

# Cultural Factors and their Effects on Organisational Justice. A Conceptual Framework for Malaysians Assessment Centres

Mohd Hanafiah Ahmad, Mohd Rashid Ab. Hamid and Nor Azlinna Azizan

---

## Abstract

This paper aims to explore how Malaysian cultures may influence the acceptance of assessment centres practice in Malaysia. Although assessment centres are a popular technique that has been used and studied for at least 50 years, primarily in Western countries (Thornton & Rupp, 2006), there is a general lack of research into the implementation and effectiveness in developing countries in spite of a widespread growth in their use in recent years (Thornton & Krause, 2009). Therefore, it is important to understand how cultural differences may influence the implementation of assessment centres and how this might differ from its implementation in more developed nations. In this regard, this paper focuses on exploring the acceptance of assessment centres in Malaysia by using the organisational justice theory. Based on literature review, a conceptual framework of how the Malaysian culture may influence the acceptance of assessment centres in Malaysian public sectors will be proposed.

**Keywords:** Assessment Centres, Malaysian Culture, Organisational Justice Theory, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice

---

## Introduction

Assessment centres are an approach that involves multiple assessment processes, where a group of participants takes part in exercises and is observed by a team of trained assessors who evaluate each participant against a number of predetermined, job-related behaviours (International Task Force on Assessment Center Guidelines, 2009; Thornton, Rupp, & Hoffman, 2014). Scholars suggest that assessment centres may help an organisation obtain a large amount of information about a person in a relatively short period of time (Bray, 1982; Gibbons & Rupp, 2009), and useful to facilitate various human resource decisions (Ballantyne & Povah, 2004; Cahoon, Bowler, & Bowler, 2012; Thornton & Rupp, 2006). As a result, this approach is now widely used by organisations in many countries, not only for managerial positions but also for non-managerial positions at different levels (Lanik & Gibbons, 2011; Lievens & Thornton, 2005).

The rapid increase in the number of assessment centres around the world however, has raised questions about the application of this approach in diverse countries. Although scholars explained that the success of this approach is due to its versatility and adaptability to the different purposes of the assessment centre, as well as to cultural, societal, and organisational requirements (Thornton, 2011), however, literature search shows that there has been very limited research carried out in the field of assessment centres to support these suggestions.

In relation to this, this paper is aimed to add a specific contribution to knowledge, by proposing a conceptual framework in evaluating how Malaysian Culture may influence the acceptance of assessment centres using organizational justice theory. The specific objectives of this study are as follows: