship in protecting the interests of stakeholders. Based on earlier analyses of IFRS orientation, using national cultural values of Gert Hofstede and Sydney Gray, Borker proposes developing a sociocultural approach to gauging the acceptability of GMAP by management accountants and organizations in various countries. (Borker D. R., 2013) (Borker D. R., 2014) (Borker D. R., Manuscript)

Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper is (1) to propose a quantitative methodology for estimating the degree to which companies and management accountants in individual countries are likely in cultural terms to be receptive to and successful in adopting the Global Management Accounting Principles proposed by AICPA/CIMA based on national cultural value work and (2) to perform a preliminary test of this methodology on a selected sample of twelve countries consisting of Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Germany, India, Japan, Nigeria, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, United States.

2. Literature Review

IFRS versus GMAP

In a comparison of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and Global Management Accounting Principles (GMAP), Borker notes that, in spite of one focusing on external and the other internal reporting, both standard systems have much in common. (Borker D. R., Manuscript):

1. Both see standards as general principles of action interpreted by accounting professionals rather than strictly defined via statutory control.
2. Both see principles based standards as offering flexibility, as opposed to imposing uniformity, allowing the management accounting professional room to adapt analysis to specific stakeholder needs
3. Both espouse a belief in transparency within the limits of their aims. For IFRS, transparency protects the interests of the investor and the general public, while for MA, transparency or openness is favored at an appropriate level for the stakeholder and activity. This does not contradict the proprietary nature of MA generated information.
4. Both acknowledge stewardship and responsibility to various stakeholders In GMAP, it is evident that greatest emphasis is placed on shareholder wealth and customers. IFRS focuses on all external users, but with special emphasis on the investor/shareholder.
5. Ethics are important for both and are connected with responsibilities to the various stakeholders.

The paper goes on to state that this comparison indicates that cultural accounting values developed by Gray on the basis of Hofstede's cultural value dimensions, would have a similar relationship to GMAP acceptability as they were found to have to IFRS orientation in earlier studies. (Borker D. R., 2014) (Borker D. R., 2014)

Literature on cultural and accounting value studies applied to accounting systems and to IFRS.

In 1980 Geert Hofstede published his first book on cultural value dimensions worldwide. He reported index scores for individual countries for four cultural dimensions: Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance. (UAI). (Hofstede, 1980) Subsequently, Hofstede developed additional cultural dimensions including Long-Term Orientation (LTO) and Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR). (Hofstede, 2001) (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) (Hofstede, 2013)

Eight years after the appearance of Hofstede first book on his cultural value dimensions, Gray wrote a paper in which he posited a relationship between Hofstede's individual country cultural value dimensions and a set of accounting value dimensions. Gray identified four accounting dimensions, Conservatism (opposite of Optimism), Uniformity (opposite of Flexibility), Professionalism (opposite of Statutory Control) and Secrecy (opposite of Transparency). (Gray, 1988) He related these accounting dimensions to Hofstede cultural dimension via four hypotheses based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions

In a conceptual paper, Borker developed a revised mapping of the relationship between Gray accounting value dimensions and Hofstede cultural value dimensions that provides relative weightings based on Gray's indications in his original article. He also expanded his model to include two Hofstede dimensions identified after Gray's article, specifically Long-term orientation (LTO) and Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR). (Borker D. R., 2013a)

In a subsequent study, a methodology was developed for measuring the level of a country's cultural IFRS orientation through two indices: the Composite IFRS Orientation Index, and the Expanded IFRS Orientation Index. (Borker, 2014) The first of these indices quantifies the level of fit between a given country's accounting cultural values and those of IFRS. The procedure involves first establishing a methodology for quantifying each of the Gray four cultural dimensions for a given country and then adjusting and combining these scores to derive a quantitative measure of the overall level of fit with the Gray four accounting values favorable to IFRS. Borker uses an average of the Gray accounting value scores for each value dimension weighted to reflect Gray's full comments on the relationship and importance of Hofstede's original four culture dimensions to develop the Composite IFRS Orientation Index. This index is used in the current paper as a major input in the development of a GMAP-Index for measuring potential viability and acceptability of GMAP in various countries.

Another index was developed from the IFRS Orientation Index that incorporated various socio-political factors thought to be associated with the accounting value of Stewardship, a value not included in Gray's original dimensions. This second index is the Expanded IFRS Orientation Index. (Borker D. R., 2014) It is determined by taking a weighted average of the Composite IFRS Orientation Index, weighted at 80% plus scores for four sociocultural indices each weighted 5%. The indices are: (a) The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) provided by Transparency International, (Transparency International, 2013) (b) an adaptation of AON's political risk ratings by which the higher a country's political risk, the lower the score it receives, (AON, 2013), (c) the United Nation's Education Index adjusted for inequalities, (Malik, 2013), and (d) the World Bank's Regulatory Index. (World Bank, 2013)

Elements of the inputs used in calculating the Expanded IFRS Orientation Index are also used in the development of the GMAP-Index.

3. Methodology

The basic methodology consists of (a) developing rules for calculating a quantitative GMAP Index based on assumptions relating to previous studies and (b) applying this calculation to a sample of worldwide countries.

The GMAP Index:

The following assumptions proposed previously (Borker D. R., Manuscript) underlie the development in this study of a quantitative index for measuring favorable orientation toward Global Management Accounting Principles (GMAP):

1. It is assumed in this study that the proposed Composite IFRS Orientation Index (Borker D. R., 2014) based Hofstede's original four cultural value dimensions (Hofstede, 1980) and Gray's four accounting dimensions (Gray, 1988) varies positively with a more favorable orientation toward Global Management Accounting Principles (GMAP). This is already captured in the previously developed Composite IFRS Orientation Index B-version (Borker D. R., 2014)
2. It is assumed that the Stewardship value dimension index based on four equally weighted socio-cultural measures (Borker D. R., 2014) also varies positively with favorable orientation toward GMAP.
3. It is assumed that Hofstede's Long-Term Orientation Index (LTO) varies positively with favorable orientation toward GMAP
4. It is assumed that the Education Index used as one of the four factors in the Stewardship Index (Borker D. R., 2014) varies positively with favorable GMAP orientation and is worthy of additional independent weight.
5. It is assumed that a new index indicating the degree of participation in stock ownership with individual countries varies positively with favorable GMAP orientation.

On the basis of the above assumptions, it was decided that the Composite IFRS Orientation Index should be given the greatest weight, while the other four factors should be given equal weight. The resultant weightings for components of the GMAP Orientation Index are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Components of GMAP-Index with Weightings

Component	Weighting
IFRS Composite Index (Borker, 2014)	0.6
Stewardship Index (Borker, 2014)	0.1
Hofstede Long-term Orientation Index	0.1
Education Index	0.1
Shareholder Index	0.1
Total	1.0

Application of the GMAP-Index calculation to selected country sample:

For purposes of testing the GMAP-Index, a sample set of twelve countries was selected that would include major cultural groupings and geographic location worldwide. This sample includes some highly developed countries and some countries with developing and transitional economies. The final list is summarized below along with columns that indicate connections among countries:

Table 2. Hofstede Dimension Indices by Country

Country	Geo-Area	Anglo-American	Highly Developed	Transitional	Developing
Australia	Oceanic-Pacific	X	X		
Brazil	S. America			X	X
China	Asia			X	
Egypt	MENA			X	X
Germany	Europe		X		
India	Asia			X	X
Japan	Asia		X		
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa				X
Portugal	Europe		X		
Russia	Eurasia			X	
Turkey	MENA			X	
U.S.	N. America	X	X		

These countries also provide of diverse selection of national cultural values based on Hofstede's four original cultural dimensions (PDI=Power-Distance; IDV=Individualism/Collectivism; MSC=Masculinity versus Femininity; UAI=Uncertainty Avoidance) and later developed LTO (Long-Term Orientation) and IVR (Indulgence vs. Restraint).

Table 3. Hofstede Dimension Indices by Country

	PDI	IDV	MSC	UAI	LTO	IVR
Australia	11	55	79	70	21	71
Brazil	69	38	49	76	44	59
China	80	20	66	40	118	24
Egypt	70	25	45	80	7	4
Germany	35	67	66	65	83	40
India	77	48	56	40	61	26
Japan	77	48	56	40	61	26
Nigeria	80	30	60	55	16	84
Portugal	63	27	31	104	28	33
Russia	93	39	36	95	81	20
Turkey	66	37	45	85	46	49
U.S.	40	91	62	46	26	68

4. Results

Results of applying new revised analytic framework for the GMAP-Index to actual countries are provided in this section. Table 4 indicates the resultant index scores as well as the scores for the various factors utilized in computing the GMAP-Index. The individual input component score are presented in their full magnitude without weighting. For graphic representation of these components with proper weights, see Figure 2.

Table 4. Derivation of GMAP-Index from Five Source Components

Weights	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	WTD AVG
Factor	Composite IFRS Orientation Index	Shareholder Intensity Index	Education Index	LTO Dimension Score	Stewardship Index	GMAP-I
Australia	84	90	97	21	94	80
Brazil	50	4	50	44	43	44
China	56	15	48	118	44	56
Egypt	43	5	35	7	26	33
Germany	72	32	93	83	89	73
India	65	5	26	61	35	52
Japan	54	78	86	88	85	66
Nigeria	53	5	25	16	18	38
Portugal	35	8	70	28	77	40
Russia	36	0	78	81	45	42
Turkey	46	15	44	46	59	44
U.S.	85	54	94	26	91	78

Australia, the United States, Germany have the highest GMAP-Index scores and also have the highest Composite IFRS Orientation Index scores. They also share the highest education index scores and the highest Stewardship scores. Egypt, Nigeria, Portugal and Russia have the lowest GMAP-Index scores and also have the lowest scores for CIOI, except for Nigeria.

The relative position of the twelve GMAP-Index country scores can be seen in the graphic representation in Figure 1.

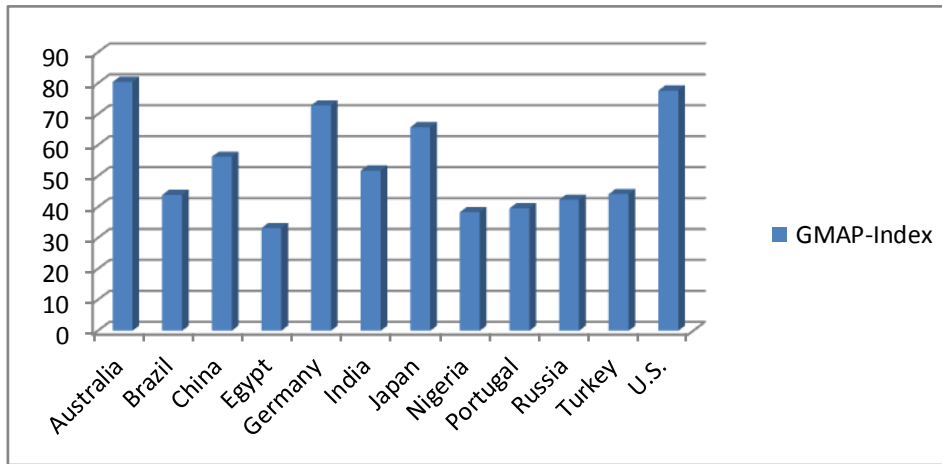


Figure 1. GMAP Index Scores by Country

Here one sees the higher potential GMAP receptivity of the Triad and Anglo-American countries Australia, the United States, Germany and Japan. Just below this *first tier* are the BRIC countries China and India with GMAP-Index forming a *second tier* with scores in the fifties. The remaining six countries form the *third tier*, with scores ranging from the low thirties to low forties. At the higher end are Turkey and BRIC countries Brazil and Russia, with Egypt at the low end.

The impact of the various source components of the GMAP-Index can best be seen is a graphic representation segments the total index score for each country into the five weighted components from which it is derived. This is provided in Figure 2 below.

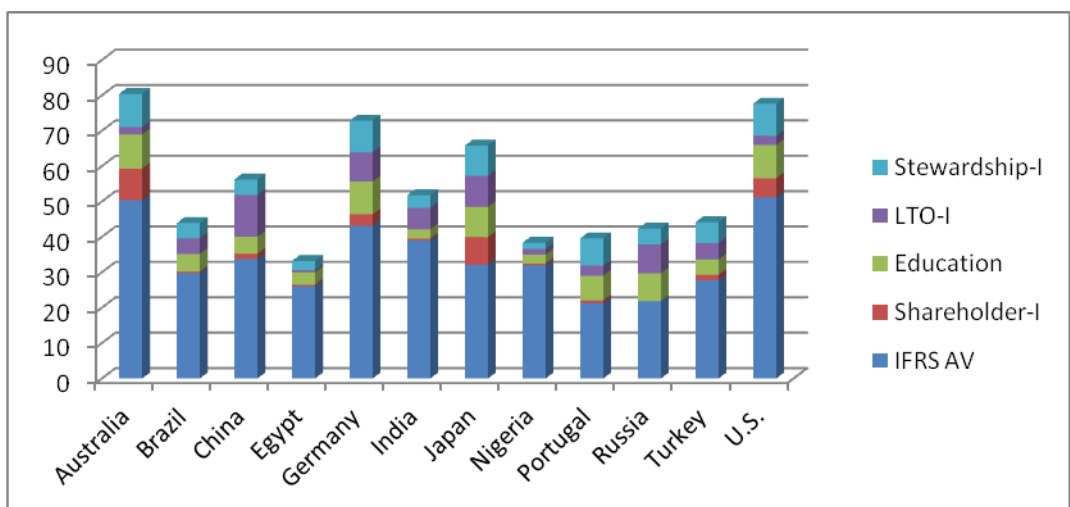


Figure 2. Components of GMAP Index Scores by Country*First Tier*

Australia and the United States have a similar relative contribution of components, except that Australia has a stronger Shareholder Intensity component. Germany has a relatively lighter Shareholder component while Japan has a high Shareholder component on a par with Australia. Both Germany and Japan have a significantly higher contribution from Hofstede's Long-Term Orientation index score than do Australia or the United States. Japan's lowest score in the top tier is primary due to its weaker Composite IFRS Orientation Index, which is lower than that of India and China and close to that of Nigeria.

Second Tier

China's score exceeds that of India on the GMAP-Index in spite of the fact that India has a much higher contribution from the Composite IFRS Orientation Index. The primary reason for this is China's extraordinarily high contribution from the LTO index. China has the highest ranking on this Hofstede dimension of any country in the world. India has a higher LTO component than Australia and the United States, but does not compare with China in this regard. China also enjoys higher contributions than does India for education and stockholder intensity.

Third Tier

Top scorers Brazil and Turkey have a very similar breakdown of contribution components, except that Turkey has a relatively higher contribution than Brazil from stewardship and stockholder intensity. Next ranking Russia exceeds Nigeria and Egypt, in spite of their higher or equal contributions from the Composite IFRS Orientation Index, due to Russia's strongest LTO contribution within the third tier and its strong education component. In spite of having the highest CIOI in this tier, Nigeria suffers from very low contributions for education, stewardship and LTO.

The relationship between the Composite IFRS Orientation Index used to indicate favorable cultural orientation toward use of IFRS in external financial reporting and the GMAP-Index indicating receptivity to the newly proposed Global Management Accounting Principles is represented graphically in Figure 3, below.

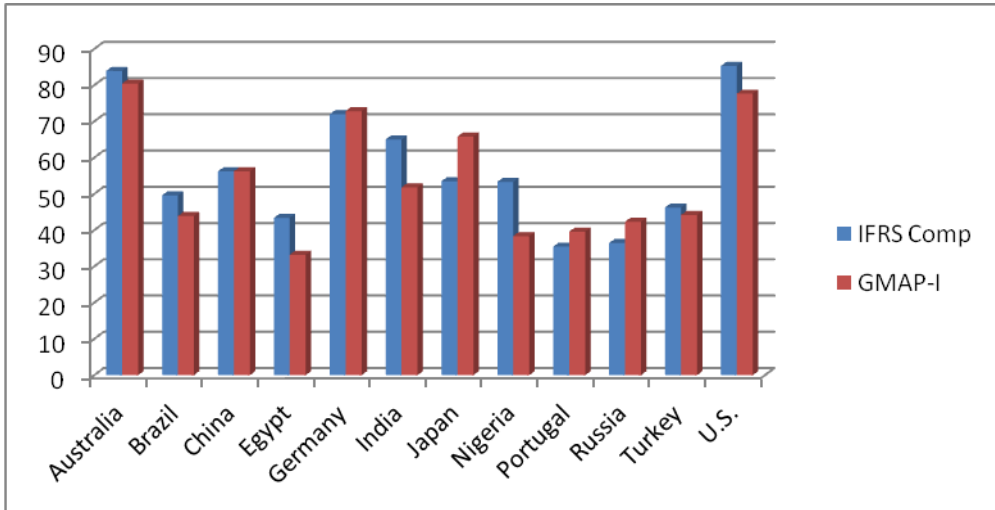


Figure 3. IFRS Composite Index Scores versus GMAP Index Scores by Country

There is a strong positive relationship between the Composite IFRS Orientation Index (CIOI) and the GMAP-Index, which would be expected given the sixty percent weighting given to the former in computing the latter. China is the only country where the two indices are virtually the same. Of the other eleven countries, seven have CIOIs that exceed their GMAP-Index and four have a higher GMAP-Index than their CIOI. The primary cause for this is the relative magnitude of each country's Long-Term Orientation Dimension (LTO) score. Those with relatively high LTO are more likely, all things being equal, to have a higher GMAP-Index, while those countries with a relatively low LTO score are more likely to have a higher CIOI.

The relative magnitude of LTO dimension scores by country is represented graphically in Figure 4 below.

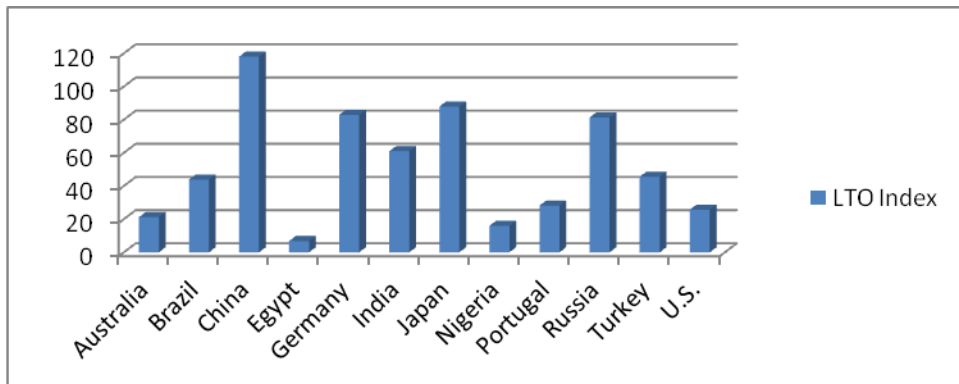


Figure 4. Hofstede Long-term Orientation Index Scores by Country

There are five countries with relatively high LTO scores. These are, in order of magnitude, China, Japan, Germany, Russia and India. Of these countries, all but China have higher GMAP-Index scores than CIOI. Seven countries have LTO index scores below 50. These are from lowest to highest, Egypt, Nigeria, Australia, United States, Portugal, Brazil and Turkey. All seven countries have higher CIOI than GMAP-Index scores.

Educational level and the distribution of stockholders within the population are viewed as import socio-cultural factors in determining the perceived importance and desirability of international management accounting standards like those proposed in GMAP. Figure 5 provides a graphic representation of the relative level of these two indices among the twelve sample countries.

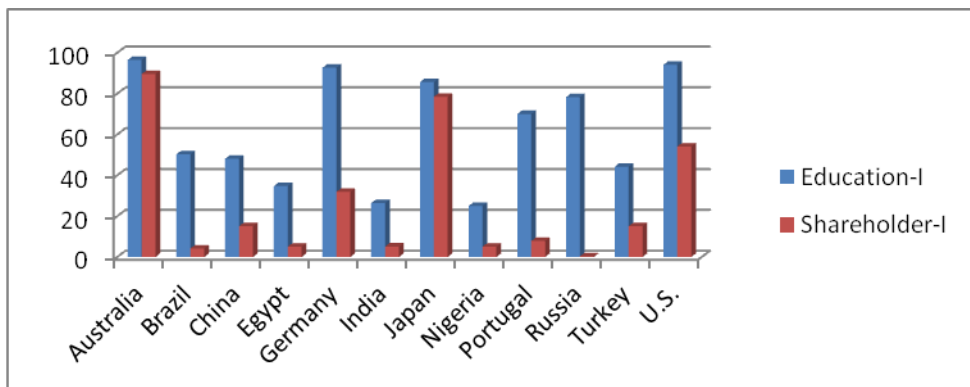


Figure 5. Education Index Scores versus Shareholder Index Scores by Country

First Tier

This group has the four highest rankings for educational level among the sample countries with uniformly high scores. It also has the four highest ranking for stockholder intensity within the population, although these score show greater diversity as to magnitude. Australia and Japan rank highest for shareholder distribution with the United States and Germany somewhat lower.

Second Tier

China ranks higher than India for educational level, but is exceeded by Russia, Portugal and Brazil from the third tier group. China's stockholder intensity exceeds India and all of the third tier countries, except for Turkey.

Third Tier

Russia leads this group for education and, actually ranking first after the first tier group in this regard. On the other hand, Russia's stockholder intensity is the lowest within the twelve country sample. This is perhaps due to its communist past, although it is in contrast with China, which shares with Turkey the highest ranking for stockholder intensity within the third tier. After Russia, the third tier's country

rankings for education from highest to lowest are: Portugal, Brazil, China, Turkey, Egypt, India, and Nigeria. After China and Turkey, the third tier's country rankings for stockholder intensity are highest for Portugal and lowest for Russia, with the other three countries having roughly the same results.

5. Discussion

Overall GMAP results for the test group indicate that the same countries that have a strong IFRS orientation, based on exhibiting stronger dimensional attributes of professionalism, optimism, flexibility and transparency as reflected by their respective Composite IFRS Orientation Index Scores. When tempered with socio-cultural inputs regarding stewardship, education, stockholder ownership, and long-term orientation, some adjustments occur.

One factor which is absent from both the IFRS Composite and Expanded Orientation indices used in previous IFRS studies, is the impact of Hofstede's long-term orientation index as a separate input. Most of the traditionally high scored countries for IFRS orientation, particularly the Anglo-American countries, tend to have relatively low long-term orientation. This is often referred to as a bottom line orientation often associated with western equity market countries where a strong emphasis is placed on the prompt reporting of current earnings. Other countries with higher long-term orientation, such as Germany, China, Japan, and India receive a slightly higher GMAP score than they would otherwise have as a result of LTO. Such countries are seen as having a greater likelihood to favor more planning and a more serious strategic orientation towards the goal of sustainable long-term growth. In countries with relatively low corruption levels, this is consistent with greater accountability from planners, project managers and strategic decision makers for the care and reliability of their analyses and recommendations. In contrast, in cultures with relatively low LTO and frequent job changing, there may be a pressure on management accountants and financial managers to focus on current impacts of decisions that may affect bonuses and stock price rather than appropriately balancing these results with long-term targets.

It is one thing to prepare fair financial statements in accordance with IFRS. Here it is important to develop the appropriate professional attributes of accountants preparing and auditing financial statements combined with the fiduciary responsibility to stockholders and other stakeholders properly report and safeguard the assets of the company through stewardship. The work of the management accountant, as conceptualized in GMAP, is more complex and diversified than that of financial accounting. Nonetheless, it requires all of the professional attributes of the financial accountant, plus a high level of accountability for providing relevant and actionable analysis communicated in a way that influences informed strategically appropriate decisions that add value to the organization and its stakeholders.

Conclusion

The results of applying the GMAP-Index introduced in this paper indicates that socio-culturally based value criteria can be used to differentiate the potential acceptability of Global Management Accounting Principles in the organizations of various countries.

Future work should be done to further refine the computation of this tool in light of new information, including changes in GMAP as the concepts evolve and evidence of the acceptance of GMAP by firms and accounting organizations in various countries. Also, the current model should be tested against other country groups, such as Central and Eastern European countries, MENA, and EU countries, to determine if the results are reasonable and consistent with events.

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