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A COMPARISON OF CONFLICT STYLES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES, TAIWAN AND JAPAN.

by

Sung-Nan Lee

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Wayne Huizenga Graduate School of Business and Entrepreneurship
Nova Southeastern University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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A Dissertation
Entitled

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By

Sung-Nan Lee

We hereby certify that this Dissertation submitted by Sung-Nan Lee conforms to acceptable standards, and as such is fully adequate in scope and quality. It is therefore approved as the fulfillment of the Dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions or writings of another.

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between social values and conflict styles (if any) is of growing interest to researchers and managers in the expanding global marketplace. Problematic misunderstandings can occur as a result of cultural differences in styles of negotiation and handling conflict. The current study compared conflict styles of managers in three countries, the United States, Taiwan and Japan. As predicted the results supported the hypotheses that the American managers would prefer a competing style of conflict management while the two Asian country managers would prefer an avoiding style of conflict management. Additional samples of managers from Taiwan but managing in either Japan or the United States were also included. The results indicated that while the country of residence dampened the style preferences somewhat, the Taiwanese managers held firm to their preference for an avoiding conflict style whether they were resident in Taiwan, Japan or the United States.
The results of the current study also supported the mediating effect of social values. Both Taiwanese and Japanese managers exhibited values that were more appropriately labeled social conservatism while the managers from the United States exhibited values that were more appropriately labeled Self-enhancement or openness to change. These mediating factors were shown to influence the preferred conflict styles for the different groups of managers. Overall, the results supported the hypotheses and demonstrated that cultural differences can and do play an important role in approaches to conflict.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One recurring theme in studies of international business is the idea that problematic misunderstandings arise as a result of cultural differences in styles of negotiating and handling conflict (Adler, 1986; Adler & Graham, 1989; Hofstede, 1991; Maddox, 1993). Negotiation can be thought of as a mutual exchange of signals. Since cultures have different signaling languages, negotiators faced with a counterpart from another culture can easily misread a signal or transmit an unintended message. The research literature suggests that U.S. negotiators struggle with such crossed signals not only with counterparts from completely unfamiliar cultures, such as indigenous tribal groups, but also with counterparts from cultures with which they have a superficial familiarity, such as Japan (Graham & Sano, 1984) and China (Pye, 1982).

As Pye (1982, pp.20-23) explained: "Unquestionably the largest and possibly the most intractable category of problems in Sino-American business negotiations can be traced to the cultural differences between the two societies.... Conscious efforts to take into account the other party's cultural practices can eliminate gross

misunderstandings, but cultural factors continue to surface and cause problems in more subtle and indirect ways".

Although cultural differences present a challenge in a one-time formal negotiation, the problem of cultural differences is even more serious in joint ventures where managers need to resolve everyday conflicts with co-workers from other cultures (Baird, Lyles, Ji, Wharton, 1990). In the research literature on joint ventures between U.S. and Asian firms two types of misunderstanding in conflicts are frequently identified. In one type of misunderstanding U.S. managers make the error of reading silence from their Asian counterpart as an indication of consent. U.S. managers may fail to pickup on the indirectly expressed objections of Asian colleagues. A different type of misunderstanding occurs when Asian managers make the error of reading an U.S. colleague's direct adversarial arguments as indicating unreasonableness and lack of respect (Graham & Sano, 1984).

Of course, it may be hard or inappropriate to consider all managers from one country as being homogeneous in their behavior. To address this concern researchers need to consider the level of analysis used. For example, the level of analysis used in this study is the cultural level. However, if significant individual differences exist, they can only be fully understood with an analysis at the

individual level. The strategy of analyzing the properties of cultures as a whole is possible (Leung, 1989). In the current study, the plan is to use the cultural level rather than individual level. In fact, any consideration of individual differences in different culture requires an analysis of cultural differences be conducted first before any meaningful individual level study can be conducted. Smith and Schwartz (1997) outline criteria that can be used to determine whether a research study should be considered at the individual or cultural level. Based on their concerns, the current study meets the test for consideration at the cultural level. Leung and Bond (1989) provide details of statistical procedures that enable individual level scores to be computed in ways that are not confounded by differences in means between different country samples.

Purpose of the Research

The many examples of joint ventures that have run aground due to cultural differences have been an impetus for research on cultural differences in styles of handling conflict with co-workers. Researchers have shifted from the method of inductively generalizing from qualitative interviews (Pye, 1982) to the method of testing hypotheses with carefully matched samples of managers and quantitative

measures (Graham, 1985). Many studies have investigated so-called 'East-West differences' by comparing U.S. managers to a matched group in an Asian society. Two patterns of findings have been observed repeatedly, albeit the precise cultural boundaries on these differences are not well understood. First, compared to U.S. managers, Asian managers rely on a style of avoiding explicit discussion of the conflict. Second, compared to Asians, U.S. managers are more inclined toward a style of assertively competing with the other person to see who can convince the other of their preferred resolution of the conflict. Although many researchers have speculated that these behavioral differences reflect underlying differences in cultural values (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Kirkbride, Tang, & Westwood, 1991), this has not been rigorously investigated. A review of the cross-cultural literature on conflict style and values can be used to derive more precise predictions. Then, by comparing the conflict management styles and values of young managers in the U.S. and three Asian societies, testing predictions about the values underlying cultural differences in conflict style can be carried out.

Basic Underlying Theories

Researchers in social psychology and organizational behavior have proposed models that reduce the myriad tactics of negotiators and managers to several basic styles. Early models of strategy in conflict (Deutsch, 1973) followed the intuitive notion that styles can be arrayed on a single dimension ranging from selfishness (concern about own outcomes) to cooperativeness (concern about the other party's outcomes). However, a limitation of single-dimension models is that they fail to encompass styles that involve high concern for both self and other and likewise, styles that involve a high concern for neither self nor other (e.g., Thomas & Killman, 1974; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

Subsequent theorists have drawn on Blake, Shepard and Mouton's (1964) taxonomy of managerial styles to model conflict styles within a framework of two orthogonal motivational dimensions, a self-oriented and an other-oriented concern (see Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Within this framework, Thomas and Kilmann (1974) developed an instrument for measuring an individual's dispositions toward five discrete styles. This study will focus on two of these, on avoiding (low self-concern and low other-concern) and competing (high self-concern and low other-concern). The remaining styles are, respectively, the

polar opposites of avoiding (collaborating) and of competing (accommodating) and a blend of the four foregoing styles (compromising).

Schwartz (1992, 1994) has attempted to encompass the Western values studied by Rokeach, as well as values identified in non-Western settings, into a multidimensional model of the structure of basic human values. With regard to the reliability of the measurement instrument and the representative ness of the sample within and across cultures, this research dominates previous work. Schwartz's model begins with respondents' endorsement of value descriptors (such as "obedience," "politeness," etcetera), which are then clustered into measures, often values, such as "Conformity." These values are further aggregated into a few broad value dimensions, for example, "Conformity" and "Tradition" makes up the "Societal Conservatism" dimension. "Achievement" and "Power" make up the "Self-Enhancement" dimension.

This study compared a U.S. sample with Chinese and Japanese samples. The key variables were scales measuring Avoiding and Competing styles in conflict and measures of the Schwartz value dimensions relevant to the study, "Social Conservatism" and "Self-Enhancement."

Significance of the Study

The issues related to comparative management focus on finding similarities and differences among various management systems. It is important to understand which managerial philosophies, values and practices can be considered to be universal and which can be considered to be unique to a particular culture. Hofstede (1980) has explored the influence of culture in organizations in depth. He looked at a single organization operating in many different cultures and identified factors that were present in all of the cultures but which existed at different levels.

Adler (1991) has discussed the influence of culture on organizations and behavior at some length. He concludes that individuals express culture through their attitudes and behavior and that the culture is rooted in a person's values. The large amount of investment in Taiwan by multinational companies, particularly those based in Japan and the United States, generates an expectation that the investment will yield a good return on investment. Conflicts that occur between the management groups from different cultures in Taiwan will negatively effect this investment. As a result, the managerial conflict styles can impact working relationships with employees as well as effect decision-making procedures between Taiwanese staff and the managers

from Japan and the United States. Any problems that reduce the return on investment in Taiwan need to be considered and resolved in the most effective way possible.

There are a variety of issues facing any organization that expands to other countries. The values of various cultures vary and this can be reflected in the approach to work demonstrated by employees (Schein, 1985). The attitudes towards the parent company and parent company's' home country may also impact attitudes. As organizations work across cultures, a greater understanding of the impact of conflict style and conflict resolution is required for an effective organizational environment. At the same time as managerial approaches are becoming more critical, there is little research to help organizations in understanding the role of conflict and how conflict may impact an organization. Because of the significant increase in investment by multi-national companies in Taiwan, as the country opens up the markets in preparation for joining the World Trade Organization, any increase in understanding of issues related to managing across cultures needs consideration.

This study attempted to develop a better understanding of the differences, if any, between the conflict styles of managers from Taiwan, Japan and the United States. By attaining a better understanding of similarities and

differences it will be possible to create strategies and interventions to improve management communication and performance. This in turn will result in better levels of productivity, higher organizational efficiencies, and better relationships between managers and between management and labor. There should also be a better understanding of the comparative management issues that need to be considered in cross-cultural management environments.

This study utilized the adapted comparative model proposed by Chen (1995). Comparative management analyzes the similarities and differences between various management systems that exist in different countries. This approach is well established and has merit since comparative management scholars regard culture and environment as crucial factors in the study of management (Chen, 1995). Any study of comparative management issues is, therefore, important for understanding management in international business, the applicability of western theories in eastern cultures and additional understanding of the role that culture plays in organizational effectiveness.

Definition of Terms

Accommodation- The willingness of one party in a conflict to place the opponent's interests above his or her own.

Achievement- The drive to excel, to achieve in relation to a set of standards, to strive to succeed.

Arbitrator- A third party to a negotiation who has the authority to dictate an agreement.

Avoiding Style- An approach based on a desire to withdraw from or suppress a conflict.

Collectivism- A national culture attribute that describes a tight social framework in which people expect others in groups of which they are a part to look after and protect them.

Competing Style- An approach based on a desire to satisfy one's interests regardless of the impact on the other party to the conflict.

Compromising- A situation where each party to a conflict is willing to give up something.

Conflict- A process that begins when one person perceives that another person has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the other person cares about.

Conformity- Adjusting individual behavior to agree with the norms of the group.

Distributive bargaining- Negotiation that seeks to divide a fixed amount of resources.

Dysfunctional conflict- Forces that hinders group performance.

Functional conflict- Conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves its performance.

Individualism- A national culture attribute describing a loosely kit social framework in which people emphasize only the care of themselves and their immediate family.

Interactionist view of conflict- The belief that conflict is not only a positive force in a group but that it absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively.

Inter-group conflict- Conflict between two different groups in the organization.

Intra-group conflict- Conflict that exists within a group and between group members.

National Culture- Culture based on the values of a nation, which may be the same, or different in the various societies that may exist within the culture.

Negotiation- A process in which two or more parties exchange goods or services in an attempt to agree on a solution.

Perceived conflict- Awareness by one or more parties of the existence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to arise.

Power- The ability to get things done the way a person wants them to be done.

Power Distance: The relative equality or inequality between people in the culture that is considered normal.

Power Illusion- The notion that a person with little power actually has significant power.

Role conflict- A situation in which a person is confronted by divergent role expectations.

Traditional view of conflict- The belief that all conflict is harmful and must be avoided.

Uncertainty Avoidance- A national culture attribute describing the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid them.

Value System- A hierarchy based on a ranking of an individual's values in terms of their intensity.

Values- Social principles, philosophies, goals and standards considered to have intrinsic worth, to be testable in the physical environment and testable by social consensus (Schein, 1985).

Preliminary Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed for testing in this research project in an attempt to answer

questions related to the conflict management styles and value differences between Taiwan, Japan and the United States.

1. Does an avoiding style of conflict management predominate in the Chinese and Japanese cultures?
2.

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Ëđ Does an Avoiding style of conflict management relate to an individual's orientation toward Societal Conservatism values (e.g., Conformity)?

4. Does a competing style of conflict management relate to an individual's orientation toward Self-Enhancement values (e.g., Achievement)?
5. Are country differences in the avoiding style related to country differences in orientation toward Societal Conservatism?
6. Are country differences in the competing style related to country differences in orientation toward Self-Enhancement?

The following chapter includes a review of the current literature related to the question of conflict styles and management and values across cultures. Emphasis is placed on

different theories and categorizations of conflict as well as discussing cross-cultural issues related to conflict.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In a global economy where companies operate across borders and within cultures other than the home culture, differences in the perception and interpretation of the concept of management can result in significant problems particularly in the case of conflict. The effectiveness of management is based on values, the organizational culture and the fit between them. Managerial values can be defined as concepts or beliefs about desirable behaviors. The values guide the selection and evaluation of managerial behaviors and how conflict is resolved or handled (Terpstra & David, 1990). It is, therefore, important to understand the values held by the managers in an organization. These values are influenced by both the nationality of the management and the business environment within which the individual manages (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992).

The role that culture plays in international development highlights the need to understand the relationship among cultural values, systems of governance and managerial behavior (Pearson, 1991). Most of the literature and research on Asian management has focused on Japanese companies and management systems. However, the

economic successes in the Asian trading area are not limited to Japan and Taiwan. In a global economy where companies operate across borders and within cultures other than the home culture, differences in the perception and interpretation of the concept of management can result in significant problems.

Hofstede (1993) believed that cultural differences could be, to some extent, described by using five bipolar dimensions. This is an additional dimension to the four suggested in his earlier works. The five dimensions are: Power Distance; Individualism; Masculinity; Uncertainty Avoidance and Long versus Short-term orientation. Americans tend to have an average Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, be higher than average on individuality and are fairly masculine and short-term oriented. On the other hand the overseas Chinese (i.e. those outside of Mainland China in Hong Kong or Taiwan) tend to have a large power distance with weak uncertainty avoidance, low individualism and a long-term orientation.

Hofstede and Bond (1988) attempted to replicate Hofstede's research within a Chinese culture. The results were not completely consistent with the original conclusions. Hofstede and Bond identified and added a new dimension to the original four that they called human-heartedness. This

dimension included concepts like kindness, patience and courtesy. They concluded that this concept was highly correlated with Hofstede's masculinity index. Hofstede and Bond suggested two additional dimensions of the cultural aspects of organizations. The first of these new dimensions was integration, which was defined as including tolerance, harmony, and solidarity. The second additional dimension was called moral discipline, which included moderation and purity of self and selflessness. These two dimensions were highly correlated with the original power distance and individualism. They are also tied to conflict styles and concerns.

The Chinese Cultural Connection, in their paper on the cultural aspects of the Chinese, proposed that these four modified dimensions were really only one underlying dimension that they labeled collectivism (Chinese Cultural Connection, 1987). Hofstede and Bond (1988) analyzed all of the various factors and developed a new dimension that was more unique than the others that they called Confucian Dynamism. This dimension reflected the teachings of Confucius. Chao (1990) specifically studied the Confucian tradition and ethos and its implications for management and worker performance. He found that the Confucian philosophy

was incorporated into the corporate culture and managerial philosophy of a major Chinese company in Taiwan.

In understanding the effect and approaches conflict at various levels of an organization a review of styles of interpersonal conflict is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of organizational conflict management, according to Rahim (1985, 1986). Rahim provides an index of the "moderate amount of conflict ... essential for attaining and maintaining an optimum level of organizational effectiveness" (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979, p. 1325) and for securing desirable "conflict outcomes for parties with interdependent but different interests" (Brown, 1983, p. 9). Information about the appropriateness and effectiveness of each style as it relates to specific situations is also necessary (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987).

The relationship between amount of conflict and conflict style has been largely ignored by researchers (Rahim, 1986). However, the causes and implications of organizational conflict are of interest to researchers. In her review of the literature, Renwick (1975) identified the following empirically verified causes of intra-organizational conflict: differences in knowledge, beliefs, or basic values; competition for a position, for power, or for recognition; a need to release tension; drive for

autonomy; personal dislike; and differing perceptions or attitudes generated by the structure of the organization.

Rahim (1986) proposed six categories as sources of organizational conflict: affective conflict, conflict of interest, conflict of values, cognitive conflict, goal conflict, and substantive conflict. Other researchers (Knapp, Putnam, & Davis, 1988) have attributed organizational conflict to "heterogeneity of the work force, environmental changes, differences in goals, diverse economic interests, differential role structures, conflict group loyalties, and value discrepancies in organizations" (p. 243).

Rahim and Bonoma (1979) believed that the two primary originating points of organizational conflict (within a person and between two or more persons) as the foundation for three levels of organizational conflict: intra-personal, intra-group, and inter-group. Intra-personal conflict occurs when a member of an organization is required to perform certain tasks, activities, or roles that do not match his or her expertise, interests, goals and values. Intra-group conflict occurs as a result of disagreements or inconsistencies among the members of a group or between subgroups within a group. Inter-group conflict refers to disagreements or inconsistencies between the members or

their representatives or leaders of two or more groups. The amount of conflict at each of these levels may vary, but some research findings have indicated that a moderate amount of conflict at each level is necessary for optimal job performance (Rahim, 1986).

Researchers in social psychology and organizational behavior have proposed models that reduce the approaches of negotiators and managers to several basic styles. Early models of strategy in conflict (Deutsch, 1973) followed the intuitive notion that styles can be arrayed on a single dimension ranging from selfishness (concern about own outcomes) to cooperativeness (concern about the other party's outcomes). However, a limitation of single-dimension models is that they fail to encompass styles that involve high concern for both self and other and, likewise, styles that involve a high concern for neither self nor other (e.g., Thomas & Killman, 1974; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

Subsequent theorists have drawn on Blake, Shepard and Mouton's (1964) taxonomy of managerial styles to model conflict styles within a framework of two orthogonal motivational dimensions, a self-oriented and an other-oriented concern (see Thomas & Killman, 1974; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Within this framework, Thomas and Kilmann (1974)

developed an instrument for measuring an individual's dispositions toward five discrete styles.

The evidence from empirical assessments of the five-fold taxonomy as a model of the overall structure of conflict behavior is mixed (Jehn & Weldon, 1997; Rahim, 1983; Womack, 1988). Nevertheless, the Thomas and Kilmann scales for tapping particular conflict styles, such as avoiding and competing, compare favorably to other methods in terms of validity and reliability (Brown, Yelsma, & Keller, 1981; Killman & Thomas, 1974).

On theoretical grounds, Pruitt and Rubin (1986) have argued that modeling conflict styles in terms of five dispositions is redundant. The important insight is that low concern for the opponent occurs with two quite different styles: Passively avoiding discussion of conflict as opposed to actively collaborating, and competing as opposed to accommodating. These two styles, then, seem particularly likely to underlie friction in a working relationship, and this may explain why these styles have been the focus of research in cross-cultural conflict management. To understand the roots of cultural differences in avoiding and competing in conflicts, however, it is also necessary to measure the underlying values.

Traditionally, studies of intentions and behaviors have focused on predicting a single action or behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In contrast, research on conflict behaviors has shown that for any given interpersonal conflict (with few exceptions) there are multiple behaviors. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE Instrument (Thomas, 1992), Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory, and Hall's Conflict Management Survey have been used extensively in American academic research, training seminars, and organizational interventions and development, few studies have linked the intentions measured by these instruments with actual behaviors. Those studies that do exist have produced mixed results. For example, Kabanoff (1987) found little association between MODE scores and peer-rated conflict behavior. A more serious limitation, also mentioned by Kabanoff (1987), is the difficulty of translating styles into their behavioral equivalents.

Goering, Rudick, and Faulkner (1986) sought to secure such information using an analysis of tape recordings of simulated conflict situations. Their results revealed that the MODE instrument predicted avoidance (low assertiveness, low cooperativeness), but not competitive behavior (high assertiveness, low cooperativeness). On the other hand,

Psenicka and Rahim (1989) found results that suggested that a dominating conflict style predicted conflict behavior.

Thomas's (1992) contention that conflict styles reflect strategic (large-scale, enduring) rather than tactical (small-scale, episodic) intentions argues for multiple behaviors proportional to the strength of an intention. This effect has been largely ignored in research on conflict styles, despite the evidence that individuals in conflict can alter their behavior over time (Bergmann & Volkema, 1989).

Researchers have taken several approaches to conceptualizing and measuring values. Most research focuses on individual differences within cultures rather than cross-cultural differences; nevertheless, researchers assume that one's values represent cultural demands as well as idiosyncratic goals (Rokeach, 1973). Members of the same culture are likely to share a set of values acquired in the process of socialization -- values that represent the acceptable modes of conduct in a particular society. Furthermore, a separate research tradition has utilized values as a way of distinguishing cultures (Kluckhorn & Strodbeck, 1961). These researchers measure values that are equally interpretable, yet differentially endorsed, across cultures.

The primary method for the study of individual differences in values has been inventories of abstract terms. The seminal work of Rokeach (1973) measured an individual's profile on 36 terms that are central to Western discourse on values, such as "equality" and "freedom." By contrast, the most influential cross-cultural studies have involved more specific statements of attitudes and preferences (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede (1980) compared managers in a large sample of countries on a set of statements of attitudes about work and life, which allowed him to position the countries on several dimensions, such as Individualism-Collectivism. One limitation of this study is that value scores could be derived only at the country level rather than at the individual level. Triandis and his colleagues (Triandis et al., 1986) have developed a scale to measure Individualism-Collectivism at the level of individual values; however, it increasingly appears that this construct is not coherent at the individual level, and different components need to be conceptualized separately (Triandis, 1995). Another limitation is that Hofstede's (1980) instruments were developed in Western countries and then translated. Because of the possibility that values not salient in Western societies were omitted from the supposedly universal space of values, researchers in non-Western settings have

developed measures that concentrate on the values central to their traditions. For example, a distinct value dimension that emerged in studies of Chinese values, Moral Discipline, involves self-regulation and attention to role obligations (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987).

Most previous researchers who have linked cultural values to conflict style have pointed to the Individualism-Collectivism dimension. The most explicit argument in the previous literature is the thesis of Ting-Toomey (1988) and colleagues (Trubisky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991) that country differences in communication style can be accounted for in terms of the Individualism-Collectivism dimension. Specifically, collectivism is associated with indirect communication, such as the Avoiding style of handling conflict, whereas individualism is associated with direct modes of expression, such as the Competing style of handling conflict. Two predictions follow from an Individualism-Collectivism (IC) account. First, measures of Avoiding and Competing should dramatically separate U.S. managers from Asian managers; for example, in Hofstede's IC data, the U.S. score (91) is far higher than those of Asian societies, which are relatively close together (for example, India=48, Phillipines=32, and Taiwan=17). Moreover, Asian patterns should resemble those in other highly collectivist societies,

such as Middle Eastern and Latin societies. The general prediction of similarity across all highly collectivist cultures has been disconfirmed by careful comparative studies of conflict style (Graham, 1985).

A second area of interest is that differences between the countries in conflict style should be mediated by individual differences on measures of Individualism-Collectivism. Again, the existing data is not encouraging: Researchers who have correlated participants' scores on Individualism-Collectivism scales with conflict behaviors have found no relationship (Leung, 1988). The problem may be that the Individualism-Collectivism construct mixes a number of distinct values and attitudes and hence obscures relations between specific values and social behaviors. The reliability of Individualism -Collectivism scales has proved quite low, and in recent years Triandis (1995) and colleagues have shifted from the position that individualism versus collectivism is a unitary dimension of values. Similarly, our view is that cross-cultural differences in conflict management style cannot be reduced to a single value dimension running from individualism to collectivism (Morris & Leung, 1999).

A number of theorists have suggested that Chinese culture promotes an indirect, avoiding style of handling

conflicts (Bond & Wang, 1983). Some studies have employed conflict style scales to test the hypothesis that Chinese managers are more disposed to an avoidant style than Western managers. Tang and Kirkbride (1986) measured the conflict styles of Hong Kong Chinese and British executives in the Hong Kong Civil Service, and found that the Chinese managers were higher on the Avoiding style. However, given that in-group/out-group differences influence conflict avoidance (Leung, 1988), it is uncertain whether British culture or expatriate status was the key to the behavior of this sample of British managers. Trubisky, Ting-Toomey and Lin (1991) compared Taiwanese and U.S. students and found that Taiwanese participants relied on an indirect avoiding style more than U.S. participants. Yet, as Leung (1997) pointed out, this is one of many studies in the literature that suffers from interpretive difficulties owing to the fact that the responses were not standardized before making cultural comparisons; higher scores in one culture may thus reflect differing response sets, such as acquiescence bias.

What underlies the difference that Chinese respondents rely on Avoiding more than comparable groups of U.S. respondents? The evidence clearly suggests that not all highly collectivist cultures share this tendency (Graham, 1985). A clue is suggested by a study comparing conflict

styles of Japanese and U.S. students, which found that twice as many Japanese students reported reliance on avoiding in their most recent conflict (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994). One of the most important reasons for avoiding explicit discussion of the conflict for the Japanese students was the desire to preserve their personal relationships. Interestingly, though both Japanese and U.S. respondents agreed that avoidance is the least effective strategy for resolving the issues, for Japanese it was the preferred style because they value the conservation of existing relationships. Adjusting one's self to the stable social structure--to relationships, organizations, and institutions--is a virtue in Confucian tradition of role-appropriate behavior, which is a central strain of Chinese culture that is also influential in Japanese culture (Su, Chiu, Hong, Leung, Peng & Morris, 1998). Confucian ethics lays out certain "rules of propriety" which structure interpersonal relationships, and adjustment to these prescribed patterns is valued. This Confucian virtue was tapped in studies of Chinese values by the factor of Moral Discipline (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). Chiu and Kosinski (1994) compared U.S. and Hong Kong Chinese participants in their endorsement of Chinese values and in their conflict management styles. Results showed that

Chinese respondents were higher on both Moral Discipline and Conflict Avoidance. This dimension corresponds to Schwartz's value dimension of Societal Conservatism.

Cultural differences in competitive styles of handling conflict also need to be considered. A pattern of findings comes from studies of choices between dispute resolution procedures. Leung and colleagues found that whereas North Americans prefer competitive adversarial procedures, less competitive procedures, such as mediation, are preferred in many other cultural contexts, such as Hong Kong and Spain (Leung & Lind, 1986; Leung et al., 1992). Other studies have measured participants' choices between competitive and cooperative strategies in conflict games. Li, Cheun and Kau (1979) found that U.S. children rely on competitive strategies to a greater extent than do matched samples of children in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The value orientation underlying the tendency of U.S. managers toward a competing style may reflect the value-orientation that Parsons (1951) referred to as an achievement versus ascription-orientation, and McClelland (1961) later operationalized as need for achievement. An achievement orientation means, "looking out for number one," placing a higher concern for one's own outcome than on the other's outcome. Achievement orientation is high in

societies, such as the United States, that traditionally permit individual social mobility, and low in societies such as India where ascribed characteristics (e.g., caste) determine one's life outcomes. Value surveys have long revealed that U.S. respondents endorse individual achievement more than South and East Asian respondents (Singh, Huang & Thompson, 1962; Morris, Podolny & Arid, 1999). The Self-Enhancement dimension in Schwartz's model captures an orientation toward achievement and mobility.

Research into organizations across cultures has found that there are similarities and differences between organizations operating in different cultural and societal settings (Lammers & Hickson, 1979). These similarities were found to be particularly true for the same types of organizational structure and business (Hickson, Hinings & McMillan, 1981). On the other hand, research has shown that there can be considerable differences between organizations operating as similar organizational types but in different societies, (Maurice, Sorge & Warner, 1980). The Maurice *et. al.* study was conducted in Europe but Ouchi (1981) also found differences between Japanese and American companies in such areas as employee-management relations, communication within the organization and staff involvement in decision-making.

Smith (1984) completed a comprehensive review of studies that had been conducted on Japanese companies. He concluded that the organization of work in Japan reflects the social structure of the society and, therefore, the workplace is a major source of an individual's identity. Redding (1990) studied senior Chinese executives in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Indonesia. He found that the cultures resulted in differences between the managerial values.

The role of style of organizational leadership has also been shown to be a relevant variable in the implementation of management practices including conflict resolution (Atwater & Wright, 1996). There is some evidence that managerial style impacts aspects of motivating employees and has an impact on job satisfaction (Trice & Beyer, 1993). The norms allow employees to make sense of their organizational world. If their world makes sense it is likely to increase productivity. Smolowitz (1996) found similar results when he investigated the relationship of organizational strength to culture and management finding that organizational strength was directly related to issues of managerial style.

The research available that specifically looks at the Chinese Culture influence in organizations is rather limited.

However, the role of overseas Chinese in numerous Asian cultures has been explored (Chen, 1995). Chen has also explored the literature looking at comparative Chinese management systems. He notes some differences and similarities in different "Chinese" cultures but provides no indication that the area has been studied in a systematic way. The predominant organizational form used by the overseas Chinese is the family business (Redding, 1990). The dominant managerial system used in these organizations is best described as paternal and as a result power and authority rest in the ownership of the organization, leadership is generally autocratic and the style of management is personal (Hall & Xu, 1991).

It is useful to not only compare U.S. and Chinese managers, but also to observe managers in other Asian cultures that, while highly collectivist, have cultural heritages that lead us to expect conflict styles differing from Chinese managers.

One country that has been evaluated is India. Observers have argued that Indian managerial conflict resolution tendencies reflect Hindu norms of seeking a solution that pleases everyone, as well as British norms of active, mutual problem solving (Moran & Stripp, 1991). Hence, we might expect that Indian managers have a style less inclined

toward competing that in the than U.S. managers, but this does not take the form of avoidance that it takes in Chinese contexts.

Similarly in the Philippines, where the historical influence of Chinese culture has been moderated by the more recent influence of Spanish and U.S. cultures, it has been noted that managers avoid overt competition in conflicts with colleagues, but not through avoidance of addressing the issues. Rather the tendency is to express one's point indirectly, or to cushion one's statements so as to preserve smooth relationships (Gouchenour, 1990).

The ability of the Chinese to develop excellent deal making skills has been the source of some interesting studies, (Engardio, 1991). The Chinese businessman does not separate marketing and financing as a western businessman might, (Limlingan, 1986) as a result he is able to take advantage of financial situations and concentrate on the cash outcomes to a much greater extent. The deal making skills are also enhanced by the Chinese ability to develop alliances including the successful use of Joint Ventures, (Goldstien, 1993). Conflict between joint venture partners can have an important impact on joint venture performance. These conflicts can occur from divergent objectives, the sharing of power, differences in organizational cultures and

national cultures and incompatible management styles and approaches, (Kozan, 1992).

Summary

The role of managers is consistent across organizations and cultures. However, the way that management is conducted can vary significantly. The evidence available from research on conflict styles across cultures is limited. However, different cultural and social systems can have a significant impact on management systems and managerial behavior.

The countries chosen for this study are Japan, the United States and Taiwan. Both Japan and the United States have increased their business presence in Taiwan in recent years as Taiwan opens up its markets in preparation for joining the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The increase in market forces, the creation of joint ventures with overseas organizations and the increase of wholly foreign owned subsidiaries have brought about a challenge to the traditional management values in Taiwan. The distinctively different approaches to organizational structure, management and conflict resolution and styles raise some interesting questions about the differences between the three countries and issues related to using managers overseas.

The following chapter outlines the methodology, sampling procedures, instrumentation, research questions, hypotheses and statistical analysis for the data collected.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the participants, sampling process, research questions, hypotheses, and design used to study the effects of conflict style. This section also addresses the research variables and measures used, the data collection procedures and related questionnaires, and statistical techniques used. The current research project was designed in order to conduct a comparative management survey between Japanese, American and Taiwan organizations. Companies that currently operate in Taiwan were used for comparison purposes and mangers from each country were included in the sampling process.

Methodology

This study utilized existing validated instruments. In choosing the instruments, emphasis was placed on identifying instruments that have already been successfully used and adapted for use in Chinese. The instruments measured values and conflict styles.

Participants

To compare groups who differ in culture yet are relatively similar otherwise, managerial employees in multinational companies operating in Taiwan were sampled. The sample included individuals from United States and Japan. Additional samples of Taiwan managers working in Japan and the United States were also used. These managers had relatively similar academic training, work experiences, and career goals. They were recruited in cooperation with a professional organization that is based in Taipei and whose membership includes the major multinational companies operating in Taiwan. For the sake of clear comparisons, data was only analyzed from participants who were citizens of the country under consideration. The goal was to have approximately 100 participants for each group (total about 500) included in the analyses. The actual sample sizes were as follows: 102 American subjects, 94 Japanese subjects, 108 Taiwanese subjects in Taiwan, 99 Taiwanese subjects in the United States and 92 Taiwanese subjects in Japan. This yielded a total sample size of 495 subjects in the five different groups. All subjects selected were males, since the number of females involved in overseas operations is limited and this deliberate sampling decision allowed for a better equivalency of the samples.

Instrumentation

Participants received a survey with brief instructions on the cover and a request for demographic information, such as country of citizenship and age. The second part of the survey was Rahim's (1983) adapted version of the Kilmann-Thomas self-report conflict style scale. This version involves a rating scale format, which is important in cross-cultural studies because it facilitates checking the inter-item reliability of the scale. This cannot be presumed to carry across cultures. Participants were asked to consider interpersonal conflicts at work, and rate how well their typical behavior is described by a series of 53 statements, such as "I try to win my position."

Next, participants received the 57-item instrument for measuring value orientations (Schwartz, 1994). Respondents were asked to indicate on a 9-point scale ranging from -1 to 7, how important each value was to them personally. A score of -1 indicates that the item was "opposed to my values," a score of 0 indicated "not important," and a score of 7 indicated "supreme importance." The scales were presented in the language of the country from which the subjects came. Scales were translated and back translated to achieve

comparability. Completing the full survey took participants about 25 minutes.

The first step in preparing the data for analysis was to standardize participants' responses to each instrument so that response biases did not enter into the cultural differences. Response sets such as general acquiescence or moderation tendencies may interact with scale content to render outcomes non-comparable. The procedure of within-subject standardization can overcome this difficulty (Bond, 1988). Each subject's score on a particular rating scale is expressed relative to his ratings on the other scales. Subtracting from the raw score for each item the mean of all the items on the focal scale and dividing this by the standard deviation of items on the scale achieves this. Next, the inter-item reliability of the specific factors from the instruments relevant to the study was tested. Pilot data was collected for a small sample of subjects (20 from each group) and levels of reliability obtained for the conflict style and value factors. The results indicated that acceptable levels of reliability were reached although the Individualism/collectivism values were somewhat lower than the others. Table 1 shows the Cronbach reliability scores for the Avoiding and Competing scales and the three Schwartz value dimensions.

Table 1. Cronbach reliability values

	Taiwan	United States	Japan
Avoidant	0.87	0.60	0.76
Competitive	0.78	0.75	0.83
Societal Conservatism	0.72	0.71	0.76
Self-enhancement	0.80	0.80	0.83
Openness to Change	0.77	0.74	0.87
Individualism/Collectivism	0.34	0.69	0.49

The Chinese version of the Avoiding and Competing scales and the three Schwartz value dimensions had validity congruity coefficients ranging from 0.68 to 0.80 (Schmitt & Stults, 1986). The Japanese version of the Avoiding and Competing scales and the three Schwartz value dimensions had congruity coefficients ranging from 0.65 to 0.83. Both of these ranges of values were in line with those generated by the English version (Schwartz, 1994 and Rahim, 1983).

The independent variable was the subject's country of origin (United States, China or Japan). The dependent variables were the avoiding and competing conflict styles

and the three measures of values. As mentioned earlier, gender was controlled by only using male subjects. However, participants were also asked their age and time on the job. These two factors were included in the initial regression analysis and factored out of subsequent regression analyses in order to attempt to control the impact of these two variables on the data.

Research Questions

Based on the literature and research results discussed earlier the following research questions were proposed for consideration and the hypotheses driven by these research questions are also provided.

1. Does an avoiding style of conflict management predominate in the Chinese and Japanese cultures?

   This research question generated the following two nul and research hypotheses.

   Ha 1. Chinese culture has a higher-level avoiding style of conflict management than in the United States.

   Ho 1. Chinese and United States cultures have the same level of avoiding style of conflict management.

   Ha 2. Japanese culture has a higher-level avoiding style of conflict management than in the United States.

Ho 2. Japanese and United States cultures have the same level of avoiding style of conflict management.

2. Does a competing style of conflict management predominate in the United States?

This research question generated the following null and research hypotheses.

Ha 3. American culture has a higher level of the competing style of conflict management than either Japan or China.

Ho 3. American culture has the same level of the competing style of conflict management as either Japan or China.

The first three hypotheses were tested using a series of one-way analyses of variance and planned comparisons for each of the two conflict styles with the Country of origin as the main effect.

3. Does an avoiding style of conflict management relate to an individual's orientation toward societal conservatism values (e.g., conformity)?

This research question generated the following null and research hypotheses.

Ha 4. Avoiding style levels are related to orientation toward societal conservatism in each country.

Ho 4. Avoiding style levels are not related to orientation toward societal conservatism in each country.

This hypothesis was tested using a regression analysis to see if country effects on conflict style are related to values.

1. Does a competing style of conflict management relate to an individual's orientation toward self-enhancement values (e.g., achievement)?

   Ha 5. A competing style of conflict management is related to an individual's orientation toward self-enhancement values.

   Ho 5. A competing style of conflict management is not related to an individual's orientation toward self-enhancement values.

2. Are country differences in the avoiding style related to country differences in orientation toward societal conservatism?

   Ha 6. An avoiding style of conflict management is related to an individual's orientation toward societal conservatism values.

Ho 6. An avoiding style of conflict management is not related to an individual's orientation toward societal conservatism values.

Hypotheses five and six were tested using a two-way analysis of variance.

3. Are country differences in the competing style related to country differences in orientation toward self-enhancement?

Ha 7. Country differences in the competing style are related to country differences in orientation toward self-enhancement.

Ho 7. Country differences in the competing style are not related to country differences in orientation toward self-enhancement.

As mentioned for hypothesis four, these relationships were tested using a regression analysis to see if country effects on conflict style are related to values.

The results of the data analysis and their implications are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data were collected and tabulated. The mean and standard deviations are presented for both the raw and standardized data for the conflict and the value scales. Tables 2 and 3 indicate the extent to which subjects in the five samples rely on avoiding and competing strategies for managing conflicts. The raw data for the conflict scales is presented in Table 2 for each of the sample groups. The same data is presented in Table 3 but here the data has been standardized so that response biases did not impact of cultural differences. The process was explained earlier in the method section (Bond, 1988).

In order to test the first three hypotheses a one-way analysis of variance was used with planned comparisons. The data for Taiwan, Japan and the United States on the avoiding scale were compared first. The results from the analysis of variance showed a main effect by country ($F [2, 301] = 3.27$, $p < .05$). Taiwanese managers relied more on the avoiding style than managers in the United States. Consistent with the first hypothesis, the Chinese managers relied more on the avoiding style than did the American managers ($t = 2.57$, $df = 208$, $p < .05$). Japanese managers also relied more on

the avoiding style than managers in the United States. Consistent with the second hypothesis, the Japanese managers relied more on the avoiding style than did the American managers ($t = 1.71$, $df = 194$, $p > .05$). Thus both the first and second hypotheses were supported.

Table 2: Raw Data for Conflict by Sample Group

		Avoiding Style		Competing Style	
Subjects	Sample Size	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d
Taiwanese in the United States	99	3.24	0.67	3.52	0.64
Taiwanese in Japan	92	3.08	0.76	3.49	0.69
Taiwanese in Taiwan	108	3.21	0.50	3.46	0.54
American	102	3.19	0.84	3.79	0.56
Japanese	94	2.96	0.86	3.39	0.57

Next, the data for Taiwan, Japan and the United States on the competing scale were compared. The results from the analysis of variance showed no main effect by country (F [2, 301] = 2.63, $p > .05$). While American managers tended to rely more on the competing style than managers in Taiwan, the statistical results were inconsistent with the third hypothesis. The American managers did not rely more on the competing style than did the Taiwanese managers ($t = 1.01$, $df = 208$, $p > .05$). Further, while American managers also tended to rely more on the competing style than managers in Japan, the statistical results were inconsistent with the fourth hypothesis. The American managers did not rely more on the competing style than did the Japanese managers ($t = 1.15$, $df = 194$, $p > .05$). Thus, both the third hypotheses were not supported.

While no specific hypotheses were formulated for the differences, if any, among the three Taiwanese samples, the data were analyzed in the same way as the between country data. First, the data for the Taiwanese subjects in Taiwan, Japan and the United States on the avoiding scale were compared. The results from the analysis of variance showed no main effect by country of residence (F [2, 296] = 2.59, $p > .05$). Further, the results from the analysis of variance for the competing style showed no main effect by country of

residence (F [2, 296] = 2.47, $p > .05$). These results indicate that while the Taiwan residents in both Japan and the United States preferred a conflict style more closely aligned with the preference of the host country, these trends were not statistically significant.

Further, while no specific hypotheses were formulated for the differences, if any, between the two "American" samples or the two "Japanese" samples, the data were analyzed for both pairs of data using independent t tests. When the American and Taiwanese managers in the United States were compared for their avoiding style, the analysis found that $t = 1.73$, $df = 199$, $p > .05$. When the Japanese Taiwanese managers were compared for their avoiding styles, the analysis found that $t = 0.13$, $df = 184$, $p > .05$. When American and Taiwanese managers in the United States were compared for their competing styles, the analysis found that $t = 0.15$, $df = 199$, $p > .05$. Finally, when the Japanese and Taiwanese managers were compared for their competing styles, the analysis found that $t = 0.59$, $df = 184$, $p > .05$. These results indicate that the Taiwanese in America and the Taiwanese in Japan had similar preferences for both the avoiding and competing styles of conflict as their hosts.

Table 3: Standardized Data for Conflict by Sample Group

		Avoiding Style		Competing Style	
Subjects	Sample Size	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Taiwanese in the United States	99	-0.24	0.45	0.11	0.52
Taiwanese in Japan	92	-0.22	0.51	0.07	0.54
Taiwanese in Taiwan	108	-0.19	0.37	0.05	0.47
American	102	-0.37	0.61	0.12	0.61
Japanese	94	-0.23	0.53	0.02	0.60

The remaining hypotheses were designed to test the relationship, if any, between conflict style preferences and values. The raw and standardized data for the scores on each of the three Schwartz value dimensions relevant to the hypotheses are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Factors with higher standardized scores are those that the respondents place above most other values. Standardized scores are appropriate because the Schwartz instrument comprehensively covers the semantic space of values. Overall, the respondents endorsed social conservatism less than self-enhancement or openness to change. The first level of analysis was to compare each of the three values as a function of country. The data for Taiwan, Japan and the

United States on the social conservatism scale were compared first. The results from the analysis of variance showed a main effect by country ($F [2, 301] = 4.56$, $p < .05$). Taiwanese managers leaned more towards social conservatism than managers in the United States ($t = 6.04$, $df = 208$, $p < .01$). Japanese managers also leaned more towards social conservatism than managers in the United States ($t = 3.77$, $df = 194$, $p < .01$). There was no statistical difference between the Taiwanese and Japanese on this scale ($t = 1.66$, $df = 204$, $p > .05$). These results are consistent with the expectations that Confucian values are related to social conservatism given that both the Taiwan and Japanese cultures share similar Confucian related values especially when compared to the United States.

The data for Taiwan, Japan and the United States on the self-enhancement scale were compared next. The results from the analysis of variance showed a main effect by country ($F [2, 301] = 3.78$, $p < .05$). Taiwanese managers leaned less towards self-enhancement than managers in the United States ($t = 2.01$, $df = 208$, $p< .05$). Japanese managers also leaned less towards self-enhancement than managers in the United States ($t = 1.99$, $df = 194$, $p < .05$). There was no statistical difference between the Taiwanese and Japanese on this scale ($t = 0.53$, $df = 204$, $p > .05$). This scale yielded

differences between the countries that were relatively smaller than the differences found on the other two scales. Apparently the managers in the United States are more comfortable with trying to get ahead of others. This is consistent with the expectations from the research of Hofstede (1980), which showed the United States with a lower Power Distance score than Taiwan and Japan.

The data for Taiwan, Japan and the United States on the openness to change scale were compared last. The results from the analysis of variance showed a main effect by country ($F\ [2, 301] = 8.71$, $p < .05$). Taiwanese managers leaned less towards openness to change than managers in the United States ($t = 10.98$, $df = 208$, $p < .01$). Japanese managers also leaned less towards openness to change than managers in the United States ($t = 3.94$, $df = 194$, $p < .01$). There was a statistical difference between the Taiwanese and Japanese on this scale ($t = 6.23$, $df = 204$, $p < .05$). The Japanese were more open to change than the Taiwanese. The openness to change dimension is most closely linked to Hofstede's concept of Individualism-Collectivism. The United States managers scored the highest on this dimension than the managers from Taiwan and Japan. Overall the results are consistent with the higher level of Individualism found in the United States by Hofstede (1980).

Table 4: Raw Data for by Sample Groups for the Major Value Dimensions.

		Social conservatism		Self-enhancement		Openness to change	
Subjects	Sample Size	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Taiwanese in the United States	99	3.53	0.88	4.21	0.94	4.37	0.81
Taiwanese in Japan	92	3.66	0.98	4.49	0.97	4.47	0.87
Taiwanese in Taiwan	108	3.64	1.13	4.68	0.99	4.31	0.94
American	102	2.75	0.91	3.81	0.92	4.51	0.78
Japanese	94	4.33	0.97	4.25	1.09	4.44	0.89

Table 5: Standardized Data for by Sample Groups for the Major Value Dimensions.

		Social conservatism		Self-enhancement		Openness to change	
Subjects	Sample Size	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Taiwanese in the United States	99	-0.42	0.39	-0.02	0.45	-0.13	0.33
Taiwanese in Japan	92	-0.39	0.40	-0.04	0.42	-0.09	0.35
Taiwanese in Taiwan	108	-0.36	0.38	-0.03	0.36	-0.14	0.31
American	102	-0.69	0.41	0.08	0.43	0.33	0.31
Japanese	94	-0.43	0.44	-0.05	0.48	0.14	0.36

The second set of hypotheses was directed at testing whether values mediate conflict styles. In order to establish the relationship between values differences and differences in conflict style several criteria must be met. The putative mediating variable should predict the dependent variable. Further, when the independent variable and the putative mediating variable are simultaneously entered into an equation that predicts the dependent variable, the coefficient should be markedly reduced (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In addition, the coefficient on the mediating variable should be less affected.

In order to achieve these requirements, the data were analyzed so that the country effects on conflict style were

tested to see if they were mediated by values by including all the relevant values in the analysis. Then an attempt was made to pinpoint the values responsible for any effects by examining the role of specific component values of the general value dimensions. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 6. Coefficients are standardized beta weights. The country variables are dummy variables with the United States as the excluded category. All variables are standardized.

As can be seen in equation 1a, there is an effect of the Taiwanese dummy variable on Avoiding (Taiwanese managers are higher than American managers). As can be seen from Column 2a in Table 6, the fourth hypothesis, that the value orientation of social conservatism predicts conflict avoidance is supported. A review of the results of the analysis for the other two value dimensions, self-enhancement and openness to change, indicates that these two dimensions do not predict the avoiding style of conflict. Given that the country effect is reduced when values are simultaneously entered while the effect of the value dimension is not (see column 3a), it can be concluded that a mediating relationship exists. The results support the hypotheses that the value dimension of social conservatism accounts for the greater Chinese tendency to avoid conflict.

Table 6: Conflict styles regressed on country and major value dimensions.

	Avoiding			Competing		
Predictors	**1a**	**2a**	**3a**	**1b**	**2b**	**3b**
Taiwan	0.15*		0.09	-0.17*		-0.14
Japan	0.09		0.04	-0.14		-0.09
Social Conservatism		0.17*	0.21*		-0.03	-0.01
Self Enhancement		0.01	0.02		0.27*	0.29*
Openness to change		-0.04	0.03		0.15*	0.21*
Adjusted R^2	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.11	0.13
df	301	300	297	301	300	297
F	3.24*	4.57*	3.96*	3.78*	16.32*	11.04*

* $p < .05$

The data presented in columns 1b, 2b and 3b report the results for the competing style variable. As shown in equation 1b, consistent with the analysis of variance results, there is an effect of the Taiwanese dummy variable on competing. This finding indicates that American managers show a higher level of the competing style than do the Taiwanese managers. The same trend was found with the Japanese dummy but not to the level of statistical significance. This result supports the fifth and seventh hypotheses that the values of self-enhancement and openness to change predict a preference for a competing style of

conflict. Here the mediating relationship was also found. The country effect did drop when the value scores were simultaneously entered in the model, as can be seen by comparing column 3b to column 2b. At the same time the beta coefficients increase for the value scores. This increase indicates that the causal relationship of values to conflict styles is not diminished.

Overall, the results provide support for the substantive hypotheses tested. The following chapter includes a discussion of the consequences of these results as well as discussion of the limitations of this study as well as potential areas for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The data generated by the respondents in this study indicate that conflict management behavior differs as a consequence of cultural values. The samples of managers used in this study have provided a test of cultural difference in an important area particularly as more and more multinational companies are pursuing global strategies. In addition, the results were consistent across the three groups of subjects from Taiwan, regardless of the country of residence, tested in this project. In general, two patterns of differences between the American and the two Asian samples in conflict management style emerged. Taiwanese and Japanese mangers tend towards the avoiding style of conflict management while the American managers tend towards a competing style. More importantly, the results also indicate that the differences in managerial conflict behavior reflect the underlying value-orientation differences among the three cultures studied. A culture that embraces a social conservatism value set emphasizes conformity and tradition. The consequence is the tendency of Chinese and Japanese managers to avoid explicit negotiation of workplace conflicts. On the other hand, the tendency to value self-

enhancement and openness to change results in American managers tending to adopt a competing approach to workplace conflicts.

As can be seen from Tables 3 and 5, the comparison of the standardized scores indicates that the country differences on value dimensions are greater than those for the conflict styles. This is of interest because managers often have to resolve conflicts whether they want to or not and globalization may require managers to adopt host country specific conflict style behaviors. On the other hand, the values are much more likely to be fixed by the culture, giving managers less flexibility in adjusting their values. This observation is confirmed when the values of the Taiwan managers are compared among the managers resident in either Taiwan, Japan or the United States. The differences in values seem to be influenced and move towards the values of the host country but they remain closer to the national Taiwanese values in both the United States and Japan. Values are related to country of origin and styles of handling conflict are influenced by the values of the country within which the manager is socialized.

One of the underlying concerns with evaluating managers across cultures is that many managers, particularly those from countries like Taiwan, have received their advanced

educational training in the United States. The fact is that we are moving towards a common global business culture (Barnet & Cavanaugh, 1994). The Taiwanese managers may arguably be very westernized, yet they remained quite different in their values from the American respondents in this study. The influence of the host culture was also not that significant on the Taiwanese managers based in Japan. These results suggest that a complete convergence of values and managerial values to a common global business culture has yet to occur.

Managers working in either multinational companies based in countries other than their home base or joint ventures can be assisted by a knowledge of cultural differences in style and underlying values. These managers must interact with colleagues and resolve conflicts with managers from other cultures. Foe example, while an American manager in Taiwan may find it difficult to work with others who are reluctant to share critical feedback, knowing that the Taiwanese manager is unlikely to express conflict directly will prevent the American from automatically assuming that the lack of expressed disagreement is the same as support. By correctly interpreting the source of behavior as being rooted in the Confucian value of accommodating oneself to the social structure will guide against false

attributions to personal characteristics or intentions (Morris, Larrick & Su, 1999). On the other hand the same principle works in the opposite way for Asian managers. They need to understand that an American manager's competitive style is not based on a lack of respect. A value in achievement through self-enhancement is a behavior that Asian manager's need to accept without offence.

Implications for Future Research

From a practitioner's point of view, assessment of conflict styles and social values within an organization is essential. Through such assessment, organizations can identify problems with managerial behavior and then follow clear guidelines for correcting them. The current findings should provide a useful foundation for further analyses with particular emphasis on expanding the number of variables included. Specifically, an attempt could be made to consider individual differences. One of the concerns from cross-sectional research of the kind conducted here is that the underlying assumption is that there is significant homogeneity within a culture. While the results of this study based on the comparison of Taiwanese managers in three countries appears to validate this assumption, it is still an assumption. Future research could, therefore, include a

consideration of the role of personality in determining conflict style. One study conducted in the United States only found mixed evidence of the predictability of conflict styles based on personality (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987). It is worth expanding this research from college students to managers and from the United States to other cultures. This is of particular concern since some research findings indicate that social behavior is more likely to be driven by personality variables in individualistic rather that collectivist cultures (Argyle, Shimoda, & Little, 1978).

The current study compared managers from one country with managers from other countries and treated each group of managers as an equal status group. However, there is every reason to believe that status differences between managers will also impact conflict styles. Differences in conflict style may interact with status. For example, managers who show the most deference to a subordinate may also demand the most deference from a subordinate. Therefore, understanding role and status characteristics and their effect on values or the effect of values on status related behaviors should serve as a useful avenue for future research.

Finally, the values used as the dependent variables in this study are rather broad constructs. Future research

could shift from a reliance on broad values to more specific belief constructs.

Limitations

The current study used a previously established definition of values. These value constructs were used although they had been developed in the United States and the reliability and validity of the measure had already been established. It is possible that this approach includes or excludes variables that are culture or circumstance specific. At the same time, it is clear that the Chinese rely on the fairly well defined Confucian values while Western value systems are less clearly defined. This is an example of a culture specific value set which may be perceived differently in Chinese (and other) cultures.

The differences generated among the three groups compared in this study were reasonably distinct so it is reasonable to expect that different cultures, groups and organizations will use different value systems and that these values will be perceived differently by different respondents. Finally, while the sample sizes used in this study were reasonable and sufficient, all research of this type can be enhanced by larger sample sizes. As mentioned in the previous section, this study ignored individual

differences with the sample groups, which is a limitation on the generalizability of the findings since it assumes homogeneity of values and conflict styles within a culture.

Recommendations for Future Research

An appreciation of conflict styles and the values, which affect them, are important pieces of information for managers and organizations. This study looked at the generalized impact of the variables. Future research should investigate the relationship of situational characteristics and how they conflict styles and values. Further, a more complex analysis might be able to better isolate critical variables, such as personality or individual differences and the relationship between them.

Values also play an important role in non-work activities. Future research could pursue the impact of values on recreational activities as well as explore the relationship between values in work and non-work situations. Foe example, it is reasonable to assume that family issues, which are also rooted in value systems, could interact with work issues including conflict styles. Recent interest in organizational concepts like the "learning organization" and individual concepts like empowerment, suggest that it is reasonable to assume that both of these concepts would have

an impact on conflict styles and also that they would be impacted by social values. The current study emphasized national culture. Another area for possible research is the role of organizational culture and organizational culture differences on conflict styles. Further, the relationship between national and organizational cultures to social values is also worthy of consideration in future research.

Summary

The relationship between social values and conflict styles (if any) is of growing interest to researchers and managers in the expanding global marketplace. Problematic misunderstandings can occur as a result of cultural differences in styles of negotiation and handling conflict. The current study compared conflict styles of managers in three countries, the United States, Taiwan and Japan. As predicted the results supported the hypotheses that the American managers would prefer a competing style of conflict management while the two Asian country managers would prefer an avoiding style of conflict management. Additional samples of managers from Taiwan but managing in either Japan or the United States were also included. The results indicated that while the country of residence dampened the style preferences somewhat, the Taiwanese managers held firm to

their preference for an avoiding conflict style whether they were resident in Taiwan, Japan or the United States.

The results of the current study also supported the mediating effect of social values. Both Taiwanese and Japanese managers exhibited values that were more appropriately labeled social conservatism while the managers from the United States exhibited values that were more appropriately labeled Self-enhancement or openness to change. These mediating factors were shown to influence the preferred conflict styles for the different groups of managers. Overall, the results supported the hypotheses and demonstrated that cultural differences can and do play an important role in approaches to conflict.

Appendix A

Conflict Management Scale

No	Items	Factors*				
		IN	AV	DO	OB	CO
1.	I try to investigate an issue with my _____ to find a solution acceptable to us					
2.	I generally try to satisfy the needs of my _____.					
3.	I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my _____ to myself.					
4.	I try to integrate my ideas with those of my _____ to come up with a decision jointly.					
5.	I give some to get some.					
6.	I try to work with my _____ to find solutions to a problem, which satisfy our expectations.					
7.	I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with my _____.					
8.	I usually hold on to my solution to a problem.					
9.	I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.					
10.	I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.					
11.	I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.					
12.	I usually accommodate the wishes of my _____.					
13.	I give in to the wishes of my _____,					
14.	I win some and I lose some.					
15.	I exchange accurate information with my _____ to solve a problem together.					
16.	I sometimes help my _____ to make a decision in his favor.					
17.	I usually allow concessions to my _____.					
18.	I argue my case with my _____ to show the merits of my position.					
19.	I try to play down our differences to reach a compromise.					
20.	I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.					

No	Items	Factors*				
		IN	AV	DO	OB	CO
21.	I negotiate with my _____ so that a compromise can be reached.					
22.	I try to stay away from disagreement with my _____.					
23.	I avoid an encounter with my _____.					
24.	I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.					
25.	I often go along with the suggestions of my _____.					
26.	I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.					
27.	I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.					
28.	I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.					
29.	I collaborate with my _____ to come up with decisions acceptable to us.					
30.	I try to satisfy the expectations of my _____.					
31.	I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.					
32.	I try to keep my disagreement with my _____ to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.					
33.	I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my _____.					
34.	I generally avoid an argument with my _____,					
35.	I try to work with my _____ for a proper understanding of a problem.					

* IN= integrating; AV= avoiding; DO= dominating; OB= obliging; CO= compromising.

** The word boss, subordinates, or peers appeared in each blank space in Forms A, B, and C, respectively.

Appendix B

INSTRUMENT FOR MEASURING VALUE ORIENTATIONS

Please circle the number on a 9-point scale ranging from -1 to 7 to indicate how important each value was to you personally. A score of -1 indicate that the item was "opposed to my values," a 0 indicated "not important," and 7 indicated of "supreme importance."

		Opposed	Not Important							Suprem Importan
1	EQUALITY (equal opportunity for all)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	INNER HARMONY (at peace with myself)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	SOCIAL POWER (control over others, dominance)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	PLEASURE (gratification of desires)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	FREEDOM (freedom of action and thought)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	A SPIRITUAL LIFE (emphasis on spiritual not material maters)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	SENSE OF BELONGING (freedom of action and thought)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	SOCIAL ORDER (stability of society)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	AN EXCITING LIFE (stimulating experiences)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	MEANING IN LIFE (a purpose in life)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	POLITENESS (courtesy, good manners)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	WEALTH (material possessions, money)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	NATIONAL SECURITY (protection of my nation from enemies)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	SELF-RESPECT (belief in one's own worth)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	RECIPROCATION OF FAVORS (avoidance of indebtedness)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	CREATIVITY (uniqueness, imagination)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Opposed	Not Important							Suprem Importan
17	A WORLD AT PEACE (free of war and conflict)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	RESPECT FOR TRADITION (preservation of time-honored customs)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	MATURE LOVE (deep emotional and spiritual intimacy)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	SELF-DISCIPLINE (self-restraint, resistance to temptation)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	DETACHMENT (from worldly concerns)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	FAMILY SECURITY (safety for loved ones)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	SOCIAL RECOGNITION (respect, approval by others)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	UNITY WITH NATURE (fitting into nature)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	A VARIED LIFE (filled with challenge, novelty, and change)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	WISDOM (a mature understanding of life)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	AUTHORITY (the right to lead or command)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	TRUE FRIENDSHIP (close, supportive friends)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	A WORLD OF BEAUTY (beauty of nature and the arts)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	SOCIAL JUSTICE (correcting injustice, care for the weak)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	INDEPENDENT (self-reliant, self-sufficient)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	MODERATE (avoiding extremes of feeling and action)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	LOYAL (faithful to my friends, group)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	AMBITIOUS (hardworking, aspiring)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	BROAD-MINDED (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	HUMBLE (modest, self-effacing)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37	DARING (seeking adventure, risk)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38	PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT (preserving nature)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Opposed	Not Important							Suprem Importan
39	INFLUENTIAL (having an impact on people and events)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40	HONORING OF PARENTS AND ELDERS (showing respect)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41	CHOOSING OWN GOALS (selecting own purpose)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42	HEALTHY (not being sick physically or mentally)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43	CAPABLE (competent, effective, efficient)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44	ACCEPTING MY PORTION IN LIFE (submitting to life's circumstances)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45	HONEST (genuine, sincere)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46	PRESERVING MY PUBLIC IMAGE (protecting my "face")	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47	OBEDIENT (dutiful, meeting obligations)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48	INTELLIGENT (logical, thinking)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49	HELPFUL (working for the welfare of others)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50	ENJOYING LIFE (enjoying food, sex., leisure, etc.)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51	DEVOUT (holding to religious faith and belief)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52	RESPONSIBLE (dependable, reliable)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53	CURIOUS (interested in everything, exploring)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54	FORGIVING (willing to pardon others)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55	SUCCESSFUL (achieving goals)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56	CLEAN (neat, tidy)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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