A LIMITED ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES IN JAPANESE AND AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American automobile industry is currently suffering a dramatic decline in business. There are conceivably many reasons for this decline, the most frequently discussed reason seems to be the quality and craftsmanship of both American and Japanese automobiles.

This study focused on the training and development of American and Japanese employees, management/employee relations and the issue of "quality" that currently is surrounding the inferior-superior automobile quality syndrome. This study was not an attempt to prove that Japanese automobiles are superior to American automobiles. There have been very few studies linking the development of corporate human resources and the proportional effect upon the quality of a product being provided by this resource within the automobile industry.

Practical reasoning supporting this study was derived through sentiments expressed by American and Japanese automobile operators, national media coverage, local newpaper interest, colleagues, and curiosity. Is it possible that automobiles made by people representing different cultures could vary so much that the purchasing behavior of human beings can be influenced? This was a nagging question for which there seems to be no answer; only strong feelings and perceptions.

Additional reflection generated other curiosities. Do Japanese produce better quality automobiles? If so, why? Are reasons for

higher quality perceptions among Americans related to Japan's assiduous determination, diligent dedication and whole life/whole job approach to employment?

After brainstorming sessions concerning these questions were conducted, a counter-balance of thought formed seeking answers related to the perceived failure of American automobile manufacturers to match the efforts of Japanese manufacturers. This trend of thought materialized from participants without instigation.

The discipline of Japanese people in every area of involvement also had had an effect upon this study. At times the Japanese appear to be exceedingly methodic in their behavior while maintaining a strong, almost religious dedication to the task at hand. If this same behavior is found during the construction of their automobiles, a particular effort to insure the job is performed correctly, it would lead an individual to think that the level of product quality would exceed average levels of quality.

A preponderance of total, sustained dedication partily involves the development of Japanese people from birth. Relentless encouragement from family and peers to study and advance serves as a pillar of strength and justifies their rigorous paths.

Many conversations among consumers in the market for an automobile are centered around the pros and cons of purchasing a particular automobile. Normally the good aspects of an automobile are generated by sales people and evaluating these aspects is the burden of the consumer. Regardless of consumers' decision to buy or not to buy, they may leave the dealership with more confusing and misleading, although convincing, data than with which they arrived.

As a backdrop for this study a discussion surrounding some domestic and foreign ideas and practices regarding the training and development of people is in order. Japanese people have traditionally demonstrated their staunch belief in the development of human resources as the most practical approach to creating a manageable group of people (Vogel, 1979, pp. 158-183). Conversely, American corporations have traditionally relied upon the spirit of its laborers to resist the fatigue, set backs and anxiety associated with industrialization, demonstrating their preoccupation with profits to a seemingly indifference to the needs of employees.

Statement of Problem

Increased attention to the area of employee development and its relation to the quality of products was generated during the beginning of the American automobile industry decline in business. The increased desire of American consumers to purchase foreign, primarily Japanese, automobiles additionally served as a reminder of the ability of Japanese management to persuade consumers. Although the fuel efficient reputation of import automobiles was an initial factor in a purchasing behavior change, fuel efficiency rapidly combined itself with proven quality performance of import automobiles and together these two factors laid the foundation for the current condition of the American automobile industry. Through the mechanics of a supply and demand economy, a decrease in productivity and the elimination of jobs once held by productive American automobile workers is inevitable.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study was to assemble data reflecting

perceptions and beliefs related to the training and development of automobile industry workers and the relationship to the quality of the automobile provided by American and Japanese auto workers.

Need for Study

In addition to expressing the vital role of American and Japanese managers in the lives of typical workers, a summarization of the character of both American and Japanese workers in the eyes of members of our society will enable the visualization of the contrast of people involved with the construction of automobiles. The revealing of differing methods and practices of management between the American and Japanese societies could ideally serve as a stepping stone for the improvement of human resource development throughout the automobile industry.

Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify perceptions concerning the quality of American and Japanese automobiles.
2. Analyze perceptions of the training and development of personnel in Japanese corporations and contrast it with the perceptions of training and development of personnel in American corporations.

Assumptions

Some of the assumptions made for this study were:

1. People surveyed accurately reflected the beliefs, concerns and perceptions of a larger population distribution.

2. All automobile manufacturers have differing levels of complexity of training and development programs for their employees.
3. The quality of American and Japanese automobiles vary.

Limitations

1. This study was limited to investigating training and development of automobile employees as seen through the eyes of trainers, trainees, Japanese and American dealers, managers, and consumers.
2. The author entered this study with a firm belief that a superior relationship exists between the training and development of Japanese automobile industry employees and the quality of automobiles they produce.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined for use in this study.

Human Resource Development - The devotion of time by managers to nurture the leadership potential, motivation, morale, climate, commitment to objectives, and the decision-making, communication, and problem-solving skills of their people.

"People" Emphasis - A generic phrase that covers a person's feelings about every dimension of work including economic rewards and benefits, security, working conditions, organizational and interpersonal relationships, and its intrinsic meaning in a person's life (Guest, 1979, p. 76).

Quality of Worklife Program - A process by which an organization attempts to unlock the creative potential of its people by involving them in decisions affecting their work lives.

Quality Control Circles - A process whereby a group of workers convene on a weekly basis to provide ideas, suggestions and recommendations with a targeted goal of solving problems.

Zero Defect Programs - Similar to Quality Control Circles with a greater empahsis placed on achieving a lower percentage of defective goods.

Trainers - Facilitators of learning who possess knowledge of a subject, an adaptability to trainees' needs, sincerity in expression, sense of humor, enthusiasm, interest, provide individual assistance, clear instruction and an understanding and willingness to involve an entire group of people in a learning experience (Donaldson-Scannell, 1979, pp. 144-147).

Trainees - People who actively seek to improve their cognitive, affective and/or psychomotor qualities.

Consumers - People actively engaged in the selling, buying, trading or borrowing of goods and services.

Organization of Study

Chapter I is the introductory chapter, providing a broad introductory statement in addition to a statement of the problem, purpose of study, need for study, objectives, assumptions, limitations and a list of defined terms. Chapter II is a review of literature relevant to three areas of concern: (1) culture, education and worklife; (2) quality control; and (3) enrichment of human resources. Chapter III reports the

methods of data collection used for this study including description of subjects, creation of information guideline, collection of data and analysis of data. Chapter IV includes an analysis of responses, a profile of demographic information about respondents and observations of interviewees. Chapter V provides a summary of the study, developmental research foundations, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The primary purpose of this study was to assemble data reflecting perceptions and beliefs related to the training and development of automobile industry workers and the relationship to the quality of the automobile produced by American and Japanese automobile workers.

Areas discussed in the Review of Literature are:

1. Culture, education and worklife;
2. Quality control; and
3. The enrichment of human resources.

Section 1: Culture, Education and WorkLife

Japan's work ethic is closely linked to its culture and all of its austere characteristics. Rising from bed to start another working day is not as burdensome as many individuals in the United States believe because people in Japan, from their very first days of school, are continuously cautioned about lack of dedication (regardless of how menial the task may seem), lack of loyalty, avoiding intellectual sacrifice and failing to identify with group spirit.

This childhood conditioning becomes a driving force of Japanese thinking during their adolescent years and a permanent part of behavior during their years of specialization and productivity. Their sharply demonstrated definition of loyalty encompasses far more than dedication, perseverance and determination and has received worldwide recognition

from authorities of many academic disciplines. Milton Friedman (1980), a world acclaimed economist and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Economics concludes:

> . . . The Japanese are lauded as hardworking, energetic, eager to respond to influences from abroad, and incredibly ingenious at adapting what they learn from outside to their own needs (p. 51).

Dr. Henry Kissinger (1979), former Secretary of State during the Nixon administration, accurately reflects:

> . . . The Japanese depend less on legal and formal rules to preserve social harmony than on the quality of human relationships and on unstated patterns of consensus and obligation (p. 322).

Richard J. Barnett (1974), author of numerous books in the fields of economics and politics, explains the frustration within world management circles and the envious eye through which the Japanese managerial endeavors are viewed by explaining that:

> World managers are also casting an envious eye at the Japanese model of labor relations, which seems to encourage the Japanese national passion for work. In a sense, this model is a throwback to the paternalism of the company. Corporate loyalty is built primarily through job security. Once hired a worker knows he will spend his life with the company. The worker sings the company song. He identifies himself publicly not by his profession but by his company. Workers and employers take company trips together. Takeshi Hirano, president of one of Japan's biggest canning firms, attends at least 10 employee weddings a month. Most firms have labor/management councils that discuss not only hours and wages but production rates, new machinery and working conditions. The payoff from management's viewpoint is a strong team spirit (pp. 328-329).

Final years of gainful interaction with technology pay big dividends for themselves and their companys. One dividend manifested by loyalty is that of permanent employment. Vogel (1979) states:

> The company's interest in the long term is also related to the system of permanent employment whereby an ordinary employee remains in the firm from the time he first enters after leaving school until he retires. The firm is committed to the employee and provides a sense of belonging, personal support, welfare and retirement benefits and increased salary and rank with age. Barring serious long-term depression, the employee expects that he will never be laid off, and even if the company were to disband or be absorbed by another company, he expects that a new job elsewhere will be arranged (p. 137).

Because of the emphasis placed upon dedication and loyalty to the job and company, Japanese employees seem to express more autonomy in individual thinking and action than American employees. Takeuchi (1979), General Manager of the Economic Research Division of the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan, states:

> American companies usually have detailed work manuals. At Japanese companies work manuals, if they exist, give only a loose description of the jobs. If it is simplified to such an extent that it can be performed mechanically according to a manual, many Japanese will become angry at being treated like children (p. 44).

Any adult who perceives they are being treated like a child will resent this treatment and become angry at the originator. However, distinction must be made between resentment because of age and resentment because of knowledge or the lack of knowledge. Some people interpret the act of being exposed to new knowledge as an embarrassing experience because of their age and life experience. This condition especially holds true whenever the source of the knowledge is that of a person younger in age than the person to whom it is directed. This is a common occurrence throughout daily communication between people and conditioning for this ultimate experience seems to be a burden for Americans and a blessing for Japanese. The fault is in our educational system and the consequences are evident in the quality and integrity of the majority of American workers after they leave our compulsory

educational system and opt for either secondary education or representation within America's labor force. High school graduates who choose college are generally less motivated and loyal to the tasks acquired during four additional years of secondary education than students of the Japanese society. Vogel (1979) claims that:

> Some of the differences might be accounted for simply by the fact that the Japanese attend school about one-third more than Americans, for 240 days a year compared to 180 days a year in America; and attendance rates in primary and junior high school are much higher in Japan (p. 166).

The mere fact that Japanese students attend school longer than American students does not in itself reflect the entire conditioning process which not only enables Japanese to accept criticism as a lesson but prepares them to give constructive criticism. It reflects the fiber of which the net of Japanese human development is made. Another example of this net is expounded by Drucker (1973-1974) and his discussion of the "Grandfather System":

> During the first 10 years or so of a young man's career, the godfather is expected to be in close touch with his godchild, even though in a large company he may have a hundred of them at any one time. He is expected to know the young man, see him fairly regularly, be available to him for advice or counsel, and, in general, look after him (p. 256).

This very much represents a mentor/mentee relationship but it is planned for, intentionally and deliberately. Its most obvious advantage is guidance from early adulthood to late stages of professional development, reducing the possibilities of a young, aggressive, inquisitive business neophyte from running astray.

With the onslaught of Japanese investment in this country and the accompanying Japanese managers, a watered down version of Japan's human net has been successfully implemented in American industry. Minaid and Doe (1978) report that:

> Hitachi Magnetics Corporation in Edmore, Michigan, bought a creaking magnet-making plant from General Electric in 1973. It was plagued by strikes and G.E. couldn't wait to unload it. But under the plant's Chairman, Yoshio Saida, things are running smoothly. In addition to running the plant, Saida organizes softball games and yakitori (barbeque chicken) picnics for his workers. He encourages them to stroll in the firms prize winning garden (p. 104).

The element of interaction which seems to make Japanese style management more acceptable is participation at all levels of business enterprise. A common Japanese industry encourages ideas and suggestions for quality improvement and increased production from the lowest person in the company's structure to the moguls and many suggestions are implemented. Cole (1980), a sociologist at the University of Michigan who has studied Japanese business and industrial organizations for fifteen years and recently served on a panel of specialists at a seminar sponsored by the House Committee on Science and Technology, concludes:

> Every year Toyota Motors is getting about nine suggestions for improvements per employee and is adopting more than 80 percent of them. By contrast, General Motors gets less than one suggestion per employee per year and adopts less than a fourth of those received. Not only are Japanese companies getting a hell of a lot more suggestions, but they are getting better ones (p. 476).

As a sociologist, Cole (1980) emphasizes the social sciences as the key to integrating company laborers with its management:

> If we look at the United States, there is a very strong tendency among industrial engineers, economists, management and government officials to underestimate the potential of harnessing worker cooperation to raise productivity and to improve quality. In so doing, I think we underestimate the contribution to be made by the social sciences (p. 476).

A version of the quality control circle approach was implemented in the General Motors assembly plant in Tarrytown, New York, rendering favorable results. The assembly plant was plagued with high absenteeism,

employee grievances averaging 2,000 per year and strong dissention among workers, union representatives and management (Guest, 1979, p. 85). As one manager put it:

> Management was always in a defensive posture. We were instructed to go by the book, and we played by the book. The way we solved problems was to use our authority and impose discipline (Guest, 1979, p. 77).

Although initially skeptical about informing workers of management's future plans, many managers and supervisors decided to conduct small meetings between workers and management for the sole purpose of generating suggestions for improvements. Many managers feared that discussing company plans with rank-and-file employees would suggest a frailty in the autocratic management approach which had been the mainstay up until then. Upon completion of these meetings, the supervisors were impressed with the outpouring of ideas. "We found they did know a lot about their operations. They made hundreds of suggestions and we adopted many of them" (Guest, 1979, p. 79).

This version of a quality control circle represented only one phase of an evolutionary program at Tarrytown entitled "Quality of WorkLife" (QWL). Its basic theme was total involvement. Its goal was improving the working conditions of assembly line workers. Its success was unprecedented in the American automotive industry. It took approximately seven years to convert this plant from a thorn in the backside of the General Motors Corporation to a model of harmonious relations, characterized by an increase in productivity, a decrease in labor/management disputes and renewed interest in the welfare of human beings as ingenious, innovative and valuable assets.

Section 2: Quality Control

Quality is the most debated area whenever American and Japanese automobiles are compared. It is difficult to assess the applicability of many claims from automobile owners because all owners maintain differing maintenance and operational standards. For example, some only use their automobile for transportation to and from work. How far they must drive, condition of roadways used, driving habits, type of vehicle and vehicle maintenance all play a substantial role in claims to superior quality. With this in mind, one must realize that a discussion about quality will generate varying opinions, depending on individual definition of quality and to a lessor extent, statistics which sway the labels of "superior" and "inferior" back and forth between people and automobiles.

The claim to fame expressed by many Japanese automobile owners is superior quality, "They are just built better". Getting company representatives from either side of the quality issue to confirm suspicions surrounding problems with the structure of their automobiles is understandably difficult. However, the overwhelming attention to this area has placed so much pressure on American corporations to vindicate themselves from this menancing issue that traces of fault have been expressed. Frazer (1980), President of United Auto Workers Union and member of Chrysler's Board of Directors, recently stated:

> The issue of quality is broken up into two primary categories, Fits and Finishes and Drive Train. We have identified problems with the Fits and Finishes area and they are being closely monitored but the Drive Train area is equal in quality to any other automobile in the world (Frazer, 1980, Interview).

This is one of the very few times a high ranking individual who enjoys much respect amongst his peers has publicly confirmed suspicions about the low-grade quality of American automobiles. Another expression of concern about the quality of American automobiles was made by Delorean (1979), a former vice-president being groomed for the Chief Executive position of General Motors. While outlining cost-cutting measures implemented by General Motors, Delorean explained General Motors' wanning respect for a quality automobile:

> Chevrolet's quality problems were due as much to the use of cheaper parts and materials as they were to outright product defects. Under pressure from the corporation to increase or stabilize its falling profit margins, Chevrolet management, from about the mid-1960's on, had taken quality out of its products as a cost-cutting measure. This directly affected the customer's perception of Chevrolet, how he felt inside the car, or how it rode. This quality cutting eventually caught up with Chevrolet. The resale value of its products dropped as did its sales increases relative to the rest of the industry (Wright, 1979, p. 154).

Not only is the confirmation of inferior quality being partially admitted by automobile industry moguls, the people who work on the assembly line are beginning to express their unhappiness at being singled out as lazy, apathetic, undedicated, unloyal workers and are placing the cause for inferior quality accusations upon industry executives. Douglas (1980), an unemployed worker for General Motors complains:

> When we lament the lack of quality in television programming, we don't fault the writers or cameramen; we blame the producers and network executives who put the shows on the air. By the same token it is not the worker who determines the quality of a car but the executives in Detroit and the plant supervisors (p. 5).

As in many other examples, Douglas (1980) points out worker participation in company decisions as a must if the auto industry seeks to derive the greatest benefit from its employees. He soundly argues that:

> The worker who performs a certain task 320 times a day, 5 days a week, knows more about the specifics of his particular job than anyone else. Yet in 16 years, I have never been consulted or seen any other assembly line worker be consulted on how to improve a job qualitatively or quantitatively. There are 'suggestion programs', but their main concern is always how to save the company's money (p. 5).

Pride in one's work is also difficult to retain if management fails to respond to worker expectations. The average worker will take pride in his/her work if they feel that their immediate supervisors fulfill their image as dispatchers of recognition for a job well done. Paying rightful compliments has seldom offended people but lends merit to employee/management relations. Unfortunately, many immediate supervisors fail to fulfill their role image. The effects of such an unfulfilling experience were expressed by Stallings (1972), spot-welder at Ford Motor Company:

> Proud of my work? How can I feel pride in a job where I call a foreman's attention to a mistake, a bad piece of equipment, and he'll ignore it. Pretty soon you get the idea they don't care. You keep doing this and finally you're titled a toublemaker. So you just go about your work. You have to have pride (p. 225).

However, a study conducted by Runcie, Director of Social Research for Development Analysis Associated Inc., a consulting firm in Cambridge, Massachusetts, indicates that assembly line workers' on the job behavior and execution of job tasks have definite adverse affects upon the quality of the cars constructed. His research design included an interview with 22 workers. During these interviews, some methods by which workers adopted to the nature of assembly line work were revealed. Coping with boredom, the most problematic area of assembly line work generated methods of toleration among workers. One worker said, "I throw stock, I throw gloves, I bullshit about everything. I lie about how many hours were working. I day dream a lot" (Runcie, 1980, p. 106). Another worker stated:

> There's not much you can do, I guess. You just do the work. Daydream, that's the best. (What do you dream about?) Gettin' out of this place. Gettin' off the line for about six hours. Just put your mind in a different place, say you're not here. I day dream about when I was a kid. Then you sit and laugh and people look at you like you're crazy or something (Runcie, 1980, p. 109).

Another method of coping with the monotony and boredom indigenous to assembly line work comes about through the use of drugs and alchohol. When asked why marijuana was used, one worker said, "If I smoke marijuana, I can stare at a spot on the floor all day long and not get bored." Another worker said:

> I know a few guys that get completely messed up and they can run their job as good as when they're straight. There's a lot who couldn't. On second shift, I've seen them take a guy and hide him 'cause he was so messed up. I don't like to get stoned when I'm working 'cause I don't know if I've done the whole car or not (Runcie, 1980, p. 109).

A more accurate reflection of quality control is found in the quality of the "stock" (parts, supplies, building materials, etc.) that is used to construct the automobiles. One worker complained:

> Half the time the parts don't fit right. One day the stock is good, the next day it's bad and you got to fight it. That's poor economy, the rejected stock. The stuff gets cheaper every day, the stock does. A guy is gonna pay so much money for the car, it ought to have real good stock on the car (Runcie, 1980, pp. 111-112).

Runcie also confirms the dissatisfaction with stock during his five month stint as an assembly line worker stating:

> Whether the concern about stock is sincere or manifests a deeper feeling that something else is wrong, I don't know. I do know, however, how frustrating it is continually to have parts that do not fit, especially when it makes the job move more slowly and makes you fall farther and farther behind, getting more in the hole with every passing chassis (1980, pp. 111-112).

The consumer debate contesting the quality of Japanese and American automobiles has also produced many surveys. The results from

a recent survey indicates that import vehicles still hold a substantial edge in overall consumer satisfaction. The intriguing backdrop for this survey was the differing responses from people with varying levels of educational training. Aside from results, this survey also contains a latent but forceful idea of human training. This training is not in the construction of automobiles but in the ability of consumers through visual and audible competencies to detect differences in the features particular to automobiles such as interior and exterior styling, comfortability, reliability, dependability, interior noise abatement (quiet ride) and future resale value. The inflationary prices of automobiles has unleashed a wave of consumer introspection; a closer than visual inspection of goods and services prior to purchase. This evaluation of a product stems from consumer desires to retrieve the greatest satisfaction from their investments. It also forces consumers to contemplate areas of thought which heretofore carried a lesser impact upon consumer thinking. The best example lies within the idea of economic justification. In the past, the average automobile consumer rendered very little thought about the price of gasoline, miles per gallon (MPG), and automobile maintenance expenses. This situation existed primarily because of the relatively inexpensiveness of the aforementioned goods and services. A preliminary investigation of todays automobile market will reveal the impact upon automobile owners that galloping inflation has had. Practically each and every day consumers are reminded of MPG and gasoline prices by driving their automobiles, replenishing their gas tanks and automobile advertisements. This task has converted numerous consumers into petroleum watchdogs, who are learning the politics which control oil prices, discovering the methods through which our national legislators propagate petroleum policy and

investigating the rights of consumers to defend themselves against shoddy goods and services. In addition, consumers are protesting the competence of major business concerns to influence the decision-making obligation of legislatures through covert and overt financial support and basically resenting the growing attitude of many corporations that consumers are nothing more than necessary obstacles that generate profits and losses in their accounting books.

The previously mentioned national study on import versus domestic automobiles which appeared in the Sunday Oklahoman (1980) states:

> United States automakers have some image problems, according to a poll that says six of every ten college-educated Americans think imports are better than domestic cars and a quarter of all consumers do not think the Chrysler Corporation will survive (p. 17).

This statement represents the future designers and managing executives of automobile corporations throughout America. The amount of information reviewed by them within and outside of their current college environment is a fruitful learning experience and will influence the decisions they make during their careers.

Now that one facet of the automobile quality issue in American has been presented, it is fitting to focus upon what America's competition, the Japanese, envision as the American automobile's future. With Japan shifting its automobile production strategy from building in Japan and shipping abroad, to constructing manufacturing plants abroad, avoiding the high shipping costs and remaining economically competitive, many problems affecting the superior quality image of their automobiles will have to be considered. The first problem concerns supply systems. Toyota contracts with 60 primary suppliers, backed by an additional 1,500 subcontractors who together account for 70 percent of Toyota's supplies. Conversely, General Motors makes more than half of its own

products, meaning its dependency upon contracted suppliers is less than that of Toyota. If Toyota does build in the United States, it will be forced to build many of its own parts for it is doubtful that the American supply system is capable of being refitted to complement two different supply systems. This will directly affect the quality of Japan's automobiles because Toyota presently insists upon component tolerances much finer than those in the United States (Krarr, 1980, pp. 106-111). The Japanese are also uncertain about the United States' ability to produce automobile parts at a defect rate within their tolerance.

> The Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association reported for the buying group that in the last year, some Japanese parts makers found defects in as much as 8 percent of some U.S. parts supplied to them. They said that figure compared with a defect rate of less than 0.05 percent for Japanese-made parts (Bennett, 1980, p. 15).

George Glaster of Champion, who is also Chairman of the Automotive Components Export Council admits, "It is a higher quality standard than we normally would have to meet" (Bennett, 1980, p. 15).

It is a scarcely mentioned, but well-understood truism, that the United States car companies are going to spend $80 billion dollars on product programs over the next five years (Sugirua, 1980, p. 109). Sugiura, Executive Vice President of Honda, Japan's fifth largest motor company wondered if the U.S. firms would be able to recover this hugh expenditure. He offered his own views:

> The amount of money they are spending really doesn't bother me. Please don't misunderstand. The U.S. is the most technologically advanced country, and the most affluent one. But capital investment alone will not make the difference. In any country, the quality of products and the productivity of workers depend on management. When Detroit changes its management system, we'll see more powerful American competitors (Krarr, 1980, p. 109).

Section 3: The Enrichment of Human Resources

The development of a human being is a process which is inter-dependent upon many variables. Culture, society, self-initiation, discipline, desire, dedication, loyalty, training environment and policies are a few of the numerous facets of training people and each is very different.

For the purpose of this study, only two distinct groups of people will be focused upon, the Japanese and Americans. Drucker (1973-1974) simply states:

> Worker responsibility for job and group will vary greatly with the kind of work to be done, with the educational, skill and knowledge level of the work force, and with cultures and traditions (p. 273).

Automobile construction is the type of work, Japan and America are the two cultures.

There are clear differences in the attitudes of Japanese workers. A tourist, after touring an automobile assembly plant in both America and Japan, observed:

> The American factory seems almost like an armed camp. Workers grumble at foremen and foremen are cross with workers. In the Japanese factory, employees seem to work even without the foremen watching. Workers do not appear angry at superiors and actually seem to hope their company succeeds (Vogel, 1979, p. 131).

The Japanese view knowledge as a never-ending source of vitality and wisdom, persistently studying all sorts of information. It is their understanding that "native ability may affect the capacity of an individual to absorb information, but in the Japanese view there is only one way to alter the result: study" (Vogel, 1979, pp. 163-164). Drucker (1973-1974) reinforces this idea by adding:

> The mechanism for making the worker take responsibility for job and tools is what the Japanese call "Continuous Training". Every employee, often up to and including top managers, keeps on training as a regular part of his job until he retires. The weekly training session is a regular and scheduled part of a man's work (p. 247).

Another area which seems to keep the American worker underdeveloped is the feeling that an understanding of where he/she fits into the entire picture is missing. Identification with overall company goals is non-existent. How are my efforts helping to achieve company objectives? This was clearly displayed during initial implementation phases of the Quality of Worklife program at General Motors assembly plant in Tarrytown, New York (Guest, 1979). Workers were so detached from the overall goals of their departments and its connection to overall corporate goals that one worker, skeptical of the program shouted, "Jesus Christ! You mean all this information about what is going on in the plant is available to us? Well, I'm going to use it" (Guest, 1979, p. 84). Conversely, Japanese workers are continuously informed and involved through communicational lines or actual participation.

> The individual member of a department is expected to be completely loyal to it, yet the individual employee tends to see beyond the boundaries of his own specialty and his own department. He knows what goes on. He knows the work of others, even though he himself has never performed it. He sees a genuine whole, and he is expected to be concerned with the performance of every single job in this genuine whole. He, therefore, can see his own place in the structure and his own contributions (Drucker, 1973-1974, p. 248).

Japan prepares its new employees for their new careers somewhat differently than the United States:

> The official training program which starts at the end of a school year, may be anywhere from a few weeks to years, and includes not only useful background information but emotional accounts of company history and purpose. For spiritual and disciplinary training, the employee may go on retreats, visit temples or endure special hardships.

> To strengthen the bond of solidarity, the new employee may be housed in company dorms while undergoing training, even if it means being separated from his spouse or his parents. But even after the formal training program is over, the young employee continues to be treated as an apprentice for some time. He continues to receive training and supervision, and he is expected to behave with appropriate deference to his seniors. In American terms it is perhaps like a combination of the behavior of the fraternity pledge, without hazing, and the young doctor in residency training (Krarr, 1980, p. 106).

The American system also can be characterized as a cut throat system. Take for example:

> . . . the pressuring of automobile dealerships by General Motors to buy parts only from General Motors Parts Division (GMPD) instead of from other manufacturers at cheaper prices. These requests are also accompanied with a blatant threat from corporate officials that failure to comply may possibly result in a slow down in delivery of hot selling models (Wright, 1979, p. 74).

The cool, calm, cooperative atmosphere of most Japanese firms and the volatile atmosphere of most American firms displays a marked difference towards the development of human beings. One seems to subtract from extensive enrichment of human beings by exhibiting the desire to sacrifice personal wants and needs for corporate profit. The other appears to promote care, understanding, and good feeling for human beings through loyal efforts aimed at appeasing social, personal, and economic desires.

American firms foster committment to profits while Japanese firms foster committment to people who in turn generate profit.

> The young American employee hired as a specialist is not interested in learning as broad a range of things about the company as the young Japanese employee, who is more of a generalist. A Japanese employee who knows he will be kept and retrained in mid-career is less likely to worry about innovation and resist technological change (Vogel, 1979, p. 151).

Sloan once boasted that:

> General Motors continued to pay dividends to stockholders right through the depression even though it had to lay off workers. A Japanese business leader would never say such a thing, if he did anything remotely resembling it, he would try to hide it, for valuing profits above his employees would destroy his relationships among his workers (Vogel, 1979, p. 151).

Loyalty, sincerity and committment to human assets pay big dividends for Japanese firms in Japan and Japanese managed firms in the United States.

> Japanese managed U.S. firms invariably report labor turnover and absenteeism rates at least 50 percent below comparable U.S. firms' rates. Sometimes their workers' loyalty verges on heroic (Minard, 1978, p. 109).

The training and development of employees is not an easy task. The Japanese have made it more simple by attacking basic needs of people, by being informative, cooperative, understanding and generous. There is no concrete proof that the Japanese approach to human development is the key for continued domination of productivity and economical growth but it is difficult to dispute the results that have thus far been achieved.

Perhaps American managers should begin to reevaluate their approaches to human beings and concentrate on revitalizing the human asset in a direction completely opposite to that suggested by the pioneer of our automobile industry, Henry Ford, when he described an assembly line as "a haven for those who haven't got the brains to do anything else" (Dewar, 1977, pp. A1-A4).

Summary

This review of literature concentrated on three areas of primary concern including culture, education and work life; quality control; and the enrichment of human resources. The culture, education and work life

of an employee in Japan differ from that of an American employee. More emphasis, energy and definition are allocated to these areas by the Japanese. Quality control, a very rigid discipline in many technical business functions within the United States and Japan, is perceived to have failed to make the grade in the American automobile industry when compared to the efforts of the Japanese automobile industry.

The greatest degree of difference between American and Japanese corporations is the emphasis placed upon the enrichment of human resources. The need for worker satisfaction is evident throughout all researched literature.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to assemble data reflecting perceptions and beliefs related to the training and development of automobile industry workers and the relationship to the quality of the automobile produced by American and Japanese auto workers. Data relevant to this purpose was attained by adhering to the following information collecting, analyzation and reporting guidelines: (1) five categories of the automobile industry were selected to serve as data sources for this study; (2) an informational guideline was revised for the purpose of gathering data; (3) people were contacted and asked to respond to the information guideline; and (4) the results are reported in this study.

Description of Subjects

The first objective of this study was to identify perceptions concerning the quality of American and Japanese automobiles. Perceptions were attained using the information guideline from consumers, some of which held jobs related to the automobile industry and some unrelated.

The second objective of this study was to analyze the perceptions of the training and development of personnel in Japanese corporations and contrast it with the perceptions of training and development of

personnel in American corporations. Both open-ended and close-ended questions were utilized to gather substantive data reflecting the beliefs and perceptions of people.

Those contacted included four automobile industry trainers, five automobile industry trainees, five American automobile industry dealers/managers and five Japanese automobile industry dealers/managers. These categories represented a wide range of varying perceptions and feelings. This broad spectrum of automobile industry knowledge provided a larger foundation from which numerous data correlations could be pursued by the author. In an effort to attain specific perceptions of automobile workers, the researcher participated in two open house public tours of automobile assembly line operations and conducted personal interviews with automobile industry employees. The duration of each interview varied from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. All responses were voluntary. All respondents remain anonymous.

Creation of Information Guideline

The information guideline used for this study consisted of 11 questions. One question asked respondents to provide demographic data, four questions generated data concerning the perceived quality of American and Japanese automobiles, five questions requested information about perceptions of the training and development of workers employed at both American and Japanese automobile corporations. The final question solicited an opinion from each respondent reflecting their ideas surrounding the increased purchasing of Japanese automobiles.

The information guideline was tested for relevancy, adequacy, and validity through discussion and consultation with consumers, representatives of the respective automobile industries, trainers, and trainees.

Five interviews were conducted as a field test. Suggestions were evaluated, recommendations compiled and changes made. Each question received close scrutiny by the researcher prior to use and reflects interests of both the researcher and the aforementioned people Appendix A for the complete guidelines.

Collection of Data

The information guideline was then used to collect data for the study. Twenty-four interviews were conducted, twenty-two by telephone and two face to face. There was no prearranged order of interviewing the categories of people previously mentioned.

Analysis of Data

After all the data was collected, compiled, and analyzed, a table depicting the number of respondents and how they responded was designed for each question. The replies for question number two are listed in Appendix B. The replies for the question soliciting respondents' opinions are listed in Appendix C. Many of the close-end questions asking for a "yes" or "no" answer were supplied with explanations describing why a particular answer was chosen. Many respondents used the information guideline to reflect upon past, present, and future employee/corporate policy and suggested a follow-up survey to determine the degree of change in perceptions to the questions contained in the information guideline.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The primary purpose of this study was to collect data reflecting perceptions and beliefs relevant to the training of automobile industry workers, the quality of American and Japanese automobiles and the relationship between workers' training and the quality of automobiles produced. Telephone interviews with salesmen, trainers, trainees, managers and consumers representing both American and Japanese automobiles were the most frequent method of data collection. All respondents were eager to assist in responding to questions related to this study.

All people asked agreed to respond to this study. There were no refusals. In total, there were 24 respondents. See Table I for a breakdown by category. Twenty-two respondents were contacted by telephone, two were informal interviews. A copy of the questionnaire used as a guideline is located in Appendix A. Of the 22 individuals contacted by telephone, five represented the American automobile industry, five represented the Japanese automobile industry, five were trainees, two were trainers and five were consumers. The remaining two interviewees worked with training and development related to the automobile industry. Additionally, all respondents were viewed as consumers for the purposes of this study.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY CATEGORY

	N
Trainees	5
Trainers	4
Dealers/Managers:	
Japanese	5
American	5
Consumers	5

Response Analysis

The first objective of this study was to identify perceptions concerning the quality of Japanese and American automobiles. The second objective was to analyze the training and development of personnel in American automobile corporations and contrast it with the perceptions of the training and development of personnel in Japanese automobile corporations. Of the eleven questions composing the information guideline, four questions addressed the first objective and five questions were designed to provide respondents an opportunity to express their feelings, perceptions and experiences in association with the second objective.

Objective 1: To identify perceptions concerning the quality of Japanese and American automobiles.

Four questions on the questionnaire guideline specifically addressed the first objective. Question number two asked respondents to rate the image of the American automobile industry as being helped or hindered by the quality of the American automobile (see Table II). Appendix B contains a list of responses to question number two.

TABLE II

IMAGE OF INDUSTRY RELATED TO QUALITY
OF AMERICAN AUTOMOBILES

	N	%
Helping	2	8.3
Hindering	22	91.6

Ninety-two percent of the respondents believed the quality of the American automobile to be hindering the overall image of the automobile industry. Eight percent believed otherwise.

Question number five requested respondents to sum up the image of American and Japanese automobiles using one word for each. A list of descriptive terms in response to this question can be found in Table III.

Question number nine was designed to ask the respondents if they perceived the Japanese automobile to be better than the American automobile. See Table IV. Ninety-two percent responded "yes". Eight percent responded "no".

Question number ten was intended to obtain an indication of how many people are currently involved in a participative quality control effort known as Quality Control Circles or Zero Defect programs. These two programs and programs bearing different titles with similar purposes are used to solicit ideas from workers throughout entire corporate organizations. See Table V for the complete data.

Eighty-three percent responded "no", many had never heard of either of the aforementioned concepts. Seventeen percent responded "yes", having heard of or participated in these programs.

TABLE III

LIST OF TERMS DESCRIBING AMERICAN AND JAPANESE AUTOMOBILES

American			Japanese		
	Response	N		Response	N
1.	Cheap	4	1.	Economical	4
2.	Unreliable	4	2.	Quality	2
3.	Poor	4	3.	Good	2
4.	Improve	3	4.	Dependable	2
5.	Quantity	1	5.	Attractive	2
6.	Spacious	1	6.	Competitive	2
7.	Pretty	1	7.	Superior	2
8.	Fancy	1	8.	Better	2
9.	Terrible	1	9.	Enlarge	1
10.	Hoax	1	10.	Bigger Room	1
11.	Good	1	11.	Great	1
			12.	Desirable	1

TABLE IV

PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERIORITY OF JAPANESE AUTOMOBILE

Superior	N	%
Yes	22	91.6
No	2	8.4

Objective II: To analyze perceptions of the training and development of personnel in Japanese corporations and contrast it with the training and development of personnel in American corporations.

TABLE V

PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY CONTROL CIRCLES

Participation	N	%
Yes	4	16.7
No	20	83.3

Question number three addresses the relationship between the Japanese ideas of hardwork and continuous study and a relationship to the quality of the automobiles they produce. The results of this question weighed heavily in favor of the Japanese methods of human development. See Table VI for the data.

TABLE VI

EXISTING RELATIONSHIP OF QUALITY

	N	%
Yes	22	91.6
No	1	4.1
Questionable	1	4.1

Ninety-two percent of the respondents agreed that there was a relationship. Four percent disagreed. Four percent believed that the relationship was questionable.

Question number four generated data concerning a relationship between the training of assembly line workers and a level of quality of automobiles produced. Respondents were asked to reply "yes" or "no" to an existing relationship. The data is presented in Table VII.

TABLE VII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINING AND QUALITY

	N	%
Yes	20	83.3
No	4	16.6

Eighty-three percent of the respondents replied "yes". Seventeen percent replied "no".

Question number six asked the respondents if they believed the heavy emphasis placed on human development in Japanese corporations helps to stimulate a need for high quality workmanship. See Table VIII. Ninety-six percent of those responding indicated "yes", four percent replied "no".

Question number eight was designed to act as a more specific follow-up of question number six. Number eight asked respondents if they believed that specific daily activities such as music lessons,...

exercise, reading and art lessons created an environment contributing to the assembly of a higher quality automobile. See Table IX for the data.

TABLE VIII

EMPHASIS ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STIMULATES QUALITY

	N	%
Yes	23	95.8
No	1	4.1

TABLE IX

DAILY ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO QUALITY OF AUTOMOBILES

	N	%
Yes	20	83.3
No	4	16.6

Eighty-three percent of the respondents believed these activities would have a positive affect upon the quality construction of automobiles. Seventeen percent suggested otherwise, opting for an autocratic, disciplined management approach.

Question number 11 asked respondents if they believed that the Quality of Work Life program instituted by the General Motors assembly plant in Tarrytown, New York for the purpose of increasing participative management by encouraging worker contributions to management

decisions would provide for a better quality automobile? Eighty-three percent of the respondents believed this program to be a step in the right direction, responding favorably while 17 percent believed differently. Table X contains the complete data.

TABLE X

PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY WORKLIFE PROGRAM

	N	%
Yes	18	75.0
No	4	16.6
No Knowledge	2	8.4

Question number seven asked respondents why they believed so many Americans have chosen to purchase the Japanese automobile. Appendix C contains a list of the responses to question number seven.

Profile of Demographic Information About Respondents

The demographic information requested from each respondent included a job description, level of education completed, type of automobile owned, sex, and age. A job description summary was presented in Table I. The mean number of years education attained by this group of respondents was 15.26. Over 68 percent were college graduates while 89.4 percent had achieved formal education beyond the high school level. Over 52 percent of the respondents owned American automobiles while

47 percent owned foreign vehicles. Seventy-nine percent were male, 21 percent female. The mean age was 31 years of age.

Observation of Interviewees

The timeliness of this study was influenced by the interviewees' current preoccupation with fuel conservation and the mass news media coverage of problems associated to the quality of American and Japanese automobiles. This provided the researcher with a sense of honesty, eagerness, and conviction on behalf of those responding to this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FOUNDATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the study, offering a summary, foundations, conclusions, and recommendations. The researcher summarizes the perceived impact of training and development of workers upon the quality of American and Japanese automobile manufacturers. Conclusions are drawn from the results of interviews conducted during the study. The researcher's recommendations are then presented.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assemble data reflecting perceptions and beliefs related to the training and development of automobile industry workers and the relationship to the quality of the automobile produced by American and Japanese workers. Three primary areas of interest were investigated: (1) culture, education and worklife; (2) quality control; and (3) the enrichment of human resources.

Twenty-four people were interviewed, representing five varying segments of both the American and Japanese automobile industry. These segments included: (1) trainers; (2) trainees; (3) dealers; (4) managers; and (5) consumers. The findings indicated that beliefs and perceptions expressed by the previously mentioned groups reflected

a degree of inadequate attention on behalf of the automobile industry. General areas of concern were the quality of automobiles, training and development of people who build the automobiles, and attempts by management of American corporations to relieve employee dissatisfaction.

Foundations

The American automobile industry has not encountered a threat greater than the penetration of foreign, primarily Japanese, automobiles into the American market since its inception. Its dependence on high profit margins associated with the sale of large automobiles and the sudden change in consumer needs to smaller, fuel efficient, lower profit margin automobiles has created a vast market for which the American automobile industry was unprepared.

Since the Arab oil embargo in 1973, the American automobile industry has wrongly predicted the future buying trend of American consumers. The Japanese automobile industry was prepared for the newly created American small car market, thirsty for fuel efficient, dependable automobiles.

The American automobile industry viewed the embargo as a continuous phase of our economy, thinking the market would level off and higher prices be absorbed. Their planning suggested that once the panic buying of petroleum products, primarily gasoline, began to dissipate, consumers would again return to the large, comfortable, high profit, fuel efficient automobile offered by the American automobile industry. This was a costly, drastic mistake. The price of gasoline and petroleum related products continued to climb. The price increase was viewed by the American automobile industry as the result of a purely competitive supply/demand economy whereby a shift in the demand curve in an upward

direction without an accompanying shift in the supply curve will result in a price increase, especially with commodities as inelastic as gasoline and petroleum products.

In its hastened effort to retool its manufacturing operations and begin to recapture the large share of the automobile market lost to prepared Japanese competition, a stronger dependency upon the American automobile industry worker became essential. Based upon the perceptions of the people responding to this study, the training and development of automobile industry workers to support this massive effort to recapture the automobile market lost to foreign competition was inadquate. Particular reasons identified were lack of corporate loyalty, non-responsive management, culture, education, quality assurance and basic personal needs.

In direct correlation with these perceptions were the beliefs, sentiments and perceptions of consumers. The results of this study demonstrated a degree of unsatisfaction with the quality of American automobiles when compared to Japanese automobiles that surpassed the expectations of the researcher and respondents.

Conclusions

The respondents of this survey perceived the training and development of American automobile industry workers to have an adverse effect upon the quality of American automobiles. This is not to say that workers are building automobiles with inferior equipment or substandard techniques.

The following conclusions are offered based upon the results of interviews conducted with the five groups of people mentioned in this study:

1. The overall quality of the American automobile is perceived to be adversely affecting the image of the American automobile industry.
2. There is a perceived relationship between the Japanese ideas of hardwork and continuous study and the quality of the automobiles they produce.
3. There is a relationship between the training of assembly line workers and varying levels of quality of the automobiles they build.
4. Japanese automobiles are perceived to be better than American automobiles.

Recommendations

The results of this study justify the following recommendations:

1. A more thorough, intensive investigation into the findings of this study should be conducted. This would enable the managerial corps representing American automobile corporations to better comprehend the extent of employee dissatisfaction and perhaps absorb the techniques and practices utilized by Japanese management personnel in an effort to resolve or eliminate dissension.
2. A far-reaching program of family unity and personal satisfaction should be introduced into a major automobile assembly plant as a pilot project for the recognition and resolution of employee/corporate identity problems.

The job of many assembly line laborers is viewed as nothing more than a source of survival. Many times this feeling is brought about by the failure of a corporation to convey its gratitude and appreciation for a job well done. Automobile industry laborers must believe their work is important to the overall corporation. The automobile industry must grant this recognition.

3. Trouble shooter classes, designed by laborers and management through joint cooperation aimed at quality control could be implemented as a pilot project in a major automobile assembly plant. Joint cooperation would allow for the participation of workers who are responsible for the daily construction of automobiles. The Quality of Work Life program demonstrated to managers and upper level supervision that once given the opportunity, the assembly line worker can provide effective ideas to ease the inherent burden of monotony associated with the mechanics of mass production.
4. Place more emphasis upon the cultural, educational and work-life aspects of each individual employee by sponsoring seminars, training classes and perhaps hosting guest speakers on a periodic basis. This would serve as a career broadening project, when implemented, similar to the Japanese policies and would produce a more work-centered, conscientious employee.
5. The American automobile corporations should begin to address other needs of its employees and create a family environment within the corporate structure. They should also begin to realize together with labor unions that money is not a panacea for the family, social and cultural problems which are plaguing the automobile industry as well as many other industries.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMATION GUIDELINE

INFORMATION GUIDELINE

1. Please provide the following information:

   a. Level of education completed:

   b. Job description:

   c. Type of automobile owned (American/Foreign):

   d. Sex: Male/Female

   e. Age:

2. Do you believe the overall quality of American automobiles is helping ___ or hindering ___ the image of the American automobile industry? Briefly explain.

3. Do you believe there is a relationship between the Japanese ideas of hardwork and continuous study and the quality of the automobiles they produce? Yes/No

4. Do you think there is a relationship between the training of assembly line workers and varying levels of quality of the automobiles they build? Yes/No

5. If you were asked to sum up the image of an American automobile and a Japanese automobile using one word for each, what would that word be?

   American automobile _____

   Japanese automobile _____

6. Japanese corporations have a reputation for placing a high priority upon the welfare of its people. Do you believe this "people" emphasis leads to a better quality product? Yes/No

7. In your opinion, why have so many Americans chosen to purchase the Japanese automobile? (Use back if necessary.)

8. Many Japanese automobile corporations provide time on a daily basis for their employees to pursue personal interests such as music lessons, exercise, reading and art lessons. Do you think these additional benefits help create an environment contributing to the assembly of a higher quality automobile? Yes/No

9. Is the Japanese automobile better than the American automobile? Yes/No

10. Do you participate in quality control circles or zero defects programs? Yes/No

11. The General Motors Corporation instituted a Quality of Work Life program in its Tarrytown, New York assembly plant in an effort to lesson employee grievances. Do you think this additional effort on behalf of GM will help provide for a better quality automobile? Yes/No

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO QUESTION NUMBER 2

Do you believe the overall quality of American automobiles is helping ___ or hindering ___ the image of the American automobile industry? Briefly explain.

1. Hindering. Until the automotive industry faces up to the fact that they have fallen way behind and they have to give the American people what they want, they are only killing the industry.

2. Hindering. Poor performance, workmanship, difficulty of user maintenance, poor engineering.

3. Hindering. American cars are known not to last as long as foreign cars.

4. Hindering.

5. Hindering. Foreign cars generally have higher mileage and are smaller. People want smaller cars that have standard safety features and "class".

6. Hindering. The prank items and just poor workmanship throughout the vehicle.

7. Hindering. In order to produce saleable auto, the American automobile industry has had to make cheaper quality cars. They do not last as long as foreign autos. This can be contributed to higher wages of employees and high material costs.

8. Hindering.

9. Hindering. American automobiles are poorly constructed. Thousands of them have been recalled for numerous reasons. Consumers have been buying foreign autos for their sound quality.

10. Hindering. Poor quality, too cheaply made.

11. Hindering. They are not put together as well and the materials used are of a poor grade.

12. Hindering. Not made as well as they used to be.

13. Hindering. Poor body. My T-top still leaks after n^{th} time that the dealer tried to fix it.

14. Hindering. Poor engine design. Gas hogs.

15. Helping.

16. Hindering. There is no adequate quality control provided when producing American cars. You're lucky if you get all of the wheels on right.

17. Hindering. The body exterior, interior, and engine are at a downfall over the past five years.

18. Hindering. I am not certain it is a "quality" problem as much as it is an industries inability to meet the needs of the buying public. For example: gas economy.

19. Hindering. The American autos are not assembled as well as the foreign cars, plus 99% of all foreign cars get better gas mileage.

APPENDIX C

RESPONSES TO QUESTION NUMBER 7

In your opinion, why have so many Americans chosen to purchase the Japanese automobile?

1. Believe this trend started back a few years ago when the price of fuel began rising. The Japanese had a wide-open market with little or no competition by the U.S. because we were geared or tooled to produce large cars only. As the time passed the U.S. realized the need for a competitive small car which got good gas mileage. In doing so, all we produced was a small, poor quality, gas saving auto, that was choked to death by EPA Regulations/Restrictions. This is not the case of the mid-range or large American cars in-so-much as they are of better quality than the small ones but still heavily restricted by EPA Reg. Note: Believe over a period of time the trend will reverse to some degree and American cars (small or large) will be of a greater demand.

2. Japanese automobiles offer more for the money.

3. Because the performance, appearance, and the quality of the car. The better gasoline mileage.

4. Gas mileage in Japanese imports. Much better quality. Even in base line imports, interior work, welding, and chassis are much better. Doors close better and Japanese cars have overall handling capabilities in driving.

5. Cheaper, better mileage, sportier.

6. More practical--better workmanship--better ideas. Overall better quality/price.

7. Some Americans have chosen to purchase Japanese automobiles because they are more economical and usually more dependable. However, due to the rising cost of foreign autos and the high expenses for repairs, and the new small American cars, this will probably cease.

8. Purchase price, gas mileage, their perception of American cars being unreliable and overpriced.

9. American automobiles are poorly constructed. Thousands of them have been recalled for numerous reasons. Consumers have been buying foreign autos for their sound quality.

10. Cheaper, better made.

11. They are cheaper to buy and better built. Cheaper to maintain. Higher resale.

12. They cost less and are more gasoline efficient. There seem to be less problems with these cars, too.

13. Japanese cars are more economical. They produce a lot of cars but "quality" is still emphasized. American cars are made at a "mass production rate" to keep people employed without any emphasis on quality at all.

14. Better gas mileage, less trouble with motor parts, last longer. If American motor companies would design an engine with better gas mileage than Japanese motor companies, the Americans would purchase the cars.

15. Initial high mileage monopoly and low cost. Continued high demand primarily due to excellent publicity and American willingness to be lead instead of deciding themselves.

16. It is a high quality product with more standard equipment than U.S. cars. They are also fun to drive and very economical. They are also priced very well compared to a similarly equipped U.S. car.

17. Gasoline, quality and design is more to the liking of the American people. Most American small cars are very less attractive.

18. Gas economy and quality of product.

19. Better gas mileage, lower costs, lower maintenance, better built.

VITA[2]

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Master of Science

Thesis: A LIMITED ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES IN JAPANESE AND AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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