A cross-cultural comparison on preferences for third-party help between Pakistani and German employees:
The impact of masculinity and individualism

Christine Klamert (s0171530)

First supervisor: Huadong Yang

Second supervisor: Amna Yousaf

Enschede, 15. July 2010

University of Twente

Abstract - *The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between German and Pakistani employees regarding their preference for three types of third-party help in a conflict. Two of Hofstede's four cultural dimensions (individualism and masculinity) served as a means of assessing cultural differences between the two countries and of explaining the detected differences in preference.*

A sample of 101 Pakistani and 130 German employees participated in this survey. The Pakistani participants received a paper pencil questionnaire in English assessing Hofstede's dimensions and three types of third-party help (social-emotional, relational and procedural content help). The German sample filled in an online version of the same questionnaire which had been translated into German.

It was found that German employees have a stronger preference for social-emotional and procedural content help than Pakistani employees. There is no difference between Pakistani and German employees in terms of relational help. In accordance with the expectation in this study, the impact which the country has on the preference for procedural content help, can partly be explained by the difference in the countries' masculinity orientation.

Samenvatting - *Het doel van deze studie was het onderzoeken of er verschillen bestaan tussen Duitse en Pakistaanse werknemers met betrekking tot hun preferentie voor derdepartij hulp in een conflict. Twee van Hofstede's vier culturele dimensies (Individualisme en Masculiniteit) dienden als een manier om culturele verschillen tussen de twee landen te schatten en om de gevonden verschillen in preferentie te verklaren.*

Een steekproef van 101 Pakistaanse en 130 Duitse werknemers participeerde in deze studie. De Pakistaanse deelnemers verkregen een papier en pen vragenlijst in het Engels dat Hofstede's dimensies en drie typen van derde partij hulp meet (sociaal-emotionele, relationele en procedureel inhoudelijke hulp). De Duitse steekproef vulde een online versie van dezelfde vragenlijst in dat vertaald werd naar het Duits.

Het werd gevonden dat Duitse werknemers een sterker preferentie voor sociaal-emotionele en procedureel inhoudelijke hulp hebben dan de Pakistaanse werknemers. Er bestaat geen verschil tussen Pakistaanse en Duitse werknemers met betrekking tot relationele hulp. In overeenstemming met de verwachtingen van deze studie, kan de impact van het land op de preferentie voor procedureel inhoudelijke hulp gedeeltelijk worden verklaard door de verschillen, die in de masculiniteit oriëntatie tussen de twee landen bestaat.

A cross-cultural comparison on preferences for third-party help between Pakistani and German employees: The impact of masculinity and individualism

Introduction

Klaus and Uma work together in an international company which produces computer chips. They are about to close a big deal with an abroad company. A final meeting with the managers of this company is arranged in order to sign the contracts. Klaus and Uma were scheduled to meet half an hour earlier to go through the contracts. Uma arrives ten minutes late for her meeting with Klaus. Klaus who is a very punctual and strict person tells Uma off, saying that she is unreliable. Uma does not understand why Klaus is mad because in her opinion she was still quite punctual. A conflict between the two arises out of different expectations and concerns.

This example shows how easily conflicts in a workplace setting can arise for evitable "trivial" reasons. Reciprocal expectations are not met and lead to disappointments and frustration. Thomas (1992) defines a conflict as a "process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his" (p. 265 in Kozan & Ergin, 1999). By calling a conflict a process, this definition shows that a conflict has an enduring entity. Most conflicts take time to develop and to resolve. They often take place between two or more people. Nowotny (2005) labels this type of conflict as interpersonal conflicts.

Conflicts happen everywhere, also at work. In a workplace setting, conflicts do not only affect the employees but also the entire organization. A conflict, for instance, can have a negative influence on an employee's job satisfaction, leading to absence or even turnover. This might lower the productivity of the entire organization (Torrington, Harris & Taylor, 2008). Acting as stressors, conflicts can also influence a person physically, psychologically and cognitively. These stressors can affect an employee's performance, satisfaction and health (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008). Thus, a suitable and efficient way of conflict resolution is necessary to prevent negative consequences of a conflict from occurring.

Giebels and Janssen (2005) discovered that third-party help is a successful strategy in managing conflicts and preventing negative outcomes leading to qualitative better solutions.

Different research in another context has also found benefits associated with third-party help (Giebels & Yang, 2009, 2005; see also Rubin, 1980). Accordingly, third-party help facilitates conflict resolution, buffers long-term negative effects, assists the disputants in maintaining a positive relationship and promotes information-processing. In third-party help disputants search for the help of a person external to the conflict in order to find a solution (Nowotny, 2005). Mostly, disputants call upon a third party when they do not know how to go on with the conflict by themselves or when their repertoire of solutions has been extinguished. The third party then assists the disputants in their search for a solution and guides the solution-process but the disputants still have to solve the conflicts themselves. It is also important that the involvement of a third party is not placed upon the disputants. They may rather decide themselves, whether they want to consult someone (Giebels & Yang, 2009; Nowotny, 2005).

Preferences for third-party help

According to Giebels and Yang (2005), third-party help can be categorized into three different types of help along the disputants' preferences, namely social-emotional, procedural content and relational third-party help[1]. In social-emotional third-party help the disputant prefers a mediator or third party to listen and to show understanding of the disputants' situation. The third party promotes comfort and gives social support, thus focuses on the emotional needs of the disputants (see also van Gils, 2009). In procedural content third-party help the disputant prefers procedures that provide guidance and that give the resolution-process a structure, encouraging precise information-processing. It is also possible that the mediator provides concrete solutions for the conflict. Here the focus lies on gaining a maximal outcome for the disputant (see also van Gils, 2009). In this way the disputants are able to find out what the conflict is actually about. The emphasis of this type of third-party help thus lies on the procedures and concrete solutions through which the conflict can be resolved. In relational third-party help the harmony of a relationship is the most important concern of a disputant when it comes to solving a conflict. The third party makes sure that the disputants treat each other with respect and that the harmony in the relationship between the two is maintained or restored.

The preference for a certain type of third-party help are likely to differ among disputants. Van Oudenhoven, Mechelse and de Dreu (1998) point out that everybody reacts differently in the context of a conflict because one's behaviour is influenced by one's cultural background.

---

[1] Other research has identified four types of third-party help (van Gils, 2009). However, this study will focus on three types of third-party help.

In order to prevent the negative impact a conflict can have in a workplace setting and to take advantage of all the benefits of third-party help, the right type must be chosen, reflecting the disputants' preferences.

Research has shown that conflict management styles and the preference for a specific type of third-party help is influenced by culture (Kozan & Ergin, 1999). In this context, culture can be seen as an aid or as an obstacle in the search for conflict resolution (Gelfand & Brett, 2004). When employees interact and communicate, they unknowingly make specific assumptions about how their counterpart perceives, thinks and reasons (Harris, Moran & Moran, 2004). These assumptions are usually based on the person's intrinsic cultural disposition which reflects their own culture. Thus, two employees with different cultural backgrounds might have incorrect assumptions, leading to misunderstandings and possibly to a conflict. In order to prevent such misunderstandings and misinterpretations we need to be aware of general cultural differences.

Even though some aspects of culture, like facial expressions and basic emotions, are universal all over the world, profound cultural differences do exist. Triandis' (1995) definition accounts for these differences in a simple way. He defines culture as "shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values found among speakers of a particular language who live during the same historical period in a specific geographic region" (p. 6). Accordingly, those who speak the same language and live in the same geographic region during the same time period are likely to share beliefs, attitudes, norms, etc., which constitute their culture. Based on this definition it seems obvious that two countries, say Pakistan and Germany, will have different cultures, since the main two aspects, namely language and geographical region, differ in an obtrusive manner. The focus of this study lies on the comparison of Pakistan and Germany in regard of their preferences for third-party help in managing work-related conflicts.

Linking country and the preferences for third-party help

In Germany, growing value is attributed to the rights and interests of the individual person. In addition, an increasing freedom of choice can be noticed (Dieleman, 2000). It has also been found that an increase in a state's welfare system leads to a greater emphasis on self-fulfilment (van Lindenberg, n.d.). Germany is known to be a state with a highly extensive welfare system including pensions, bonuses and medical care (Harris, et al., 2004). Hence, the Germans appear to be quite individualistic and self-focused. This characteristic of

the German population is also supported by the upbringing in German families. Teaching independence to their children is an important aspect of the upbringing within German families (van Lindenberg, n.d.). Furthermore, Dieleman (2000) states that two-thirds of the German youth value independence and assertiveness. The focus of the Germans on independence and freedom of choice, gives reason to assume that German employees prefer social-emotional third party help, because this type of help emphasizes the individual and its needs.

Hypothesis 1: German employees have a stronger preference for social-emotional third-party help than Pakistani employees.

Harris, et al. (2004) state that 25 percent of Pakistan's population lives in poverty while Suhail and Chaudhry (2004) describe the Pakistani economy as weak. Living under poor circumstances like it is often the case in Pakistan demonstrates the need for strong support systems. Islam (2004) characterizes Pakistanis as taking responsibility for their extended family and group-members. In Pakistan, loyalty and clan-based solidarity are important aspects of the society. Moreover, power and privileges seem to be reserved for family members or members of one's in-group. These facts show that Pakistanis rely on their family and are highly connected to them. Because of honour and loyalty to their families and in-groups they are likely to avoid conflicts and try to maintain harmony (Islam, 2004). Most likely, they will not only engage in such behaviour when it comes to family but also in a workplace setting. That is, Pakistani employees will presumably prefer a type of third-party help that tries to maintain harmony and pays attention to relationships.

Hypothesis 2: Pakistani employees have a stronger preference for relational third-party help than German employees.

The German population is generally described as punctual and not spontaneous (Harris, et al., 2004). A study concerning national stereotypes also found that the Germans are described as hardworking, disciplined, businesslike, orderly, authoritative and domineering in their relationships (Reigrotski & Anderson, 1959). They rate themselves in a similar way. Furthermore, it has been found that three-fourth of the German youth think that self-fulfilment and assertiveness are important characteristics of a person (Dieleman, 2000). All of these characteristics are in accordance with a person who is likely to prefer procedural content third-party help. In addition, Harris, et al. (2004) state that the Germans prefer a style of communication that emphasizes content rather than emotions and solutions that maximize

outcomes. These facts, too, give reason to believe that the Germans are likely to prefer procedural content third-party help. Accordingly, a third hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 3: German employees have a higher preference for procedural content third-party help than Pakistani employees.

The mediation effect of culture

Previous research has shown that culture has a mediating effect on the relationship between the homeland country of an employee and his or her preference for third-party help (van Gils, 2009). Hofstede (1981) provided a way of assessing cultural differences. He composed four dimensions in which countries can differ. One of these dimensions is masculinity (MAS). This dimension describes the degree to which a country is dominated by male or female values. Male values are said to be performance, success and competition, because in most societies these values are associated with the male social role. In contrast, female values are quality of life, personal relationships service and solidarity (Hofstede, 1981; Spector, 2008; Torrington, et al., 2008). A further dimension is called individualism (IDV). Individualism describes the degree to which inhabitants of a country perceive themselves as being independent and acting autonomously. Individualists focus on their own needs and interests and they will not sacrifice their own goals in order to maintain a relationship (Hofstede, 1981; Spector, 2008; Leung, 1987; Giebels & Yang, 2009). In contrast to individualism stands collectivism. However, collectivism will not be included in this study. Other dimensions are uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and power distance (PDI). These dimensions will neither be discussed in this study.

When Hofstede's dimensions are applied to Pakistan and Germany, clear differences between the two countries can be seen (Itim International, n.d.). Hence, the cultural dimensions can be used as a mediator variable in explaining the differences between Pakistan and Germany in terms of preferences for third-party help. In this mediation model, the relationship between the home-country of a person and his or her preference for third-party help is assessed. The causal path between the independent variable (home-country of the employees) and the dependent variable (preference for third-party help) is here believed to be indirect, via the mediator variable (cultural orientation) (Dooley, 2001). As depicted in figure 1, the home-country of the employee has an effect on the culture of the employees, which in turn has an effect on the employee's preference for third party help.

Figure 1: A mediation model with country as the independent variable, preference as the dependent variable and a cultural dimension as a mediator variable.
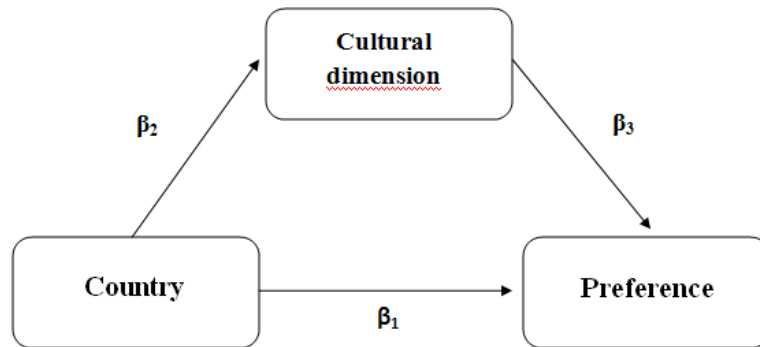
Using the previously formulated hypotheses as a basis, further hypotheses are formulated according to the mediation model described above. Culture will be assessed by Hofstede's dimensions. Special attention is paid to two of Hofstede's dimensions, namely individualism and masculinity. The 5D model of Hofstede in Figure 2 illustrates the differences between Pakistan and Germany regarding Hofstede's dimensions. Pakistan and Germany strongly differ on the individualism dimension (IDV) and they fairly differ on the masculinity dimension (MAS). These findings by Hofstede have been confirmed by numerous researchers (Torrington, et al., 2008; Harris, et al., 2004; Islam, 2004; Triandis, 1995).

Figure 2: A comparison of Germany and Pakistan regarding Hofstede's dimensions
Source: Itim International (n.d.)
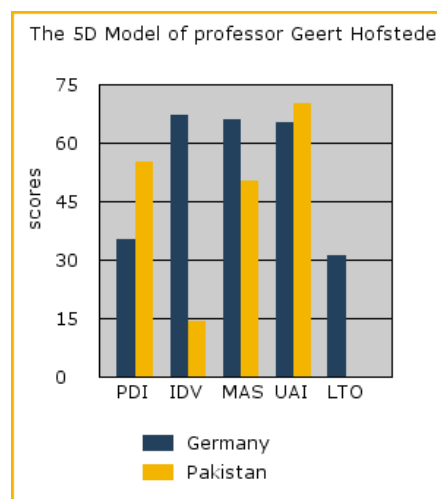
As mentioned earlier, individualists see themselves as independent and are mainly motivated by their own needs. Triandis (1995) further states that individualists think of conflicts or arguments as a good means of restoring a positive sphere, suggesting that they probably would not neglect a conflict, when it arises. He also points out that individualists

will express their own needs in conflicts and that they will assess a cost-benefit analysis, ensuring the most possible positive outcome for them. These attitudes can easily be associated with social-emotional help, as this type of third-party help focuses on the personal and individual needs of the disputants (Giebels & Yang, 2005; 2009; see also van Gils, 2009).

Hypothesis 4: The difference between German and Pakistani employees in their preference for social-emotional third-party help can partially be explained by their differing individualistic orientation.

As Figure 2 shows, Germany scores high on the masculinity dimension. Characteristics of masculinity are described as follows (Islam, 2004): Men live to work and women care for the family. The focus of the society lies on success and competition and not on quality of life. A country that scores high on the masculinity dimension has a society that is dominated by male values, such as performance, success, achievement and competition (Hofstede, 1981; Spector, 2008; Torrington, et al., 2008). Evidence has been found that Germany indeed is shaped by the masculinity cultural dimension. Volz (2004) stresses that in Germany a gender gap regarding the salary exists. The average salary of a female worker is one-third lower than the average salary of a male worker.

In order to attain male-oriented goals, like success and achievement, people will be likely to focus on maximizing their own optimal outcome. An efficient means of achieving one's best outcome is simply to follow procedures and instructions or accept concrete solutions that are based on this goal. Procedural content third-party help provides a good way in this context. It offers concrete solutions through which the outcome can be maximized (Giebels & Yang, 2005; 2009; see also van Gils, 2009). A clear connection between Germany, masculinity and procedural content third-party help can be established.

Hypothesis 5: The difference between German and Pakistani employees in their preference for procedural content third-party help can partially be explained by their masculinity orientation.

Method

<u>Participants</u>

Initially, 252 respondents (102 Pakistani employees and 150 German employees) participated in this study. However, only the data from 231 respondents was usable because of incompleteness of the data or because an acquiescence bias was detected.

The Pakistani sample consists of 101 Pakistani employees. In this sample 36 female and 61 male respondents with an average age of 30 years participated. Four of those participants did not indicate their gender. In general, the Pakistani sample had received a high education. Approximately 72% of the Pakistani participants received some kind of university education (e.g., Bachelor's or Master's degree). However, the work experience of those Pakistani employees is relatively low with 84% of them having less than 15 years of work experience. All of the Pakistani participants work in a profit organization and a majority of them (83%) fulfil a management position either at a low (21%), middle (53%), or top level (9%).

The German sample contains 130 participants and is composed of 49 male and 69 female respondents. 11 participants did not state their gender. The average age of the German sample is 40 years. Half of the German sample has received a university education (55%) and approximately 57% have work experience of more than 16 years. In contrast to the Pakistani sample, the German sample consists to 49% of people who work in a profit organization while 51% work in a non-profit organization. The occupations of the German sample also differ from those of the Pakistani sample. In the German sample, the majority fulfils non-managerial positions. 5% have operational positions, 30% have administrative positions and 49% fulfil professional, non-managerial positions. Only 16% of these participants have some kind of management position.

<u>Procedure</u>

The data for the Pakistani sample was collected by means of an English paper and pencil questionnaire. This questionnaire was distributed in different organizations in Pakistan. Regarding the approach of the German participants, convenience sampling was used (Dooley, 2001). Available people were asked for their e-mail address if they agreed to participate in this study. It was made sure that these people were part of the working population in Germany. The data of the German sample was collected using the same questionnaire which was translated into German. The translation is used to facilitate the filling-in process and to

increase the response rate. To ensure comparability of the Pakistani (English) and German versions of the questionnaire, the German questionnaire was back translated into English. Back translation ensures that the two versions of the questionnaire are equivalent enough to compare the results by testing the quality of the translation (The American Pychological Association, 2001; Sin-Wai & Pollard, 2001).

Then, the questionnaire was transformed into an online questionnaire. By this means the data collection was facilitated because participants were able to fill in the questionnaire whenever and wherever they wanted. Participants who were willing to participate received an e-mail which introduced the study and included the link for the online questionnaire. The participation in this study was voluntary and the data was treated anonymously.

Measures

All items in the questionnaire are measured with a 7-point Likert scale which ranges from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree)[2]. It contains three parts: the assessment of the cultural orientation, the preference for third-party help and demographic information of the participants. The cultural orientation consists of four dimensions, namely individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity[3]. To measure the preference for third-party help, at first a general preference regarding third-party help is measured. Then emotional, relational and procedural content third-party help are each measured. At last, demographic information, such as gender, age, work experience and education are assessed.

To measure *individualism* a questionnaire by Yang (in preparation) was used. Individualism is measured with 11 items. For both countries acceptable Cronbach's α values were found: 0,724 for the German sample and 0,710 for the Pakistani sample. An example statement used to measure individualism is *"I perceive myself as an independent individual rather than being a part of interpersonal relationships".*

To measure *masculinity* a questionnaire was used which is based on the work of several authors (Srite & Karahanna, 2006; Vittel, Paolillo & Thomas, 2003). Masculinity is measured with 7 items. However, the Cronbach's α values are unacceptable. In the German sample α is

---

[2] Several example statements of the questionnaire are included in Appendix A.
[3] In this thesis, only two dimensions are included, namely individualism and masculinity.

0,578 and in the Pakistani sample α is 0,395. An example statement is *"It is important for me to have a job that provides opportunity for advancement"*.

The questions for the *three types of third-party* help were developed by Yang & Giebels (2005). All items begin with *"When I call a third party in, I feel the need for..."*. Social-emotional help is measured with 3 items. Cronbach's α of the German sample is inappropriate (α = 0,474), while in the Pakistani sample α is more appropriate (α = 0,606). An example in this context is "*... a third party which shows understanding for my situation"*. Procedural content help is measured with 6 items and both countries have appropriate α values (Germany's α = 0,728 and Pakistan's α = 0,788). An example here is "*... a third party which provides clarity about the situation"*. Relational help was measured with 4 items and Cronbach's α values for both countries are good. In the German sample α is 0,849 and in the Pakistani sample α is 0,848. An example is *"... a third party which brings about a harmonious relationship between my colleague and I"*.

Results

<u>Analysis</u>

In order to analyse the collected data and to test the hypotheses different statistical analyses were executed. A reliability analysis was used to assess the consistency of the questionnaire items. Factor analysis was used to identify groups or clusters of variables. A correlation analysis was used to show associations between variables. Then, the hypotheses were tested using a multiple regression analysis. In this analysis, the independent variable was the country of the participants, the preference for third-party help was the dependent variable and the cultural orientation was used as the mediation variable.

<u>Results from factor analysis</u>

In cross-cultural research it is quite difficult to have appropriate reliability coefficients across countries. As an alternative, results from factor analysis were used as evidence to show whether items within a dimension measure the same construct.

Two principle component analyses (for items measuring masculinity and third-party help) were executed with oblique rotation (direct oblimin). The sample size and the correlations

between the items of all analyses were satisfying enough to execute a factor analysis (the lowest KMO value was .659 and all Bartlett's χ^2 values were significant at the 0.01 level).

For the items measuring masculinity and its opposite femininity two factors with Eigenvalues > 1 were found that explain 65% of the total variance. Items measuring masculinity load on one factor with a minimum item loading of .627 and all cross-loadings lower than .290. Items measuring femininity load on the other factor with a minimum item loading of .730 and cross-loadings below .158[4]. Even though reliability analysis indicated inconsistency of these items, factor analysis shows that these items measure the underlying construct consistently.

For the items measuring third-party help four factors were identified with Eigenvalues > 1 explaining 65% of the total variance. However, one item showed item loadings below .344 for each factor and therefore did not seem to be consistent with any type of third-party help. On this basis, this item was removed. After the removal of this item, three factors with Eigenvalues > 1 were extracted and the items measuring procedural and content help were found to load onto the same factor. Thus, these two types of third-party help were summarized to become procedural content third-party help because they appear to measure the same underlying construct.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 depicts means, standard deviations and correlations between the cultural dimensions. Using an independent sample t-test, it was assessed whether the means of Pakistan's and Germany's cultural orientation differ significantly. The results show that Pakistan has a significantly higher masculinity orientation (t(215) = 3.691, p = .000) than Germany. However, Germany does not score significantly higher on individualism than Pakistan (t(217) = -.676, p > .05).

The results of the correlation analysis in Table 1 show that in both samples the three types of third-party help all correlate significantly and positively which each other. For example, in the German sample social-emotional help and procedural content help correlate with Spearman's rho = .432, p < .01. In the Pakistani sample, procedural content help and relational help correlate with Spearman's rho = .607, p < .01. A significant, positive correlation was also found between masculinity and procedural content third-party help (r =

---

[4] Appendix B contains the pattern matrices for masculinity and third-party help.

.259, p < .05). For Germany, a significant positive correlation was also found between individualism and masculinity (r = .210, p < .05).

Table 1: Depicts means, standard deviations and correlation between the cultural dimensions for both countries, Germany and Pakistan

		Mean	SD	Individualism	Masculinity	Emotional help	Relational help	Procedural content help
Germany	Individualism	4.25	.835					
	Masculinity	4.96	.711	.210*				
	Emotional help	5.23	1.11	-.030	-.055			
	Relational help	5.49	1.32	-.085	-.081	.394**		
	Procedural content help	6.06	.736	-.183	-.077	.432**	.432**	
Pakistan	Individualism	4.17	1.02					
	Masculinity	5.37	.942	.172				
	Emotional help	4.95	1.28	.201	.189			
	Relational help	5.61	1.40	-.183	.160	.534**		
	Procedural content help	5.55	1.15	.134	.259*	.589**	.607**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Multiple regression analysis: Testing the hypotheses

In order for a variable to be a mediator certain conditions have to be met (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Firstly, it has to be shown that the independent variable and the dependent variable are related (β_1). Secondly, the initial independent variable has to be related to the mediator (β_2). Thirdly, the mediator variable has to be related to the initial dependent variable using both the mediator and the independent variable as predictors (β_3). At last the mediation effect is calculated by subtracting β_3 from β_1. If the changes in the β value decrease and steps one and two are significant a partial mediation can be confirmed. A multiple regression analysis is used to test all the hypotheses. In general, an alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

According to the *first hypothesis*, German employees prefer social-emotional third-party help more than their Pakistani counterparts. The results in Table 2 under step 1 show that indeed a significant relationship between the country and the preferences for social-emotional help exist (b = .141, p < .05). The means (see Table 1) of social-emotional help for both countries show that German employees (M = 5.2825) score higher on the preference for social-emotional help than Pakistani employees (M = 4.9444). The first hypothesis is therefore confirmed.

Table 2: Multiple regression analyses testing hypotheses 1 & 4 (with individualism as a mediator)

	Social-emotional help
Step 1: Social-emotional help regressed on country (β_1)	.141*
Step 2: Individualism regressed on country (β_2)	.046
Step 3: Social-emotional help regressed on individualism when controlling for country (β_3)	.094
Step 4: Mediated effect $\Delta \beta = (\beta_1 - \beta_3)$	.047

*. Regression is significant at the 0.05 level

The *fourth hypothesis* predicts that differing preference of German and Pakistani employees for social-emotional third-party help can partially be explained by the differences

in their individualistic orientation. Even though Table 2 indicates a significant first step in the mediation model, the second step was not found to be significant (b = .046, p > .05). Thus, no significant relationship between the country and individualism was found. The fourth hypothesis is thus disconfirmed. This disconfirmation is in accordance with the results of the t-test analysing significant differences between the countries' cultural orientation. Here, no difference between the German and Pakistani employees was found in terms of their individualism orientation.

The *second hypothesis* states that Pakistani employees prefer relational third-party help more than German employees. This statement was found to be not significant (b = -.044 p = .519), even though the means (see Table 1) show that Pakistani employees (M = 5.6120) do prefer relational help more than German employees (M = 5.4915). This hypothesis is therefore disconfirmed.

The *third hypothesis* predicts that German employees prefer procedural content third-party help more than Pakistani employees. The results in Table 3 under step 1 indicate that a significant relationship between the country and the preference for procedural content help does exist (b = .260, p < .01). The means in Table 1 for procedural content help of both countries show that German employees (M = 6.0580) indeed prefer procedural content help more than Pakistani employees (M = 5.5479). Thus, the third hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 3: Multiple regression analyses testing hypotheses 3 & 5 (with masculinity as a mediator)

	Procedural content help
Step 1: Procedural content help regressed on country (β_1)	.260**
Step 2: Uncertainty avoidance regressed on country (β_2)	-.244**
Step 3: Procedural content help regressed on uncertainty avoidance when controlling for country (β_3)	.166*
Step 4: Mediated effect $\Delta \beta = (\beta_1 - \beta_3)$	.094

*. Regression is significant at the 0.05 level   **. Regression is significant at the 0.01 level

Hypothesis five claims that the cross-cultural difference in preference for procedural content help can partially be explained by the difference in their masculinity orientation. As

the results in Table 3 under step 1 and 2 indicate, the relationships between the country and procedural content third party help (b = .260, p < .01) and masculinity (b = -.244, p < .01) are significant. In addition, a sharp decrease in the β value was found in the relationship between country and the preference for procedural content help, when controlling for masculinity (b = .166, p < .05). The mediation effect of masculinity in this relationship accounts for β = .094. Hereby, the sixth hypothesis is confirmed. Masculinity partially mediates the relationship between the home-country and procedural content third-party help.

Discussion

Using the culturally appropriate type of third-party help seems to be of special importance when the international character of today's workplaces is considered. Spector (2008) describes countries as becoming increasingly multicultural, which is reflected in the composition of the workforce in a country's companies. In this regard, the results yield some interesting findings, important implications and explanations.

The results show that two main effects and one mediating effect were confirmed while one main effect and one mediating effect remain disconfirmed. Thus, German employees prefer social-emotional and procedural content help more than their Pakistani counterparts. However, the differing preference for social-emotional help between German and Pakistani employees cannot be explained by their individualistic cultural orientation. No difference in the preference for relational help between the two countries was found. In accordance with the expectation in this study, the impact which the country has on the preference for procedural content help can partly be explained by the difference in the countries' masculinity orientation.

In the study at hand, German and Pakistani employees do not seem to differ in terms of their preference for relational third-party help. According to the means in Table 1 both countries score quite high on this type of help. The Pakistani employees even prefer this type of help more than any other type. The German employees prefer relational help second best. These findings lead to the assumption that relational third-party help is a successful way of resolving conflicts between Pakistani and German disputants.

Since hypothesis four was disconfirmed, individualism does not mediate the relationship between German employees and their preference for social-emotional help. This could be caused by the fact that German employees do not have a significantly higher individualistic

orientation than Pakistani employees according to the data in this study. This contradicts Hofstede's (Itim International, n.d.) findings that Germany has a higher individualistic orientation than Pakistan.

As expected, it was found that German employees prefer procedural content third-party help more than Pakistani employees. Due to the significance of hypothesis five the difference between German and Pakistani employees regarding procedural content third-party help can partially be explained by their masculinity orientation. Phrased in plain words, this means that the impact which the country has on the preference for procedural content help is partly due to the masculinity differences between Germany and Pakistan.

It has also been found that the two samples differ in their cultural orientations not only in terms of a within-factor comparison, but also in terms of a between-factor comparison of Hofstede's findings and the findings of this study (Itim International, n.d.). As Hofstede's 5D model in Figure 2 depicts, the two countries differ most highly on the individualism dimension with Germany scoring high and Pakistan scoring low on this dimension. However, in this study no differences in the individualism cultural orientation was found. The differences between Hofstede's and these findings might be explained by the work of Triandis (1995). He states that the German culture is overall individualistic but that it remains collectivistic in certain aspects. In addition, he suspects that collectivism is still present in some parts of the society, for example in East Germany.

Against Hofstede's claims (Itim International, n.d.), it was found that the Pakistani employees score fairly high on individualism. This finding may be explained by the demographic characteristics of the Pakistani sample in this study. This sample has an average age of 30 years and is highly educated. 72% have received a university education. This suggests that this young, highly educated Pakistani sample has a western cultural orientation due to the globalization which proceeds all over the world (Spector, 2008). These finding may explain why both, German and Pakistani employees in this sample, might not be as individualistic as Hofstede (Itim International, n.d.) has claimed.

According to Hofstede's findings presented in Figure 2, Germany scores higher on the masculinity dimension than Pakistan. However, these findings are reversed in the study at hand. Here, Pakistan scores higher on the masculinity dimension than Germany. These puzzling findings can be explained by Wilde and Diekman (2005). They claim that the women's role has changed in the German society. The gendered labor division has changed in recent years and the role distribution between men and women is believed to decrease. Women also move into male-dominated roles. Volz (2004) explains that classical masculinity

is being more and more challenged. Thus, based on the literature and the findings in this study, it seems logical to assume that the German culture is becoming less masculine.

Another aspect of this study worth discussing is the choice of the types of third-party help. As stated before, different researchers have used four types of third-party help, namely relational, social-emotional, content and procedural help. However, in this study it was chosen to combine content and procedural help due to the results of the factor analysis. In addition, these two types of help have complementing aspects. Procedural help focuses on providing procedures to achieving a solution, while content help focuses on the solutions themselves. The procedures for achieving a solution are essential for the solutions themselves, thus procedural and content help seem to complement each other.

Limitations

In addition to the interesting findings of this study, several limitations will be discussed next. Firstly, Hofstede's dimensions are not without criticism. For example, McSweeney (2002) states that Hofstede's sample of respondents was not representative leading to the assumption that his findings and therefore his classification of the four dimensions might be inaccurate.

The unacceptable reliability coefficients should also be kept in mind when discussing the limitations. As indicated above, α values for the items measuring masculinity was very low, designating that masculinity is measured inconsistently. Moreover, some dimensions were measured with many items, while others were measured with only a small number of items. This should also be matched in future research. Consequentially, the questionnaire should be reworked, in order to enhance its reliability.

In addition, it is advisable to use the same method for acquiring data from different samples. In this study, an online questionnaire as well as a paper pencil version was used to obtain the data. The two samples were therefore subjected to different situations in which they filled in the questionnaire. This situation should be generalized as much as possible in order to further enhance reliability. Furthermore, it is possible that the different languages in which the test was administered have an influence on the answers given. Even though back translation was used to ensure comparability of the two versions, some aspects of the questionnaire presented difficulties for the translation. In future research it should be considered whether an English version should be used for both samples.

Furthermore, the sample might not be fully generalizable due to the fact that the respondents came from the same regions within their country.

Improvements and Implications

The interesting choice of types of third-party help also provides implications for future studies. It should be assessed whether the combination of procedural and content third-party help was legitimate and also applies to countries, other than Germany and Pakistan. It is also possible that other types of third-party help exist that were not included here.

The differences between the findings in this study and Hofstede's findings implicate that more research in the area of cultural orientation is advisable in order to ascertain whether the cultural orientation of Germany and Pakistan indeed have changed. Further implications for future research are demonstrated by the correlations presented in Table 1. Further research with a mediation model is implicated by the significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and relational help in Germany.

Furthermore, Hofstede's dimensions do not pose the only means of assessing cultural differences. For example, Schmitz's cultural profile might contribute another way of measuring the culture of a country (Harris, et al., 2004). His cultural profile contains 9 levels on which countries can differ, such as environment, time orientation, communication, etc. Future research could use those levels in order to assess cultural differences and to use them as mediation variables.

It is also possible to use multiple-choice scaling instead of a 7-point Likert scale in order to differentiate better between the types of third-party help. A follow-up study should control the results for region of the country because literature above has indicated that culture can differ from region to region, especially in the case of Germany regarding East Germany.

In consideration of the already named improvements and implications, further fascinating results in this scientific field can be expected.

References:

Baron, R. M. & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51 (6), 1173-1182.

Dieleman, A. (2000). Individualisering en ambivalentie in het bestaan van jongeren (Individualization and ambivalence in the life of youngsters). *Pedagogiek,* 20 (2). 91–112.

Dooley, D. (2001). *Social Research Methods*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Gelfand, M. J. & Brett, J. M. (2004). *The Handbook of Negotiation and Culture*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Gerrig ,R. J. & Zimbardo ,P. G. (2008). *Psychologie*. München: Pearson Studium.

Giebels, E. & Janssen, O. (2005). Conflict stress and reduced well-being at work: The buffering effect of third-party help. *European Journal of work and organizational Psychology*, 14 (2), 137-155.

Giebels, E. & Yang, H. (2005, February 14).Third-party intervention in workplace conflict: The impact of culture and gender. *IACM 18th Annual Conference.*

Giebels, E. & Yang, H. (2009). Preferences for Third-Party Help in Workplace Conflict: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Chinese and Dutch Employees. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research,* 2 (4), 344-362.

Gils, van N. (2009). The influence of disputant's cultural orientation on the preference for third party help.

Harris, P. R., Moran, R.T. & Moran, S. V. (2004). *Managing Cultural Differences: Global Leadership Strategies for the 21st Century*. Burlington, Massachusetts: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Hofstede, G. (1981). Management Control of Public and Not-For-Profit Acitivities. Organizational Dynamics, 9 (1), 42.

Islam, N. (2004). Sitarish, sycophants, power and collectivism: administrative culture in Pakistan. *International Review of Administrative Sciences,* 70 (2), 311-330.

Itim International (n.d.). Retrieved March 17, 2010, from http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php?culture1=34&culture2=66#compare.

Kozan, M. K. & Ergin, C. (1999). The Influence of Intra-cultural Value Differences on Conflict Management Practices. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 10 (3), 249-267.

Leung, K. (1987). Some Determinants of Reactions to Procedural Models for Conflict Resolution: A Cross-National Study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53 (5), 898-908

Lindenberg, van H. (n.d.). *Individualisering in Nederland en West-Europa. Retrieved 9th of June* 2010, via Universiteit Utrecht from:
http://www.google.de/#hl=de&source=hp&q=Lindenberg%2C+van+H.+%28Individualise ring+in+Nederland+en+WestEuropa&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=&gs_rfai=&fp=4caeddb3989 7e525.

Nowotny, D. (2005). *Kommunikation und Rhetorik im Öffentlichen Dienst*. Berlin: dbb Verlag.

Oudenhoven, van J. P., Mechelse, L. Dreu, de C. K. W. (1998). Managerial Conflict Management in Five European Countries: The Importance of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 47 (3), 439-455

Reigrotski, E. & Anderson, N. (1959). National Stereotypes and Foreign Contacts. *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 23 (4), 515-528.

Rubin, J. Z. (1980). Experimental Research on Third-Party Intervention in Conflict: Toward Some Generalizations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 87 (2), 379-391.
http://business.nmsu.edu/~mhyman/M310_Articles/acquiescence_bias_MN_Semon.pdf.

Sin-Wai, C. & Pollard, D. E. (2001). *An Encyclopaedia of Translation*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Spector, P. E. (2008). *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Research and Practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Srite, M. & Karahanna, E. (2006). The role of espoused national cultural values in technology acceptance. *Management Science Quarterly*, 30 (3), 679-704.

Suhail, K. & Chaudhry, H. R. (2004). Predictors of subjective well-being in an eastern Muslim culture. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23 (3), 359-376.

The American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication Manuals of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Torrington, D., Hall, L. & Taylor, S. (2008). *Human Resource Management*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism & Collectivism*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc.

Vittel, S. J., Paolillo, J. G. P. & Thomas, J. L. (2003). The perceived role of ethics and social responsibility: A study of marketing professionals. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 13 (1), 63-86.

Volz, R. (2003). Auf dem Weg zu einer neuen Vätergeneration? Aspekte von Familienstrukturen und Geschlechterbeziehungen in Deutschland. In Arbeitsnehmerkammer Bremen*, Hrsg., Familie und Familienpolitik in Deutschland und Frankreich*, Bremen.

Wilde, A. & Diekman, A. B. (2005). Cross-cultural similarities and differences in dynamic stereotypes: a comparison between Germany and the United States. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29 (2), 188-196

Yang, H. (paper in preparation). Relational and group collectivism across 8 countries

Appendix A: Example statements from the German version of the questionnaire

Question 10 measuring individualism:

Man sollte sein Leben möglichst unabhängig von anderen führen.

Stimme gar nicht zu ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Stimme völlig zu

Question 50 measuring masculinity:

Für mich ist es wichtig, andere in meinem Betrieb zu übertreffen.

Stimme gar nicht zu ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Stimme völlig zu

The following three questions all measure third-party help:

Wenn ich eine dritte Partei hin zurufe, habe ich das Bedürfnis nach:

 Question 58 measuring social-emotional help:

... einer dritten Partei, die ein guter Zuhörer ist.

Stimme gar nicht zu ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Stimme völlig zu

Question 63 measuring procedural content help:

... einer dritten Partei, die konkrete Lösungen bietet.

Stimme gar nicht zu ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Stimme völlig zu

Question 69 measuring relational help:

... einer dritten Partei, die eine harmonische Beziehung zwischen meinem Kollegen und mir befördert.

Stimme gar nicht zu ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Stimme völlig zu

Appendix B: Results form factor analysis

Table B 1: Depicts the pattern matrix of the 7 items measuring masculinity.

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
MFR3	.842	
MFR1	.794	-.290
MFR2	.759	.238
MFR4	.627	.160
MFO2		.833
MFO3	-.123	.828
MFO1	.158	.730

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table B 2: Depicts the pattern matrix of the 14 items measuring third-party help before the removal of item 2.

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Thirdhelp13	.891			
Thirdhelp12	.797			.147
Thirdhelp14	.762			
Thirdhelp11	.657	.161	-.133	-.376
Thirdhelp8		.852	-.103	
Thirdhelp7	-.338	.649		-.386
Thirdhelp10	.294	.649		
Thirdhelp5	.112	.636		
Thirdhelp9	.220	.626	-.107	
Thirdhelp2		-.250	.868	
Thirdhelp3	.110	.117	.610	-.322
Thirdhelp6		.504	.569	.427
Thirdhelp4			.254	-.702
Thirdhelp1	.275	.344		-.374

Table B 3: Depicts the pattern matrix of the 13 items measuring third-party help after the removal of item 2.

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
Thirdhelp8	.895		
Thirdhelp9	.725	-.156	-.200
Thirdhelp10	.683	-.244	
Thirdhelp5	.626		.139
Thirdhelp6	.506		
Thirdhelp13		-.875	
Thirdhelp12		-.787	
Thirdhelp14		-.746	
Thirdhelp11	.120	-.623	.288
Thirdhelp4	-.103		.773
Thirdhelp3		-.132	.714
Thirdhelp7	.495	.369	.510
Thirdhelp1	.306	-.239	.354

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.