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Matthew P. Earnhardt

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

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MENTORING FUNCTIONS' RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIALIZATION FACETS AND STAGES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sidika Nihal Colakoglu, Norfolk State University
Omer Gokus, Norfolk State University

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to provide a conceptual framework that examines how the two mentoring functions (i.e., career-enhancing and psychosocial) are related to both the six content dimensions of organizational socialization (i.e., performance proficiency, people, politics, language, organizational goals and values, and history) and the two stages of organizational socialization process (i.e., encounter, and change and acquisition). Theoretical and practical implications of the present research are also provided.

INTRODUCTION

The effect of early learning experiences on the newcomer's subsequent adjustment to the organization occupies a central position in research on organizational socialization. Louis (1980) defined organizational socialization as "a process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organization member" (pp. 229-230). In other words, socialization focuses on how individuals learn the beliefs, values, orientations, behaviors, skills, and so forth necessary to fulfill their new roles and function effectively within an organization (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Van Maanen, 1976). Thus, socialization facilitates the adjustment of newcomers to organizations.

Socialization content is what is being imparted to the newcomer in the organization (Louis 1980). It refers to the information required to perform effectively in any organizationally defined role. Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) divided the information acquired during the socialization process into six categories: (1) performance proficiency - the identification of what needs to be learned and how well; (2) people -individual characteristics of organizational members: (3) politics - formal and informal power structures within the organization; (4) language -organization and group specific jargon; (5) organizational goals and values -formal and informal goals and values espoused by organizational members; (6) history -the organization's customs, traditions, myths, and rituals.

Several theoretical discussions of socialization have emphasized the importance of not just formal organizational processes, but also informal interactions between newcomers and insiders. Peers, supervisors, and mentors, often referred to as "agents" of socialization, are seen as playing

an integral role in facilitating newcomer sense-making (Louis 1980; Reichers 1987). By interacting with experienced others, newcomers can gain a better understanding of events and practices within the organization. Further, various agents of socialization can facilitate socialization by providing newcomers with advice, job instructions, and social support (Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983).

Mentors are considered as important agents that organizations use to socialize newcomers. A mentor, as one who helps a protégé "learn the ropes" has the potential to exert a strong influence on newcomers during their earliest experiences in the organization (Kram & Hall, 1991), experiences that may be critical to their careers. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) noted that mentors were very instrumental in helping newcomers learn about the organizational domain. They found that newcomers were able to learn more about an organization and its practices if they had mentors. Chatman (1991) also found that spending more time with a mentor in the first year was positively associated with person-organization fit of newcomers.

Kram (1983) identified two categories of functions served by mentors for their protégées: career-enhancing and psychosocial functions. Career-enhancing functions include providing sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments -- activities that directly relate to the protégé's career advancement. Psychosocial functions include providing role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship-- activities that influence the protégé's self-image and competence. Noe (1988) provided empirical support for Kram's (1983) two theoretical dimensions.

Only a few studies have investigated the relationship between mentoring functions and the facets of socialization (Allen, McManus, & Russell, 1999; Chao et al., 1994; Chao, 1997). Overall results indicated that mentoring was related to organizational socialization, and that the effects held up over time. In their meta-analysis Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, and Lima (2004) were not able to examine effect sizes between mentoring and socialization due the limited number of studies conducted in this field. In addition, there is no specific study which tries to conceptually determine which specific aspects of mentoring (career- related and psychosocial) are more critical to the different facets of organizational socialization. Therefore, developing a conceptual framework which helps researchers to understand which specific aspects of mentoring (career- related and psychosocial) are more related to the different facets or dimensions of organizational socialization is the central idea of the first set of research propositions offered by the current study.

Organizational socialization is typically thought of as having three primary phases or stages which include: (1) anticipatory socialization: learning about an organization that occurs prior to becoming an employee, including information from recruitment efforts, the organization's reputation, and job previews: (2) encounter: becoming employee and learning through direct experience what the organization is actually like; (3) change and acquisition: mastering important skills and roles while adjusting to the work group's values and norms (Feldman, 1981). Each socialization stage is characterized by both different sets of activities that employees engage in and process variables that indicate progress through the socialization process. For instance, while individuals are concerned with forming expectations about their jobs and making employment decisions in the anticipatory socialization stage, they are more concerned with learning new tasks, establishing new relationships with coworkers and clarifying their roles in the organization in the

encounter stage. Thus, it is possible to think that individuals in different stages of socialization may find different mentoring functions more useful or instrumental than others. Therefore, in the current study, the second set of propositions would explore which mentoring functions (career-related and psychosocial) could be found more important or desirable by newcomers in different phases of socialization.

In this study formal mentorship, instead of informal mentorship, will be used to describe mentor and newcomer relationships because of two basic reasons. First of all, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) suggest that mentoring can have its most dramatic impact soon after new members join the organization. Although this time is the time of greatest potential influence, it may also be the time when (informal) mentoring relationships are least likely to occur naturally due to their new and uncertain position as newcomers, their lack of self-confidence in establishing new relationships or time constraints (Ragins & Cotton, 1991). Such factors may support the idea that formal mentorship programs are necessary in organizations, particularly for newcomers (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1993). Second, Chao et al. (1992) reported no significant differences between those involved in formal versus informal mentorship programs on socialization, intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction, and salary outcome variables.

The current study is primarily focusing on the two socialization stages—encounter and change and acquisition—because since the current study examines the formal mentor-protégé relationships within an organizational context, the anticipation stage of socialization does not have a relevance for the purposes of the study.

PROPOSITIONS

Mentoring Functions and Content Dimensions of Socialization

Feldman (1981) and Fisher (1986) propose that the content domains relevant to socialization generally include task demands, role attributes, work-group norms, and organizational climate and culture. Chao et al. (1994) identified six content dimensions of socialization –performance proficiency, politics, language, people, organizational goals/values, and history.

Performance proficiency is referred to the extent to which the individual has learned the tasks involved on the job. Fisher (1986) posited that "learning to perform the required work task is obviously a critical part of socialization" (p.107). This dimension is characterized by the identification of what needs to be learned and how well an individual masters the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform his/her job. In their study Berlew and Hall (1966) indicated that having a challenging first job and a first superior with high expectations were associated with higher success and performance of newcomers years later in their careers. As noted earlier, one of the career-enhancing functions that mentors offer to their protégés is to provide them with challenging assignments. Mentors assign challenging work assignments to their protégés in order them to be prepared to perform well on difficult tasks so that they can move forward. The assignment of challenging work, supported with technical knowledge and ongoing performance feedback provided by the mentor, enables newcomers develop specific competencies

as well as essential technical and managerial skills (Kram, 1986). Coaching, another career-enhancing function may help newcomers improve their performance proficiency. Through coaching, mentors suggest specific strategies for accomplishing work objectives, for achieving recognition and for achieving career aspirations. These functions, in turn may help newcomers learn how to perform better in their jobs.

In addition to challenging assignments, two psychosocial functions—acceptance and confirmation and counseling—may help a newcomer develop competence in the work world. Through acceptance and confirmation function, the newcomer receives unconditional positive regards and feedback from his or her mentor. That, in turn may help newcomers or junior members feel confident about their skills and abilities related to their jobs. Counseling, on the other hand, provides a forum in which the newcomer can talk openly about anxieties, fears, and ambivalence that detract him or her from productive work (Kram, p.36). Personal concerns in the early stage of career usually fall into three major areas; competency at work, relationships with peers and supervisors, and work-family conflict. Counseling provided by the mentor helps protégés cope with these concerns more effectively and in turn helps them concentrate on mastering their jobs. Depending upon these explanations, we can formulate the following proposition:

Proposition 1a *Employees whose mentors provide extensive degrees of challenging assignments, coaching, acceptance, confirmation, and counseling are more effective in the performance proficiency dimension of the socialization than employees whose mentors provide these functions to a lesser degree.*

People is the second content dimension of the socialization identified by Chao et al. (1994). People dimension is referred to the extent to which the individual has established successful and satisfying work relationships with other organizational members (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). Fisher (1986) suggested that finding the right person and persons from whom to learn about the organization, work group, and job plays a central role in socialization. Personality traits, group dynamics, and similarity of non-work interests, as well as work interactions and structurally defined organizational relationships, affect how well the individual's social skills and behaviors will be accepted by other organizational members. As far as work interactions and structurally defined organizational relationships are concerned, almost all of the career-enhancing functions in combination may play an active role in establishing successful and satisfying work relationships for the newcomers. For instance, while coaching provides guidance how to handle work relationships more effectively, challenging work assignments and exposure and visibility functions may provide opportunities to interact more often with other members of the organization. Moreover, protection function may help the newcomer avoid unnecessary risks or conflicts while interacting with others.

As far as psychosocial functions are concerned, Kram (1986) suggests that these functions affect each newcomer or junior person on a more personal level than career functions; their benefits extend beyond organizational advancement and generally carry over to other spheres of life. In other words, career functions affect the individual's relationship to organization while psychosocial functions affect the individual's relationship with self and with significant others both within and especially outside the organization. From these explanations, we may say that

psychosocial functions offered by mentors are also important to interact with other members of the organization, however it can be assumed that career-enhancing functions are relatively more important than psychosocial functions in terms of the people dimension of the socialization.

Proposition 1b *Employees whose mentors provide extensive degrees of career-enhancing functions are more effective in the people dimension of the socialization than employees whose mentors provide these functions to a lesser degree.*

Socialization in organizational politics concerns the individual's success in gaining information regarding formal and informal work relationships and power structures within the organization. Effective learning and adjustment to a new job or organization could be made more efficient by being aware of which people are more knowledgeable and powerful than others within the organization (Louis, 1980; Pfeffer, 1981). Political dimension of organizational socialization also implies that the newcomer should both learn effective behavior patterns for his or her new role (Schein, 1968) and explore solutions to intergroup conflicts to deal with political environment within the organization (Feldman, 1981). Coaching, a career function enhances the newcomer's knowledge and understanding of how to navigate effectively in the corporate world. Coaching often involves sharing mentors' understanding of the important players—who can be trusted, who has the power, and who is likely to support or attack in a particular situation (Kram, 1986). In this case, an individual with an interested mentor may be at an advantage in relating to the organization because of sufficient knowledge of the informal and political process.

Another career-enhancing function—exposure and visibility—may be also helpful for the newcomer to master in politics of the organization. The exposure and visibility function involves assigning responsibilities that allow a lower-level manager to develop relationships with key figures in the organization (Kram, 1986). By being exposed to these key people within the organizations, the newcomers may be able to learn how to deal with people and power structure of the organization. Since counseling function of mentoring provides advice also on how to relate to peers and supervisors without compromising personal values and individuality, it may help the newcomers deal with intergroup and interpersonal conflicts more effectively.

Proposition 1c *Employees whose mentors provide extensive degrees of coaching, exposure and visibility, and counseling are more effective in the politics dimension of socialization than employees whose mentors provide these functions to a lesser degree.*

Language dimension describes the individual's knowledge of the profession's technical language as well as knowledge of the acronyms, slang, and jargon that are unique to the organization. It is suggested that an organization member needs to learn a certain base knowledge of company-specific language in order to comprehend information from others as well as communicate effectively with other organization members (Manning, 1970). According to Fisher (1986), there is some cognitive component to learning the task, which includes the learning of organizational jargon. Challenging work assignments usually involve works on a project team or task force to carry out a specific task or project. By assigning challenging work assignments, mentors give an opportunity to the newcomers to learn their profession's technical language, as

well as communicate more often with other members of the organization. Friendship, a psychosocial function, is characterized by social interaction in which both mentors and protégés have informal exchange about work and outside work experiences (Kram, 1986). These formal interactions with the mentor may help the newcomer learn knowledge of the acronyms, slang, and jargon that are unique to the organization.

Proposition 1d *Employees whose mentors provide extensive degrees of challenging assignments and friendship are more effective in the language dimension of socialization than employees whose mentors provide these functions to a lesser degree.*

Another important content dimension of socialization is organizational goals and values. This dimension indicates how well the individual understands specific organizational goals and values which relate to the maintenance of the integrity of the organization (Schein, 1968). The learning of organizational goals and values extends to unwritten, informal, tacit goals and values espoused by members who are in powerful or controlling positions (Fisher, 1986). Feldman (1981) clearly highlights the role of learning group norms and behaviors in the new employee's process of coming to understand unspoken rules, norms, and informal networks. In terms of role modeling, a psychosocial function, the mentor's attitudes, values, and behavior provide a model for the newcomer to emulate. Through such modeling, the newcomer learns appropriate approaches, attitudes, and behaviors held by his or her model (Kram, 1986). By setting up a desirable example, the mentor helps the newcomer learn what values or norms are considered appropriate or inappropriate within the organization. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) suggested that those with mentors tended to rely observation of their mentors to acquire information about their new settings.

Proposition 1e *Employees whose mentors provide extensive degrees of role modeling (psychosocial function) are more effective in the organizational goals and values dimension of socialization than employees whose mentors provide these functions to a lesser degree.*

History as one of the content dimensions of socialization refers to the individual's knowledge of traditions, customs, myths, and rituals that are used to transmit cultural knowledge and thereby perpetuate a particular type of organizational member (Chao et al. 1992; Ritti & Funkhouser, 1987). Knowledge of history, as well as knowledge about the personal backgrounds of particular organizational members, can help the individual learn what types of behavior appropriate or inappropriate in specific interactions and circumstances (Stein, 1968). Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) found that mentors were most instrumental for helping newcomers learn about the organizational domain relative to other content domains (task, role, and group). They also suggested that mentored newcomers were more quickly sensitized to the importance of organizational culture, politics, history and other system-wide features than their non-mentored colleagues. These results shows that mentors are very important for newcomers to learn about the organization, but there are not many studies explaining which specific mentoring functions are related to the organizational domain in general and history domain in specific. In their study Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found that newcomers acquired information mostly from role

models. In this sense, one can assume that newcomers may observe (role modeling) their mentors to gain information about traditions, customs, myths, and rituals of the organization. Also, their informal, daily base interactions with mentors through friendship, counseling, company socialization events may help newcomers get a sense of what the company is all about.

Proposition 1f *Employees whose mentors provide extensive degrees of psychosocial mentoring functions are more effective in the history domain of the socialization than employees whose mentors provide these functions to a lesser degree.*

Mentoring Functions and Socialization Stages

A common approach to the study of organizational socialization has been to characterize the process as a sequence of stages through which newcomers typically pass. A number of models have been proposed (Buchanan, 1974; Feldman 1976, 1981; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Van Maanen, 1976; Wanous, 1980). Only two stage models (Buchanan, 1974; Feldman 1976) have been directly tested empirically. Building on his previous theoretical model (Feldman, 1976) and incorporating some of the features of other existing models of the socialization process, Feldman (1981) presented an integrated model of multiple socialization processes. In his model Feldman (1981) identified three stages of organizational socialization –anticipatory, encounter, and change and acquisition.

Each stage consists of: (a) a different sets of activities that employees engage in, and (b) certain process variables that indicate the degree to which an individual has successfully completed a given activity in the respective stage. Progress through these stages occurs at different speeds and depends on different sets of organizational contingencies (Feldman, 1989). A mentorship relationship may be an important contingency in this process. For example, since newcomers engage in different activities in each stage to become an accepted member of the organization, they may find a specific set of mentoring functions --career- enhancing or psychosocial-- relatively more useful or desirable than other functions in different stages. Supporting this notion, Kram and Hall (1991) suggest that mentoring can be beneficial at many career stages, ranging from new college hires to managers with several years of experience behind them, but different kinds of mentoring will be needed at different career stages.

The first stage of the model, anticipatory socialization, involves the learning that takes place prior to newcomers entering to the organization. Four process variables, realism about the organization, realism about the job, congruence of skills and abilities, and congruence of needs and values, are involved in this stage. Since mentoring is not usually available to newcomers at this stage, our focus in this study will be on encounter and change and acquisition stages of socialization.

The second phase is "encounter" (Porter, et al. 1975; Van Maanen, 1975), in which the new recruit experiences what the organization is truly like, and in which some initial shifting of values, skills, and attitudes may occur. Five process variables indicate progress through socialization in the encounter stage—management of outside-life conflicts, management of intergroup role conflicts, role definition, initiation to the task, and initiation to the group (Feldman, 1981). While management of outside-life conflicts refer to the newcomer's progress in dealing

with conflicts between personal life and work life (e.g., scheduling, demands on employees' family), management of intergroup role conflicts refer to the newcomer's progress in dealing with conflicts between the role demands of one's own group and the demands of other groups in the organization. Role definition, on the other hand, is an implicit or explicit agreement with the work group on what tasks one is to perform and what the priorities and time allocation for those tasks is to be. It indicates the extent to which employees have fully clarified their roles. Initiation to task variable refers to the extent to which the newcomer feels competent and accepted as a full work partner and it indicates how successfully he or she has learned new tasks at work. Finally, initiation to the group refers to the progress in establishing new interpersonal relationships and learning group norms.

These explanations show that newcomers primarily engage in four types of activities which characterize the encounter stage of organizational socialization: learning new tasks, clarifying their roles, establishing new interpersonal relationships, and dealing with out-side and intergroup role conflicts. Experiences during the encounter period are considered as critical in shaping the individual's long-term orientation to the organization (Van Maanen, 1976). In this stage, the newcomer, faced with an ambiguous, uncertain situation and lacking the reference points for appropriate behavior, is assumed to experience a "breakpoint," or "reality shock," on entering the new situation (Van Maanen, 1977; Jones, 1983). In order to reduce uncertainty or role ambiguity, new comers try to acquire information and learn about the new setting by using various communication channels, notably social interactions with their supervisors, peers, and mentors (Saks and Ashforth, 1997). Mentors, in this case, could help new employees cope with this reality shock by providing support, advice and "inside" information through psychosocial functions such as friendship and acceptance and confirmation, and by coaching and protecting employees (career functions) (Kram, 1985).

In terms of learning new tasks and role behaviors, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) concluded that newly hired employees are more likely to observe others as a way of gaining relevant task and role information. Consistent with social cognitive theory, they found that newcomers acquired information from role models, and through observation and experimentation achieved a sense of mastery of their task and role. Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) also reported that newcomers who had mentors relied on the observation of others and their mentors for information, while newcomers without mentors relied on observation and co-workers. Depending upon these results, one may assume that role modeling function, more than other mentoring functions, help newcomers learn their new tasks and role behaviors required by their new jobs.

With establishing new interpersonal relationships, it is believed that the mentor's role often does not generally include providing guidance about specific task duties or work group functions, as the mentor is mostly at a higher level than immediate work group. In their study, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) found that mentors provided the most information about the role and organization domains. In this case, one may assume that psychosocial functions, which enhance self-image and competence of newcomers, will help them establish better interpersonal relationships. For example, while the counseling function help them reduce or deal with potential anxiety and fears related to interpersonal conflicts, mentor's friendship and unconditional positive

regards enable them to socialize better with their colleagues. Moreover, the role modeling function may give them a clear example which shows how to communicate and deal with others effectively.

Finally, dealing with out-side and intergroup role conflicts is another important issue that newcomers should resolve effectively to become a fully accepted members of the organization. In this case, counseling and coaching functions of mentoring may be the greatest help for the newcomers. Feldman (1980) suggested that being trusted and accepted personally by one's own work group made the biggest difference in resolving outside role conflicts. Thus, being accepted and trusted by a senior, higher status mentor may help other work group members accept and trust the newcomer more easily.

As also stated by Buchanan (1974), the primary concern of newcomers at the encounter stage is safety: getting established with and accepted by the organization. They are intensely anxious to prove themselves by showing that they can learn and adjust to the demands of the new environments. In addition, Katz's study (1980) suggested that at first newcomers were most concerned about fitting in socially, and later they become more preoccupied with how well they were performing. In this sense, one may conclude that newcomers could value psychosocial functions of mentoring relatively more than they do career-enhancing function at the encounter stage. As Kram (1986) stated, psychosocial and career-enhancing functions are not entirely distinct; providing psychosocial support may also enhance an individual's career success. However, the primary focus of the study is to show which one of these functions is relatively more helpful than the other to newcomers in their different stages of socialization. Therefore, the following proposition is developed:

Proposition 2a *Psychosocial mentoring functions are more related to the socialization of newcomers at the encounter stage.*

Change and acquisition is the third phase of socialization proposed by Feldman (1981) in his multiple socialization process. In this stage relatively long-lasting changes take place: new recruits master the skills required for their jobs, successfully perform their new roles, and make some satisfactory adjustment to their work groups' value and norms. There are three process variables addressed by Feldman (1981): resolution of role demands, task mastery, and adjustment to group norms and values. Buchanan (1974) identified this stage as a "performance" stage. According to him, newcomers' primary focus on safety and acceptance at the encounter stage is replaced by a concern with achievement and performance. In this case, by assigning challenging work assignments, providing coaching and opportunities for more exposure and visibility, mentors help newcomers experience high levels of achievement and performance.

In this stage newcomers also want to see that they are making real contribution and this contribution is appreciated by the organization (Schein, 1971). Having promotions at this point may be seen as an indication or proof of this recognition and appreciation. As Kram (1986) stated sponsorship is the most frequently observed career function and involves actively nominating an individual for desirable lateral moves and promotions. According to Kanter (1977), individuals gain "reflected power" from their sponsors. It is not only what sponsor says about an individual, but the knowledge that he or she is a sponsor that empowers the less experienced person and creates opportunities for movement and advancement. In sum, one may assume that sponsorship is

another career-enhancing function provided by mentors to help newcomers at the change and acquisition stage of socialization.

In terms of resolution of role demands, especially two functions—protection and coaching—may lead to lessened confusion about role demands from other parties. While protection helps newcomers avoid unnecessary risks that may jeopardize their career advancement and relationships with other members of the organization, coaching help them learn how to navigate in the organization more effectively. These overall may help us developing the next proposition:

Proposition 2b *Career-enhancing mentoring functions are more related to the socialization of newcomers at the change and acquisition stage of socialization.*

CONCLUSION

Building on the works of Chao et al. (1994), Feldman (1976, 1981), and Kram (1985, 1986), the current study aims to develop a conceptual framework that examines two sets of relationships between the two mentoring functions—career-enhancing and psychosocial—and organizational socialization. In the first set of relationships the study focuses on developing conceptual connections between the mentoring functions and the six content dimensions of organizational socialization. The second set of relationships looks more closely at the interplay between the mentoring functions and the two stages of socialization—encounter and change and acquisition. Having a deeper understating of how and why each mentoring function is related to each socialization stage or to the development of a different socialization dimension is theoretically important as it helps researchers to more effectively build nomological networks for both mentorship and socialization constructs.

This research has practical career implications for both protégés and mentors within the organizations. With decreasing career insecurity due to downsizing and restructuring of organizations and increasing inter-organizational mobility (Colakoglu, 2011) learning the ropes of the organization (i.e., socialization) as fast and effectively as possible becomes an important skill for protégés to improve their employability in their present and future organizations. Therefore, for protégés seeking for and getting stage appropriate career-enhancing and/or psychosocial functions from their mentors to master specific aspects of the organization (e.g., history, politics, and people) effectively can positively contribute to their career prospects. In line with Allen's (2003) study knowing which specific mentoring help and support are needed at a certain stage of socialization for more effective socialization of newcomers can improve the willingness and satisfaction of mentors in a formal mentor-protégé relationship. Moreover, if such purposeful mentorship provides successful protégés for the organization this can significantly improve the reputation and consequently the power and influence of the mentor within the organization.

The successful socialization of newcomers through purposeful mentoring has important practical implications for organizations as well. As the recent global recession is placing increasing pressures on organizations to cut operational costs while improving productivity it becomes essential for them to utilize their human resources to the fullest. Improving retention

thus reducing rehiring and retraining costs through effective newcomer socialization could be a way for organizations to response to these competitive pressures in the market place. By carefully designing formal mentoring programs in which mentors tailor the help and support they provide to their protégés according to protégés' socialization stage and socialization needs companies can improve the speed and effectiveness of newcomer socialization which in turn help them remain competitive.

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CROSS-CULTURAL DISCONTINUITIES WITHIN INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE WORK: FIRM-LEVEL EVIDENCE FROM A GERMAN SOFTWARE DEVELOPER IN THAILAND

Nipawan Mantalay, Chiang Mai University
Nopasit Chakpitak, Chiang Mai University

ABSTRACT

Offshoring knowledge and innovation activities enables many small and mediumenterprises (SMEs) to successfully compete in a global economy. This offshoring is largely driven by skills shortages and rising costs at home. However, while economic, political, and regulatory environments have traditionally been the main considerations when offshoring, understanding culture and the cross-cultural discontinuities associated with offshoring have received less attention. This paper uses a case study approach to assess the impact of culture on a German software developer offshoring its operations to Thailand. It begins with literature related to the growth of SMEs who offshore their knowledge-based activities. The methodology then uses interviews and focus groups to identify cross-cultural discontinuities at a case firm and links them to Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Results show five key cross-cultural discontinuities affecting work performance and discusses the implications for small businesses that offshore their knowledge related activities.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing competitiveness in the global economy has compelled a substantial number of multinational companies to outsource and offshore their business activities to foreign countries, particularly within Asia (Ernst, 2006). This has frequently resulted in both challenges and opportunities, but the current shift in the types of activity offshored embodies new critical challenges. This is especially so for SMEs (small and medium enterprises) who may be lured by the business prospects that offshoring presents, but may lack the experience and resources to overcome these challenges, in particular, the day-to-day management of employees in a cross-cultural work environment. This paper adopts a case study approach to explore the cultural challenges SMEs face when offshoring and employing knowledge workers abroad.

According to Balasubramanian and Ashutosh (2005), a new, second wave of offshoring is underway,which ischaracterised byfirms who areoffshoringmore than simple manufacturing, and are now relocating knowledge and innovation activities (Lewin, Massini & Peeters, 2009).Theoffshoring of knowledge activities and innovation requires a critical understanding of how to managelocally recruited knowledge workers who are performing these knowledge-based activities in the context of an international management environment. This paper argues via a German-

Thai case studythat cross-cultural discontinuities between expatriate management and their locally recruited staff represent a significant barrier to effective knowledge work. Such cross-cultural discontinuitiescan negate the potential benefits that attract SMEs to offshore their activities in the first place. The paper has two keyaims, firstly to identify the cultural discontinuities which exist within the German-Thai workplace, and secondly, to assess the potential impacts these cultural discontinuities have on work performance and quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONTEXT

Offshoring Business Activities

Offshoring has frequently been termed the most visible consequence of globalisation (e.g. Auer, Besse & Meda, 2006). Akey driver of this offshoring process has often been access to comparatively low cost labour; firms seek to relocate their business activities to countries where labour is cheaper. While this global division of labour is often suggested as the primary reason for offshoring (Farrell, 2005), other aspects also play a significant role in business decisions to locate internationally. These include the need to secure raw materials located overseas (e.g. Fifarek, Veloso & Davison, 2008), the desire to diversify and overcome the risks related to currency fluctuations (e.g. Vestring, Rouse & Reinert, 2005), and the requirements to access free trade areas and be closer to key markets (Kelly, 2001).

While the cost savings of operating aboard are generally well understood, there are a variety of invisible costs and challenges associated with offshoring, which are generally less acknowledged (Stringfellow, Teagarden &Nie, 2008). For example, cultural differences have been noted as one of the most significant barriers when operating overseas, particularly in terms of managing staff. These cultural issues are frequently nuanced towards particular cross-cultural interactions, and often require specific understanding or practical experience. Developing an awareness and understanding of these cultural issues and interactions is fundamentally important to firms operating in the domain of the creative knowledge industries. It is particularly important for SMEs that are unlikely to possess the experience or financial resources necessary to address the cultural issues affecting their work quality and performance.

Deciding whether to offshore and operate internationally can become a business dilemma. On the one hand it provides significant benefits, including considerable scope and flexibility to cut costs, address local issues, and differentiate from competitors who remain focused at home (Miroshnik, 2002). In contrast, international operations can also represent critical business challenges. For example, while offshoring might be economically feasible, the employment of relatively cheap labour, and the potential loss of jobs in the firm's home country often represents a moral quandary (Bardhan, 2006). There are also wide ranging issues such as the difficulty in protecting intellectual property (Bidanda, Arisoy, & Larry, 2006), the choice in offshorelocation, and the services a firm can provide by offshoring to a particular location (Pyndt & Pederson, 2006).

This paper argues that one of the most significant issues affecting SMEs who choose to offshore their activities is understanding and responding to the cultural differences between locally recruited knowledge workers and the firm'sexpatriate management. Through a case study of a German software developer operating in Northern Thailand, this paper identifies key cultural discontinuities that exist, and explores their impact on work performance and quality. The focus is on knowledge work, which isexpanding relative to the growth of the knowledge economy and the offshoring of knowledge activities. Knowledge work is also more susceptible to differences in culture due to its heavy reliance on communication (Smith & Rupp, 2002), which in turnrepresents significant potential for conflict (Scarbrough, 1999).

Growth of the Knowledge Economy and OffshoringKnowledge Activities

Over the last two decades, knowledge has emerged to become a distinguishing feature of the world's economy (Barrera, 2007). The fundamental importance of knowledge to economic success has led to creation of the term 'knowledge economy'. It was Drucker (1966) who, heavily influenced by Machlup (1962), introduced the concept of the knowledge economy. Since the 1960s, there has been growing debate over the definition, but continuing agreement that the leading edge of the economy is primarily influenced by innovation, technology, knowledge production and knowledge dissemination (Powell & Snellman, 2004). The knowledge economy is generally defined as the effective utilisation of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills, and innovation as key resources for competitive advantage and economic success (ESRC, 2005). Knowledge has become the primary driver of growth in many countries, with economic trends signifying that traditional agrarian and manufacturing activities have been in steady decline and are less resilient to financial crises (Carlaw, Oxley, Walker, Thorns & Nuth, 2006). The emergence of the knowledge economy and increasing internationalisation of knowledge activities means that employee remuneration and skill are becoming overshadowed by creativity and the ability to innovate. This requires new ways of thinking about managing knowledge workers (employees), and the natural result is a global race for talent, where knowledge workers, and the way these knowledge workers are managed have become critical to the success of firms operating within knowledge-based industries. The increasing growth of knowledge economies and subsequent offshoring of knowledge-based activities has created a need to understand culture and perhaps most importantly, the subsequent impact that different cultures have on management, organizational performance and quality.

The relationship between culture and work performance is well known, inextricably linked, and complex (Hartog& Verburg, 2006) and expatriate managers play a critical role in managing locally recruited human resources. Managers must understand how to effectively lead local employees to perform, but these local employees frequently possess different expectations of management as well as differences intheir task readiness related tocultural disparities (Petison &Johri, 2008). Similarly, Rodsutthi and Swierczek (2002) found that the characteristics of leaders and their cultural background had a powerful effect on staff. One of the most internationally and culturally diverse knowledge industries is software development, which is built on a foundation of knowledge (Schware, 1992). The software development industry has gradually expanded from the sole domain of developed countries to become aglobal endeavour, where internationalisation and offshoring have played a significant roles in building the software industry in countries such as India, Brazil and China (Cochran, 2001).

Offshoring Software Related Knowledge Work

The software development industry contributes to the global knowledge economy via its intrinsic features and fits the key definitions and strands of the knowledge economy literature in multiple ways. For example, the software development industry can be described as knowledge intensive, producing both new technology and intellectual property. Software is also consistent with two common perspectives of the knowledge industries, one where knowledge is considered a product, and one where knowledge is used as a tool. Software organisations that thrive in the knowledge economy are deeply involved in producing knowledge and organizing themselves around continuous learning and innovation. Software development has therefore become a multisite, multicultural and globally distributed industry (Herbsleb, Zubrow, Goldenson, hayes & Paulk, 2001). Despite some sizeable contenders, the global software industry is fragmented, consisting mainly of small and niche firms (Nowak&Grantham, 2000). In more developed economies, there are skills shortages in the software industry, which have resulted in steadily rising wage costs (Trendle, 2008). To offset these skills shortages and rising wage costs, international offshoring occurs, but these primarily small firms face significant issues in managing international knowledge workers. While the most well-known offshoring locations for software are the BRIC countries (Brazil,Russia, India, China), non-BRIC countries are also inheritors of a globalised economy (Willcocks, Griffiths & Kotlarsky, 2009), with significant outsourcing and offshoring of software and IT activities. Thailand is focused on developing its knowledge economy, and is continuing to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) related to software.

Software and FDI in Thailand

Thailand's economy has shifted towards knowledge-based industries, creative activities, and the generation and exploitation of knowledge, and is rapidly moving away from its agrarian roots to increasingly focus on innovation and creativity as drivers of growth (Intarakumnerd, Chairatana &Tangchitpitoon, 2002). In 2011, the World Bank reclassified Thailand's economy from a lower income to middle income economy, signifying the changes taking place within the Thai economy (World Bank, 2011). While India, China and Brazil host the largest emerging software development industries (Veloso, Botelho,Tschang, Amsden & Stefanuto, 2003), Thailand is developing a reputation as a creative and innovative player within the domain of software (Thailand Investment Review, 2012).Geographically, the two major areas of focus for software development are Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand, and Bangkok in the south. Figure 1 illustrates key features of Thailand's software development industries in these two locations, which focus on software outsourcing, and the production of innovative IT content.

While Figure 1 shows the Thai software industry is primed for growth, developing economies such as Thailand face significant issues in delivering effective knowledge workers. Perhaps most critically, there is a mismatch between employer needs and the outputs of the education system, which often causes difficulty in supplying industries with appropriate knowledge workers. The most common method to circumvent such issues has been the development of industry clusters, where universities, businesses, and infrastructure are agglomerated to improve competitive advantage. Industry clusters through the Triple Helix ofuniversity- industry-government relations have been a particular focus in Thailand's software industry. Research suggests that in Thailand, the fundamental economic conditions are more significant to attracting FDI than short-term government incentives (Larsson &Vankatesh, 2010). For example, an adequate source of effective knowledge workers is considered more important than tax breaks or other forms of incentivisation. This corroborates the need to understand how foreign SMEs investing and offshoring in Thailand can effectively manage the cultural differences of Thai knowledge workers.

What is clear from the literature is that managing international knowledge workers with a view to achieving the most effective performance is challenging, particularly in terms of cultural differences, and is therefore an issue warranting further research. For Thailand, it is particularly important to understand the cultural issues that affect knowledge work, especially if the Thai government is to succeed in continuing to encourage FDI in its creative and knowledge-based industries. The Southeast Asian region offers significant potential for small firms who wish to offshore their business and many companies choose to offshore their activities to countries within ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region (Koubek, Weinert & Meyer, 2009). Figure 2 highlights that within the ASEAN, Thailand currently offers an attractive mix of relatively low cost labour and a high availability of skilled staff. While other countries in the region such as Singapore offer a very high availability of specialised/skilled staff, they do so at an equally high cost. Cambodia and Vietnam appear to offer a relatively high cost of labour compared to Thailand, but with a lower availability of specialised staff.

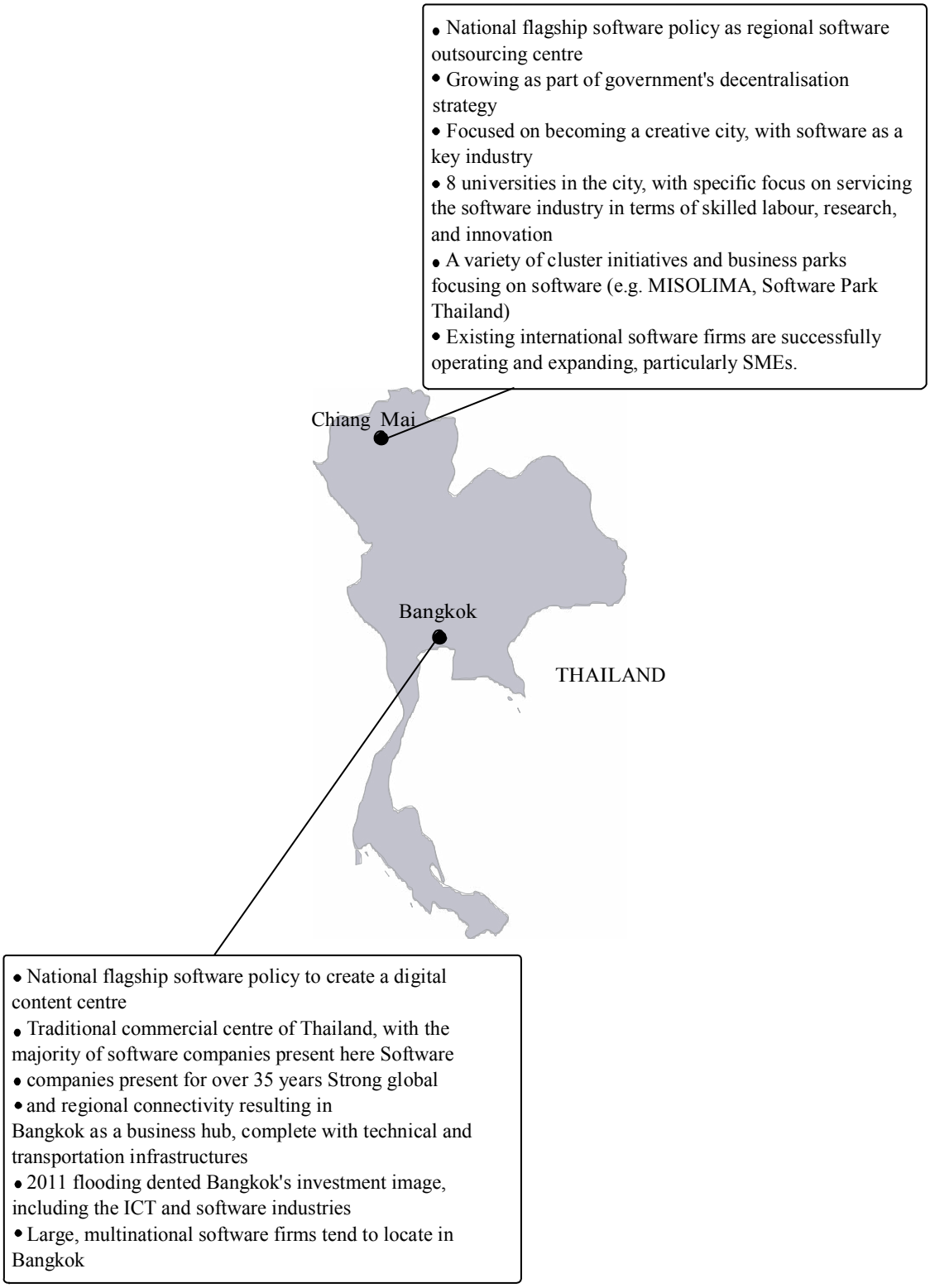

Figure 1: The two key clusters of software development in Thailand (Data sources: Glassman & Sneddon, 2003; SIPA, 2007; MICT, 2012)

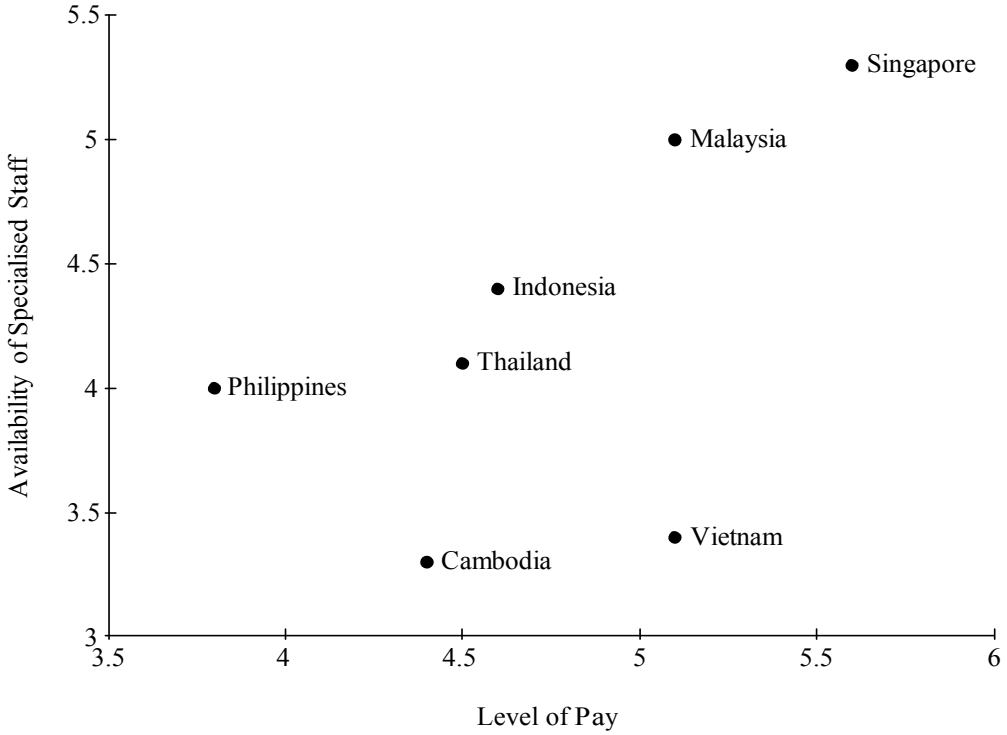

Figure 2: Pay levels versus availability of knowledge workers in the seven ASEAN countries where data is available. (Data source: The World Bank, 2011)

Offshoring to Thailand has often been investigated from a regional perspective where research focuses on Confucian management methods and other related Asian management styles, particularly how Japanese managers work with Thai subordinates (e.g. Swierczek & Onishi, 2003) and Korean systems of management (Chen, 2004). There has been far less research relating to the use of western styles of management in Asia and the cultural discontinuities these represent. There has also been little in terms of how these cultural discontinuities can affect knowledge work, which is frequently the domain of SMEs who offshore their operations. The research gap filled by this paper aims to understand the Thai culture with specific reference to the knowledge workplace, and how this affects SMEs engaged in offshoring their knowledge work to Thailand. The research approach is via a German case firm operating in Thailand's software development sector.

METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDY RESEARCH APPROACH

The Case Firm

Cross-cultural discontinuities are explored via a case study at a German SME offshoring to Thailand. The software industry is vital to the German economy (Hoerndlein, Schreiner, Benlian, Hess & Picot, 2012), and according to Casper and Vitols (2006), German software services and technologies are prospering. German software companies spend approximately 8% of their revenue on innovation, and the success of the German software industry contradicts the typical assumption of US industry dominance in software (Leimbach, 2008). However, despite success, issues

have emerged as a result of this sustained growth and success. One of the largest problems is the lack of qualified and skilled knowledge workers. This has led to a widening skills gap (Nicholson, 2001) and an acute shortage of accessible labour within the software industry. The difficulty in finding qualified knowledge workers has led German firms to offshore, which can successfully bridge the skills gap, but requires time and structural adjustment. Successfully offshoring requires considerable effort in the form of navigating legal and political issues, and comprehending the host country's culture and work style (Peeters, Lewin&Massini, 2009). This raises the question of how to understand and successfully manage the cultural differences between German culture and the culture of the host country, which in this case study,is Thailand.

In line with these issues and the general aims stated in the introduction, there were two key research objectives:

1. To identify the cultural discontinuities from the perspective of both German managers and Thai knowledge workers (software developers).
2. To assess the potential impacts of these cultural discontinuities on work performance and quality.

The methodological approach in this work is based on a qualitative case study at a German SME operating in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. Since 2005, the case firm has provided a wide variety of both standard and customized software solutions to international customers and in 2012 turnover reached 23 million Euro. Company headquarters are in Berlin, where there are approximately 280 employees. The Thai affiliate in Chiang Mai employs 80 locally recruited staff for its offshore software development business. The company maintains close relations with local universities in Thailand to assist when recruiting knowledge workers and developing the business.

Business decisions to offshore software development activities to Thailand (Chiang Mai) were for a variety of reasons, including:

- The presence of an existing and successful IT industry cluster. Such business clusters are reported to increase the productivity and competitiveness of companies, both nationally and internationally (Porter, 2000).
- The cost of labour in Chiang Mai is significantly lower compared to hiring knowledge workers in Germany. According to the International Labour Office (2012), the average wage rate of a new software developer in Thailand was approximately $400 USD per month versus approximately $4400 USD per month in Germany.
- There is a sufficient supply of skilled knowledge workers in Chiang Mai, which is being developed as a creative city (UNESCO, 2011). In addition, Chiang Mai has pioneered initiatives such as Software Park Thailand (Mongkolnam, 2009), and there are also a number of universities in Chiang Mai contributing to the industrial growth in these regions (Glassman & Sneddon, 2003), particularly through the supply of skilled knowledge workers.

- The infrastructure in Chiang Mai is effective for international business and includes high quality Internet connectivity and convenient air links. According to the CIA (2012), Thailand ranks above some of its ASEAN neighbours (including Indonesia and the Philippines) in terms of the number of Internet hosts.

The primary activities of the case study firm are related to software development and web design, which can be separated into four main business areas. Table 1 illustrates the firm's key activities according to these particular business areas.

Table 1
KEY BUSINESS AREAS IN WHICH THE CASE STUDY FIRM OPERATES

BUSINESS AREAS			
BUSINESS/WEB APPLICATIONS	DIRECTORY SERVICES	MOBILE APPLICATIONS	DESIGN
• Super office • Research interface • Lead list interface • Domain admin tool • Designer backend • DCIA (Diamond Connection Interface Agent) • Accounting • CCB (Credit Card Billing) • SEM Tool (Search Engine Marketing)	• Office Finder	• Day Planner	• Websites • Flyers • Logos • Banners

To meet the research aim and objectives, the research design was developed to include a variety of perspectives including the expatriate German management, Thai knowledge workers as well as the opinions from the German headquarters.Research design is explained below in detailed methodological steps.

RESEARCH DESIGN

There were three main methodological steps in the research, these were:

1. Identification of appropriate sample groups and data collection.
2. Analysis of cross-cultural discontinuities via Hofstede's cultural dimensions.
3. Linking work performance/quality issues to cross-cultural discontinuities through cause and effect (fishbone) analysis.

Figure 3 illustrates the three research steps, along with the main outputs.

Sample Groups and Data Collection

The research gathered the perspectives of four main stakeholders: German managers working in Thailand, locally recruited Thai staff, German software developers working at the headquarters, and German managers, also in Berlin. Key

data collection instruments were semi-structured interviews and focus groups which were carried out with each of the four main sample groups. These sample groups along with the rationale for their selection are presented in Table 2.

It is important to note that the sample sizes are relatively small, however the focus was on depth of understanding rather than range and frequency. In addition, the case firm had a limited population from which to gather data, and Mason (2010) argues that in qualitative studies, there is a point of diminishing return as sample size increases, and that the frequency of samples is rarely important. Similarly, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) illustrate that in qualitative cultural studies, the objective is to provide meaning rather than propagate wide- ranging or general hypothesis statements. A limitation of this study is that sample sizes may not be enough to achieve saturation and could preclude the generation of themes and patterns. The triangulation of results from different sample groups and the fact that this is a case study approach minimize potential impacts of this limitation. Future work will utilize the overall research process to build on results, expand sample sizes and contribute to making wider ranging and more generalizable conclusions. Thus the sample size in this research meets the objectives and principles associated with qualitative research and provides in depth understanding of the cultural issues faced by the case firm. It is expected that results from this case study will apply to other firms in a similar situation.

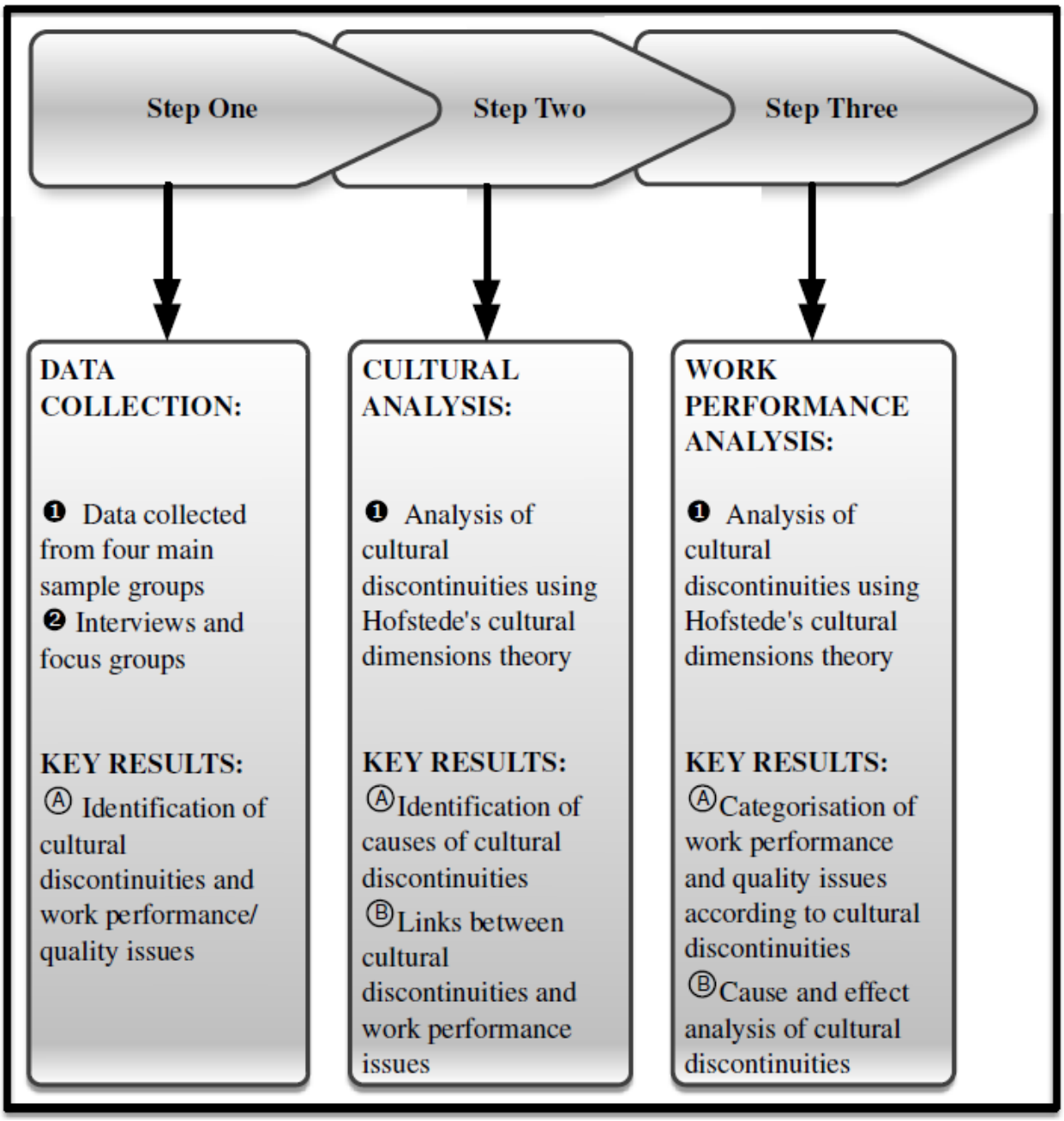

Figure 3: The three key methodological steps along with data collection techniques and key outputs (results)

Table 2
SUMMARY OF SAMPLE GROUPS, SIZES, AND RATIONALE FOR

SAMPLE GROUP	SAMPLE SIZE	RATIONALE
Expatriate German managers working in Thailand	2	To gather cultural perspectives of the German expatriate managers responsible for effectively managing Thai staff.
Locally recruited Thai software developers	13	To understand how Thai knowledge workers feel about German management and working within the German-Thai culture.
German developers located at German HQ	6	To understand the perspective of German knowledge workers when collaborating in the cross-cultural German-Thai workplace.
German managers located at German HQ	3	To gather perspectives of German management working at the home country in terms of cultural discontinuities and how they affect the company's knowledge work.

Focus groups were conducted with each one of the four sample groups and were used to provide an informal and relaxed discussion about issues of culture. Morgan (1998) suggests that focus groups provide an ideal platform from which to listen, communicate and learn, minimising constraints and without an intimidating atmosphere that can often plague other data collection techniques. In dealing with the sensitive issue of culture, focus groups were considered to be the most appropriate tool to question the Thai knowledge workers.

Focus groups with each of the sample groups lasted for approximately one hour and a set of predetermined discussion topics ensured the appropriate topics were covered as well as encouraging conversation and communication if the participants dried up during the session.

After completion of the focus groups, data was analysed to assess issues of German and Thai culture at the case firm, and particularly how this impacted upon work, including the performance of knowledge workers and the quality of the work itself. In addition to focus groups, the German managers were questioned more closely with respect to how they felt work performance and qualities were affected by culture. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were structured according to three main sections. Firstly, the issues managers faced with Thai knowledge workers, secondly, the potential impacts on company productivity and finally, ways these three issues might be overcome. All interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. Following data collection via interviews and focus groups, the results were analysed by applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede,1984).

Analysis via Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

A key objective in this research relates to the cultural discontinuities that occur when international firms offshore to Thailand. While the case study is a German software developer, it acts as a reference framework and it is expected that some of the key cultural differences and challenges might occur with different cultures (albeit skewed to a different degree of influence). While software development is a quintessential knowledge industry, other knowledge based offshoring is also likely to be affected by cross-cultural discontinuities. One of the most well-known cultural theories was used to underpin the cultural findings at the case firm, and acted as a frame of reference when assessing and analyzing cultural differences between the German and Thai knowledge workers.

Figure 4 illustrates the five key cultural dimensions of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede, 1984), each of which has a significant impact on the way individuals act in terms of their everyday life and work.

Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) show that the five cultural dimensions are effective at understanding the behavior of different individuals in a cross-cultural business environment. Each of the cultural dimensions are briefly outlined below.

Power distance relationship: This can be defined as the degree to which less powerful individuals within an organisation expect and/or accept that power is distributed unevenly (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010). In an organisation, this depicts how a subordinate might expect a boss to treat staff and make decisions. For example in a low power-distance relationship, staff may prefer their bosses to consult and treat them as equal, while conversely, in a high power distance relationship, there might be an expectation and preference for autocratic decision making.

Uncertainty avoidance: This relates to tolerance of ambiguity (Hofstede, Hofstede& Minkov, 2010) and how threatened or worried individuals feel about ambiguous situations.

Individual/collectivism: The emphasis on individuals or on groups distinguishes the individual/collectivism cultural dimension (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). Some societies place emphasis on individuals and their own personal identities, while others place emphasis on working together as a unit for the collective good of a group.

Masculinity/femininity: This dimension refers to the degree of importance placed upon what are considered masculine traits: earnings, achievement, recognition, and advancement. The feminine aspects in this dimension relate to employment security, cooperation, working relationships, and the living environment related to a job (Hofstede, Hofstede& Minkov, 2010).

Long-term orientation: is the degree to which individuals are focused either on future reward, or the past and the present (Hofstede,Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). Those with a long-term orientation place importance on thrift and perseverance, while those with a short- term orientation respect tradition and saving "face".

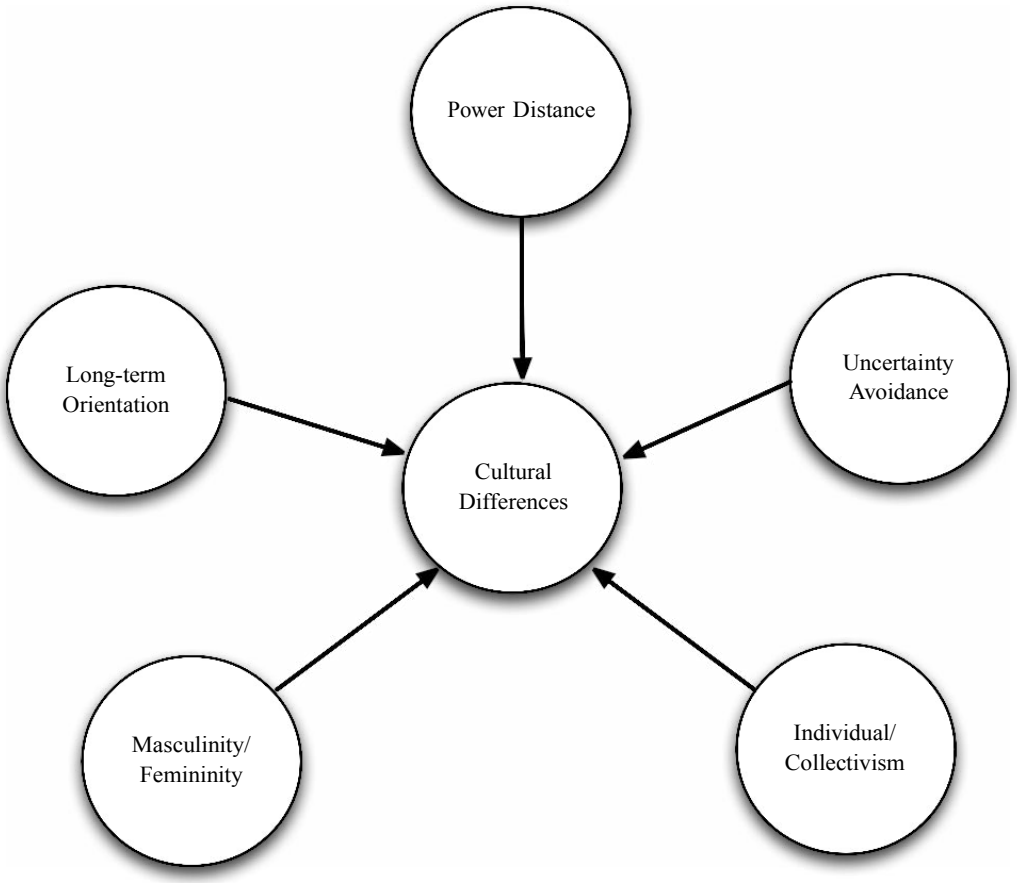

Figure 4: Hofstede's five cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1984)

Figure 5 illustrates how the five cultural dimensions relate specifically to the Thai and German culture investigated in this research, and shows the contrast between the two national cultures. These theoretical (but empirically based) cultural differences are expected to translate into cultural discontinuities in the workplace, and at the case firm. The analysis using Hofstede's cultural dimensions thus interprets the cultural issues arising from the focus groups and interviews according to these five cultural dimensions.

Figure 5 shows significant differences in four of the five cultural dimensions. After analysis using the cultural dimensions, the final step of the methodology sought to assess how these cultural dimensions affected work performance at the case firm. This was undertaken via a cause and effect analysis.

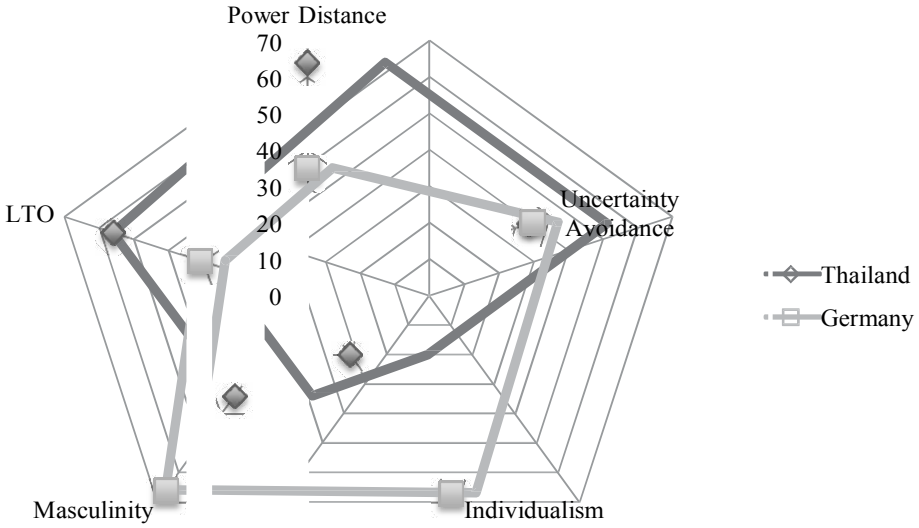

Figure 5: The difference in Hofstede's five cultural dimensions between Thailand and Germany

Cause and Effect Diagram (Fishbone Analysis): Linking Cultural Discontinuities with Work Performance and Quality

Once the specific aspects of culture had been identified at the case firm, the research assessed how these affected work performance of the Thai software developers. Although many of the work issues identified in the interviews and focus groups related to the cultural dimensions, a sizeable number were general day-to-day issues, which might be present in any workplace. The cause and effect diagram and analysis thus aimed to isolate the more specific cultural issues from general day-to-day issues. After the focus groups and interviews were completed and analyzed, a cause and effect diagram (fishbone analysis) (Ishikawa, 1986) focused on structuring the issues. The fishbone analysis technique is detailed as a reliable and useful method for diagnosing business problems (e.g. Kettinger, Teng & Guha, 1997). Figure 6 illustrates an example pro forma fishbone diagram, indicating how it was used to analyse causes and sub causes of issues leading to a particular effect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are split into two main parts. Firstly, results from the interviews and focus groups, which identify the cultural issues and how they affect work performance

and quality. Secondly, cultural aspects are isolated from more general work performance issues via a fishbone analysis. The perspective of each sample group (i.e. German expatriate managers, German mangers at headquarters, as well as German and Thai software developers) is considered when analyzing and discussing the cross-cultural discontinuities and how they affect the workplace. Finally, the results discuss the findings from a more holistic perspective including all four sample groups and the wider context of cultural issues that arise when offshoring.

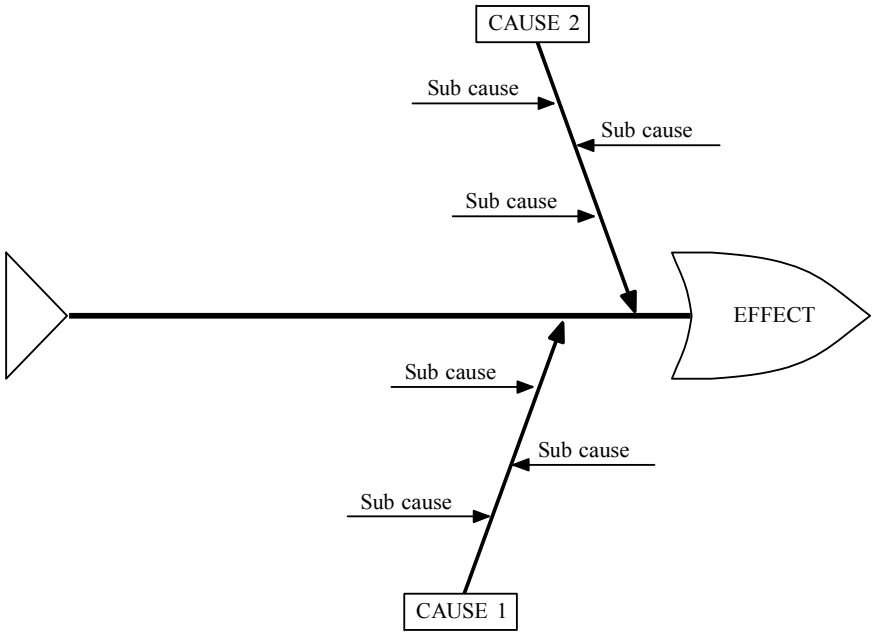

Figure 6: An example fishbone diagram, also known as a cause and effect diagram
or
Ishikawa diagram

Identifying Cultural Discontinuities

Culture is considered as the shared and collective learning of a group, which influences their response in different circumstances and these ideas are embedded into organisational culture (Pinto, 2010). When people from distinctive backgrounds work together, they share a set of assumptions, beliefs, values and norms, which represent the main composition of their work surroundings (Newstrom & Davis, 2002). Approachingknowledge work through the lens of differing German and Thai cultures shows that culture has significant impacts on work performance. Table 3 shows Hofstede's cultural dimensions for Germans and Thais and calculates quantitative differences between each of the five dimensions.

Table 3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GERMAN AND THAI NATIONAL CULTURES (Data Adapted from Hofstede, 1984)			
CULTURAL DIMENSIONS	GERMAN SCORE	THAI SCORE	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CULTURAL DIMENSIONS
• Power distance	35	64	+29
• Individualism	67	20	+47
• Masculinity	66	34	+32
• Uncertainty avoidance	65	64	+1
• Long-term orientation	31	56	+25

As Table 3 shows, the greatest difference is between aspects of individualism (a difference of 47). Individualism refers to the emphasis placed by society on encouraging individualism or conformity. Cultures with high individualism place importance on individual achievement and initiative. In contrast, cultures with low levels of individualism emphasise group loyalty and dependence on groups, or organisations. This theoretical perspective on the apparent difference of individualism between Germans and Thais was evident in some of the observations at the case firm. For example, the large difference between individualism is exemplified by Thai software developers who prefer communicating as a group versus the usual German approach of all individuals communicating equally.

According to Table 3, there is also a large difference between Germans and Thais in terms of masculinity (difference of 32). Masculinity relates to the level of importance society places on either achievement, or nurture. Cultures with a high level of masculinity expect ambition, achievement and the acquisition of wealth. Those cultures with lower levels of masculinity emphasise nurturing for growth, and a high quality of life. This relates to the interview responses given by German managers, who suggest that Thai employees consider work of an adequate standard to be complete, and favour quality of life over work, whereas the German managers and developers strive for perfection and achievement.

Table 3 also indicates that the power distance relationship exhibits a large difference between German and Thai cultures (difference of 29). Power distance relates to the expectation of equality within an organisation. More specifically,the extent to which less powerful members of organisations expect inequality. Thais have a power distance number of 64, which is relatively high, and thus they expect power to be distributed unevenly, which would be represented by an autocratic management style. In contrast, Germans have a relatively low power distance number of 35, and expect all to be treated equally. This supports the various observations from Thai employees and German managers about the differences in their needs and expectations.

Uncertainty avoidance showed very little difference between Germans and Thais. Uncertainty avoidance signifies the degree to which individuals tolerate ambiguity or uncertainty in situations. In this respect, both Germans and Thais exhibit a similar dislike of uncertainty, and have relatively high uncertainty avoidance index. However, the responses from Germans and Thais, suggest that the uncertainty avoidance between them relates to different aspects of their work. For example, the focus groups suggest that Thais do not like uncertainty when given instructions, or in the organisation's chain of command. In contrast, Germans dislike uncertainty or ambiguity in terms of whether their Thai employees have understood a task, or whether a task is fully complete.

Long-term orientation (LTO) is another cultural dimension with a significant difference (difference of 25). A longer-term orientation (signified by a lower LTO number) is characterised by persistence, ordering relationships by status, and an ability to adapt. Conversely, a culture with a short-term orientation is more likely to respect tradition, focus on quick results, and not save for the future. In the context of the German-Thai working environment, this has significant implications for the performance of knowledge workers and the most appropriate ways to motivate them.

Results from Hofstede's cultural dimensions, interviews and focus groups show that there are significant differences between four of the five key cultural dimensions. Table 4 summarises the key characteristics of Germans and Thais taken from the literature and links these to the observed cross-cultural discontinuities and effects on work performance at the case firm.

Table 4
SUMMARY OF GERMAN VS. THAI CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THE EFFECTS ON WORK PERFORMANCE

TYPICAL CULTURAL BEHAVIOUR (From literature, Hofstede's dimensions and the case firm)		RESULTING CROSS-CULTURAL DISCONTINUITY	EFFECTS ON WORK PERFORMANCE OF THAI EMPLOYEES (at the case firm)
GERMANS	THAIS		
• Strict (case study; Steers, 2010)	• Flexible cool-hearted (Jai Yen), considerate (Kreng-Jai) (case study; Komin, 1991)	• Power distance relationship. • Feedback needs differ	• Slow decision-making in work processes.
• Disciplined (case study)	• Not well-organised (case study)	• Concept of work completion	• Work tasks are not prioritised.
• Punctual (case study; Steers, 2010)	• Perform tasks at a pace they feel comfortable (case study), Slow work pace, (case study; Sriussadaporn, 2006)	• Time management • Concept of work completion	• Delays in delivering required products.
• Direct expression (case study; Hofstede, 1984)	• Indirect expression, avoid confrontation, no disputes (case study; Komin, 1991)	• Power distance relationship	• Problems remain unsolved or require time-consuming processes.
• Freedom provided for critical thinking and decision-making (case study)	• Follow commands(Kumbanaruk, 1987, Tansuvan& Saeng-Xuto, 1993) obedient (Sriussadaporn, 2006)	• Differences in learning style and needs • Feedback needs differ	• No creativity to complete work tasks. • Follow orders but work without clear understanding.
• Serious (case study)	• Not serious, fun-working orientation (case study; Komin, 1990)	• Time management • Concept of work completion	• Work tasks are not undertaken with full competence.
• Prefer flat organisational hierarchy/equality (case study); low power distance (case study; Hofstede, 1984)	• Prefer strict organisational hierarchy (case study), high power distance (case study; Hofstede, 1984)	• Feedback needs differ • Power distance relationship	• Employees lose trust/respect for managers. • Managers lose credibility as leaders.

Figure 7 summarises the key cultural differences identified from the interviews, focus groups and literature, showing how these differences create cross-cultural discontinuities in the workplace.

Each of the five cross-cultural discontinuities identified in Figure 7 are now discussed in more detail based on interview responses and focus groups at the case firm. To frame these cultural issues, where appropriate they are contextualised according to Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions.

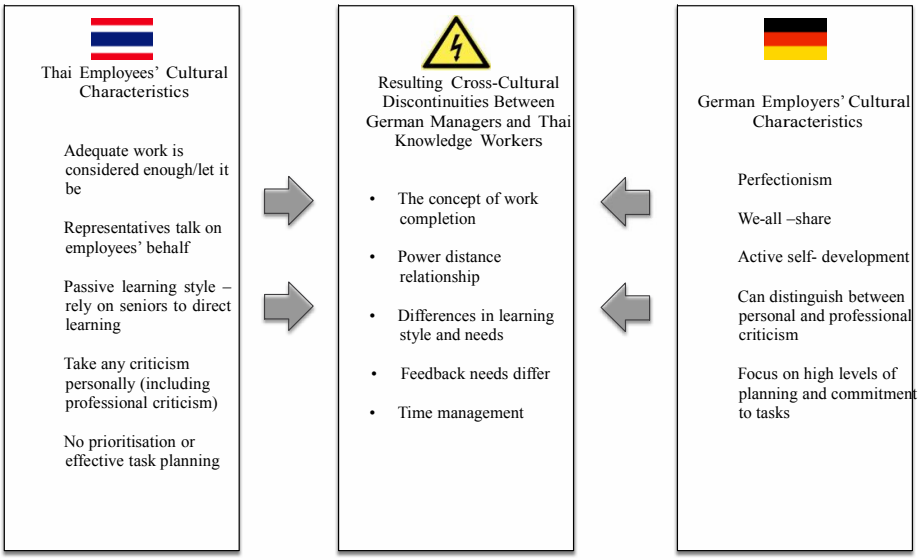

Figure 7: Cultural differences between Thai knowledge workers and German employers at the case firm based on interviews, focus groups and the resulting cross-cultural discontinuities

Cross-Cultural Discontinuity One: The Concept of Work Completion

German managers stated that when Thai software developers sent completed versions of their software products to be tested by the software team at headquarters, the German team discovered the products were not fully functional, and not at the expected level of completion. The software products had significant aspects missing, or were simply incomplete. This highlights that the concept of product accomplishment is different between Thais and Germans. One German software developer based in Berlin elucidated this by stating:

> "I think the mindset for what is done by a Thai developer is different from what a customer expects…I think there really is a difference in the definition of what is done and complete.Maybe we will have to train and teach them about our definition of what being complete means."

One German team member expanded on this by noting:

> "…we need to ensure we all have the same definition of what being done means. Maybe here in Berlin we have a different expectation of quality. Maybe in Chiang Mai they have their own definition of what quality is, but we need to make sure we have the same understanding so we can all move in the same direction..."

Another German team member hypothesised ways to overcome the different cultural definitions of work completion by recommending that Thai team members utilise checklists to ensure quality and completion:

"…maybe it would help to give them more structure and/or to have one person that employees can talk to if there is a problem or if they don't understand…we really need a standard where if the work is marked as complete, it really must be checked and completed."

The evidence shows that there are key differences between the concepts of work quality and completion at the case study firm, which are related to the LTO and masculinity differences between Germans and Thais. Germans have a LTO characterised by a sense of persistence and shame, while Thais have a shorter-term orientation linked to personal stability. Germans are therefore more likely to persist to complete work, while Thais finish when they feel it is good enough. Germans also have a high masculinity, which relates to success and achievement, while Thais have a lower score in this area signifying they are more interested in personal relationships and a high quality of life. The key point is that for any small business offshoring to Thailand, they must be aware of these cultural traits and be prepared to effectively manage the differences in cultures and expectations.

Cross-Cultural Discontinuity Two: Power Distance Relationship

The second cross-cultural discontinuity occurs due to differences in communication styles and expectations between the Thai developers and German managers. For example, when meeting and discussing work, either in Thailand or via teleconferencing, it is evident that most Thai software developers feel reluctant to share knowledge. They often nominate one or two representatives of the Thai team to speak on their behalf. One German team member responded to interview questions about communication as follows:

"…I have not spoken to some team members, but they seemafraid to speak. If we have group meetings or videoconferences they don't talk, and this means they are not communicating. So you only have one or two people who are communicating with us and these people have to communicate for the others..."

In contrast, Germans at the firm are keen on sharing and discussing various issues. Part of the communication problem relates to a language barrier, but part of the problem is based on the cultural dynamics of communication between Germans and Thais, which is ultimately related to the power-distance relationship.

Cross-Cultural Discontinuity Three: Differences in Learning Style and Needs

German bosses at the case firm encourage Thai employees to use creative thinking when accomplishing work tasks, however, this is not always successful. Thai employees prefer to follow commands rather than thinking individually. As a result, Thai employees can learn more about work when their superiors pay attention to what they are doing, and provide guidelines. A Thai senior developer confirmed this:

"Learning is somehow involved with cultural issues. Thais work mostly in silence and stay quiet despite difficulties. They try to sort out the solution, but with an empty head. However, when I sit and advise them closely, they seem to work with more confidence and even more quickly when I show them working steps such as 1,2,3..."

This relates to the power distance relationship and the Thai preference for autocratic and clear management instructions as well as differences in individualism. Germans place a high emphasis on individualism, while Thais place a much lower emphasis on the individual and naturally prefer groups.

Cross-Cultural Discontinuity Four: Feedback Needs Differ

Results show that when giving feedback, Germans are straightforward in expressing their concerns and comments. If they find Thai workers underperforming, they openly discuss it and expect changes. Germans consider this form of feedback to be separate from the individual, and not personal. Nevertheless, Thai employees involve their emotions and personal feelings during feedback. Most feel that German management dislike them, and rather than trying to improve their work, Thai employees avoid contact. This causes frustration, degradation of their confidence, and according to management at the case firm, early resignation of Thai employees. This relates to masculinity/femininity differences where Thais place emphasis on their working environment and relationships.

Cross-Cultural Discontinuity Five: Time Management

Time management is significant because the company subsidiary in Chiang Mai has to deliver the software product to the in-house customers (at German headquarters). Difficulties arise when Thai software developers cannot finish the final version of the software product. Cultural differences in terms of managing time relate strongly to planning and time management. The old adage of "fail to plan, plan to fail" is illustrated by Thais who do not plan their work and consequently spend significantly longer on the task than Germans who utilise their work time to plan effectively before starting a task. This again exemplifies the differences in LTO.

Isolating Cultural Issues from Day-to-Day Work Problems

The final step in the results and analysis sought to isolate the cross-cultural discontinuities from other more general day-to-day issues affecting the workplace. The rationale for this step was to corroborate the previously identified cross-cultural discontinuities and provide a summary of the cultural impacts on work performance at the case firm. Figure 8 shows the cause and effect diagram (fishbone) where each of the work performance issues identified during the interviews and focus groups has been categorised as either a cultural or day-to-day issue.

Figure 8 shows that the main issues affecting Thai knowledge workers at the case firm can be categorised into one of five categories: tools; environment/work setting; management; people; and work methods. Overall, there are 11 cultural issues and 5 general issues. This indicates that there are far more cultural issues at the case firm than general issues, and therefore has important implications for small businesses who offshore their knowledge work to Thailand. There are a variety of

wider key implications to these cross-cultural discontinuities, which are brought together in the conclusion. The final section of the paper considers these cross-cultural discontinuities from a wider context and standpoint.

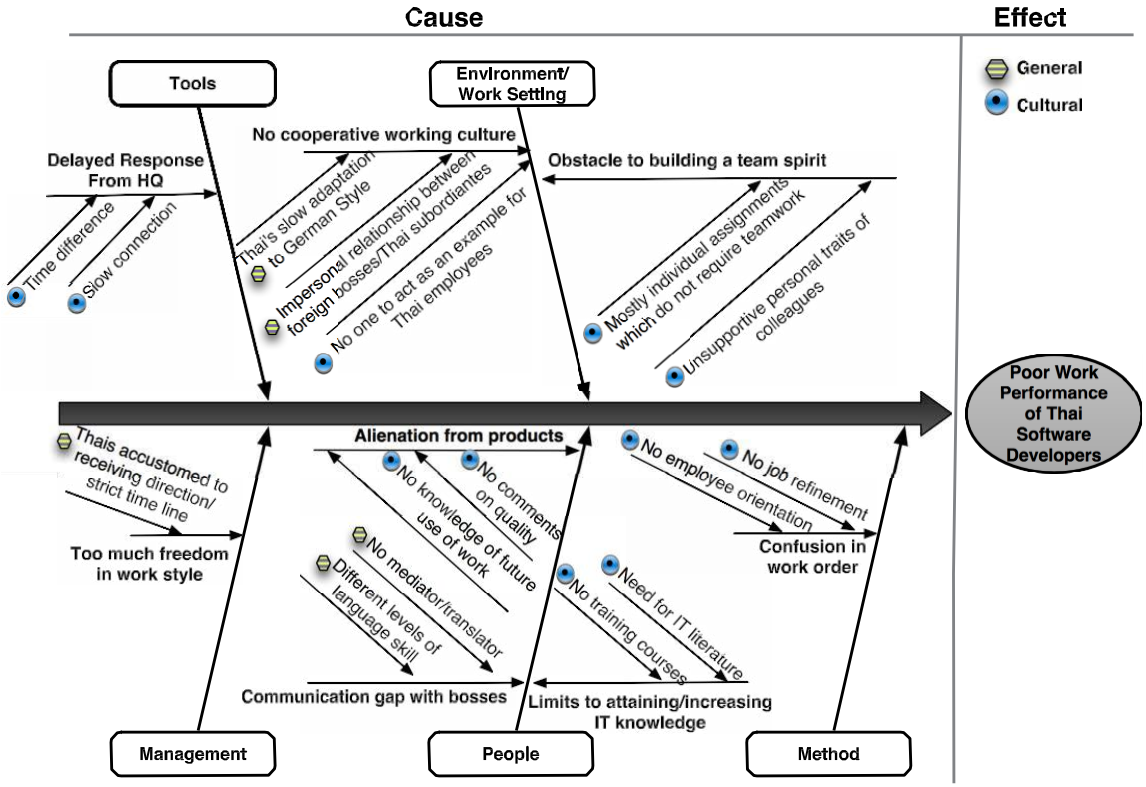

Figure 8: Fishbone analysis to isolate the cultural from day-to-day work issues

CONCLUSIONS AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS

There are a variety of preconditions for small businesses wishing to offshore their activities, however, this paper argues through the case study, that when offshoring knowledge work, there are critical aspects related to cross-cultural discontinuities. These are often overlooked until they become embodied in the firm's attempts to innovate and undertake effective knowledge work. The growing importance of knowledge work and innovation means that cross-cultural discontinuities have more importance than with traditional offshoring of simple manufacturing operations, and are more visible and relevant to small businesses, who are increasingly operating in a globalised economy with less standardised work and more emphasis on tacit knowledge tasks (Jorgensen and Koch, 2012).

Reflecting growth in the wider knowledge economy, the software industry is intrinsically knowledge based, and is structured with a high proportion of SMEs, many of which are born global (Kundu and Katz, 2003). The result is that these SMEs should consider cultural aspects as a critical feature contributing to their success or failure. While this paper has presented a German-Thai cultural perspective with specific and unique aspects, there are universally important implications, which suggest that an understanding of culture can have critical impacts on the effectiveness

of small businesses engaged in knowledge work. Culture in the workplace should be considered by businesses when deciding whether to offshore as it can have a wide ranging and significant impact on the success of offshore business activities. Understanding culture is useful for developing economies such as Thailand who wish to encourage economic growth through FDI. It is perhaps even more crucial for SMEs, who must understand cultural interactions to ensure they remain at the forefront of offshoring, taking full opportunity of internationalisation rather than becoming hindered by it. The process and methodology in this paper has used well-established cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) to understand cultural impacts on intrinsically knowledge related work (software development). The key value of this article is that it brings forward cultural considerations and insights that should be considered by SMEs who wish to offshore their knowledge work. The considerations and insights from this case study are consistent with those found in the existing literature and highlight some of the challenges that SMEs might face when working cross-culturally in a global environment. Impacts on productivity, service and the overall organisational aims are highlighted through the lens of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which serve to reveal insights and perspectives that must be considered if SMEs want to gain the full benefits of offshoring in a global economy.

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ARE WALLS JUST WALLS? ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE EMERGENCE IN A VIRTUAL FIRM

Miriam L. Plavin-Masterman, Worcester State University

ABSTRACT

Though we often take it for granted, we often think of organizational culture as occurring in a physical location. For enduring utility, the concept needs an extension to encompass alternative conceptualizations. As such, this paper includes contributions from organizational culture (Schein, Chatman, Spillman, Martin), virtual work (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, and Garud, Cummings, Wilson) and anthropology (Anderson and Appadurai), among others to develop a framework for maintaining organizational culture without a physical environment. Using data from a qualitative and quantitative case study, I explore whether a small, completely virtual organization can maintain a shared imagined community using selection, socialization, and other processes needed to compensate for being completely virtual.

Keywords: *Virtual work, organizational culture, mixed methods*

Recent work on organizational culture has focused on links between organizational culture and organizational memory (Fiedler and Welpe, 2010, Rowlinson, et al, 2010), organizational learning (Berends and Lammers, 2010), innovation (Bartel and Garud, 2009, Gebert et al, 2010) and cultivation (Harrison and Corley 2010). It has not focused on explicitly reconceptualizing where an organization's culture 'lives'. In fact, conceptualizations of organizational culture have tended to anchor a firm's artifacts, symbols, shared norms, beliefs, and behavioral expectations in a physical location, in proximate space (Whyte 1956, Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984, Hatch, 1993). Assuming that patterns of interaction, and the ways an organization's culture can be sustained are linked to the brick- and-mortar location where the organization 'lives' may once have been sufficient for understanding organizational culture.

Removing the constraint of thinking about culture as a manifestation of direct, face- to-face interactions makes it possible to extend discussions of organizational culture to a form of organization and work that does not have a physical space. Specifically, I build on Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, and Garud's (2001) treatment of virtual work as a situation where an employee works outside of a traditional office space. Virtual work is a growing practice, with as many as 34 million Americans working at least part time from home (Chafkin, 2010). Virtual work also has many benefits. For example,

Sun Microsystems estimates that having almost one-half of its employees work remotely saves the company $300 million in real estate costs per year. (Business Week, 2005). According to internal studies conducted by IBM, white-collar employees who moved from one of the company's corporate offices to work from home had a 15-40% increase in productivity (Lococo and Yen, 1998, Cascio, 2000.). While there is little recent academic work identifying specific business-related benefits, the fact that Sun and IBM tout "virtualism's" virtues is one reason the business press has accepted as fact the perception that virtual work is both important and cost- effective.

Despite the increasing reliance on virtual work and its apparent benefits, there are questions about what effects virtual work has on the communities of workers that are the core of business practice and productivity. Canonical conceptualizations of organizational culture (Meek, 1988, Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006), which tie both the production and persistence of culture to location, suggest that the lack of face-to-face interaction that characterizes virtual work – the reliance on maintaining relations virtually -- means culture is attenuated and often less positive.

However, if we take seriously arguments about the creation of community and culture through a shared image (Anderson, 1983) and the indirect interaction of community members through this shared image, we may be able to explain the organizational culture of virtual firms better than we currently do – and know more about if and how they work, as we have been able to explain organizational cultures of traditional brick and mortar firms. The extent to which the virtues of virtual work in a virtual *firm* can be realized is an empirical question and ought to be demonstrable through empirical research, which I pursue in the current work.

Specifically, I use an in-depth, qualitative case study and quantitative survey data to explore organizational culture at a small, entirely 'virtual firm'. I find that it indeed is possible for a virtual organization to exist primarily as an 'imagined community' and that physical space is not necessary for an organization to have a strong culture.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Though it is rarely enunciated, most discussions of organizational culture are about social structures that operate within four walls (see Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985, Deal and Kennedy, 1982, Alvesson, 1990, Hofstede, et al. 1990, Denison and Mishra, 1993, Fletcher, 2002, O'Mahony, 2007, among others). Thinking about culture manifested primarily in a direct way extends even to the discussion of organizational culture in a "virtual" setting (Townsend, DeMarie, and Hendrickson, 1998, Cascio, 2000, Duarte and Snyder, 2001, Dani et al 2006). But what actually happens to the culture of an enterprise in a company when some co-workers work "virtually"?

As virtual work has become more prevalent, researchers have begun to look at the impacts on a company's behaviors, rituals, and interactions when its employees are not all in the same location. "How we interact with those around us influences what they think of us, how they judge our actions, and our relationships with them." (Cameron and Webster, 2011:767). How we interact is affected by whether we interact in person or virtually. Some of the existing organizational culture models may be relevant in virtual settings, but given the priority placed on direct reinforcement of culture, such models may not adequately address the complexity of this arrangement.

Without explicitly theorizing alternative conceptualizations of culture, we may be less well positioned to understand the organizational cultures of many modern firms. For example, Anderson (1983) argues in his non-organizational work on diasporas that community can be based on a shared image, even though members may not see each other often, or at all. Instead, members hold in their minds a mental image of their affinity for the community and a shared image of a heritage and homeland to which they may never physically travel. Group members are connected to each other, indirectly, through their shared attachment to a psychosocial space that represents and reinforces their culture. Appadurai's work on modernity focuses on the new role of the imagination as a "collective, social fact" (1996, p. 5), which has broken out of its traditional domain of creative individual expression and entered the daily lives of ordinary people. This interweaving of imagination and everyday life, combined with an emphasis on the collective, enables what Appadurai (1990) has termed a 'community of sentiment', one that feels and imagines things together without needing to be in the same location. Their actions indirectly support and reinforce the "imagination as social practice" (Durkheim, 1995, Appadurai, 1996, p. 31) since they are all engaging in this behavior.

The concept of the imagination as social practice is incorporated in Anderson's and Appadurai's work on diasporic communities (Anderson, 1983, Appadurai, 1996), where the development of a collective social imagination for a particular group has enabled them, through accessing an 'imagined world', to feel part of a group they do not often see face-to-face. A shared culture can exist, reinforced indirectly, and it can incorporate references to physical location. As Castells (2009, p. xxix) points out, "the development of digital communication… transformed the spatiality of social interaction by introducing simultaneity, or any chosen time frame, in social practices, regardless of the location of the actors engaged in the communication practice." But an indirect, non-spatial model of culture has mainly been applied to ethnic or national culture, and few investigations have extended the new perspective into the Organizational Culture literature.

The most recent (2006-2011) work in organizational culture and virtual work tends to focus on managing performance of global virtual teams (Brown et al, 2010, Sarker et al 2011), ensuring knowledge management, managing virtual worker/coworker tensions, or maintaining a virtual community of practice within a traditional organization (Alavi, 2006, Duarte and Snyder, 2006, Dube, 2006, Golden, 2007, Golden, 2008, Peters, 2007, Ale Ebrahim et al 2010 among others). The indirect view of culture suggests a virtual firm can create a 'shared imagined community' even without physical proximity, through a combination of strong person-organization fit, strong employee socialization, and compensating techniques for being virtual. This in turn can moderate the effects of working virtually and can lead to strong levels of employee commitment – as an outcome of shared imagined community. Figure 1 highlights the relationships among "virtualness" (computer-mediated communication), shared imagined community, and commitment.

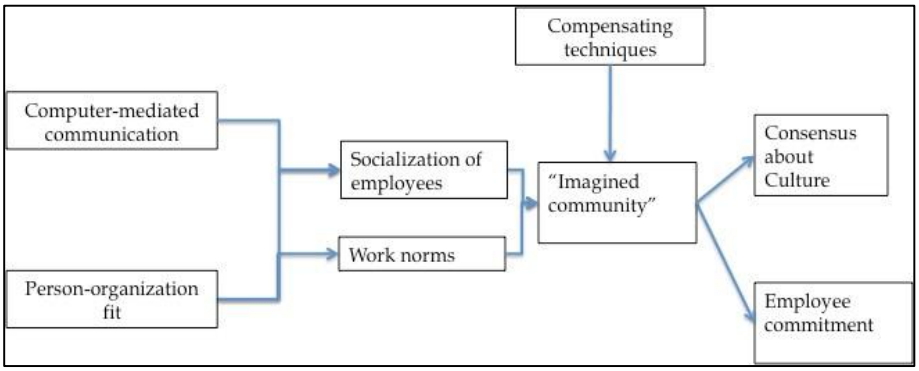

Figure 1: Indirect View of Culture – Link Between Imagined Community, Consensus About Culture, and Employee Commitment

Person-organization fit theory (Chatman, 1991) describes the process by which individuals choose to join an organization. There is a selection effect for any organization, where the individual chooses to be part of a firm because of some combination of characteristics that individual finds appealing. In firms that are not traditional, we might expect fit effects to be much stronger, because the specific characteristics of the workplace reflect a conscious choice on the part of the new employee rather than a background taken-for-granted. In the case of the completely virtual firm, this theory would suggest that there are individuals with specific characteristics the organization wants and who choose to be part of a virtual firm, value being part of that firm, and feel very committed to their co-workers

common artifacts or behaviors, or common imagined places, even in the absence of a shared and the firm as a result. This fit between the person and the virtual organization would in theory moderate the impact of being virtual.

When employees are dispersed or working virtually it becomes increasingly important to create and maintain certain levels of socialization and social control. We would expect socialization to occur differently in a primarily or wholly virtual firm than in a traditional firm with some workers working virtually. Virtual work "reduces direct supervision, coordination, feedback, and the conditions under which rules and norms are communicated." (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006: 1079). Research examining the socialization of virtual workers suggests that direct (i.e. traditional, physically located) positive employee socialization is associated with increased employee commitment, which both feeds back into ongoing socialization and leads to increased willingness to socialize other employees (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, and Garud, 1999). Crucial to the view expressed above, and where empirical observation of a virtual firm is so important, is the assumption that employee socialization occurs primarily and needs to be created and maintained in a physical location.

Compensating techniques also play important roles in a virtual firm – literally replacing the face-to-face reinforcement of norms, social support, and other activities found in firms with a physical location. In their ethnographic study of an intra-company message board/chat room Menchik and Tian (2008) point out that common language, common symbols and operating norms can control terminology, relevance, and situational/background ambiguity in computer-mediated communication. This is important because [c]omputer-mediated communication reduces nonverbal cues about interpersonal affections such as tone, warmth, and attentiveness, which contribute to message clarity and communication richness." (Gibson and Gibbs, 2006: 458) On a related point, in dealing with dispersed groups, Ghosh, Yates, and Orlikowski (2004) highlight how important it is to manage group communication norms to minimize conflict and ambiguity-- preventive norms, which occur before a distributed group undertakes its tasks, and corrective norms, which help get the group back on track after some unplanned event or crisis occurs. One might extend this to predict that in a virtual environment, preventive norms take on a more critical role; 'getting it right the first time' in communication becomes more important when you cannot read social cues in person.

In studying virtual work, Wilson et al. (2008) see increased achieving perceived proximity (the feeling of being close when physically you are not) as enabling organizations with dispersed workers to achieve many benefits of co-location. One can extend Wilson's argument about perceived proximity to say that in the absence of direct interaction and physical proximity, perceived proximity is needed to have the dispersed group of co-workers function well together in support of company goals.

Research Setting

In order to test whether a virtual organization can achieve a shared imagined community, a qualitative and quantitative case study of the organizational culture of a small, virtual financial services consulting firm/hedge fund (referred to as VirtualCo) was conducted. VirtualCo has approximately 40-50 clients. This company seemed particularly interesting given the kind of work they do, and the collaborative work required to do it well. The company's formal structure is relatively flat, with a CEO, a COO, an analyst team, and administrative support. The firm has a total of seven employees, both professional and administrative, all living within the Eastern time-zone. Four of the employees had previously worked together, and the firm has been in existence for six years. For purposes of anonymity I have given the firm's employees pseudonyms. The CEO is referred to as Max, the members of the Analyst team have been given names starting with the letter "A" (for "analyst"), and the COO and administrative assistant have been given names starting with the letter "S" (for "support staff").[2]

Data Collection

I collected qualitative and quantitative data on VirtualCo in order to get an understanding of their culture and corresponding commitment levels. For the qualitative data collection, I interviewed all employees of VirtualCo with open-ended interviews, lasting between 60 and 120 minutes. Where possible the interviews were conducted in person, and since the company does not have an office, the in-person interviews were conducted in coffee shops. Given the dispersed nature of the firm's employees, two of the interviews were conducted via telephone. Anthropologists or ethnographers might argue that without the ability to see body language in conversation, interviewers lose some information about their subjects. However, information collected via telephone interviews was confirmed by questionnaire responses for those individuals as well as in-person interviews with other employees. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Adami (1999) discusses three types of control necessary in a dispersed environment; direct/input control, process control, and output control. She defined input control as recruitment, development and socialization processes, process control as control designed to shape employee behaviors, and output control as specific measures that determine whether a set of tasks has been completed to the satisfaction of a superior and/or a customer. I created an open-ended interview guide using the Adami typology. All employees also completed an online closed-ended questionnaire. I take Martin's (2002) view of culture as both objectively and subjectively constrained and combine it with Schein's (1999) view of culture as a construct including both easy to observe layers, such as language, and harder to observe layers, such as values. The closed-ended questionnaire included information on both easy and hard to observe layers. In particular, the questionnaire asked each employee to describe the

values of the organization. The data collected by the interviews and questionnaire, and summarized in this paper, is focused on observing shared work values and norms along with shared language as examples of the organization's culture. Table 1 indicates how I have operationalized and how I am observing each of the variables.

Table 1
SUMMARY OF VARIABLES IN CASE STUDY

Variable	Operationalization	How Observed
Selection/person-organization fit	Company is selecting new employees with specific traits that make them more likely to succeed in this firm's virtual environment	Qualitatively via interview questions asking specifically about where employees worked prior to joining VirtualCo, how new employees are hired, what has happened when hiring mistakes
Employee socialization	Process by which employees adopt VirtualCo's norms and behaviors	Qualitatively via interview questions asking about the process of receiving and completing work assignments, questions about how employees know what is expected of them at work, how they treat other employees, and how they interact with the CEO (where
Computer-mediated communication	Type of communication engaged in by members of VirtualCo	Qualitatively via description of how firm operates Quantitatively via survey questions asking about frequency of different media used to communicate
Work Norms	Specific processes VirtualCo does to operate in a purely virtual environment	Qualitatively via interview questions about use of Blackberry-based common
Physical proximity	Face-to-face interaction and working in the same physical environment	Proximity did not vary across respondents. It was zero (i.e., non-proximate) for everyone. Qualitatively via interview questions asking about impact of
Consensus about culture	VirtualCo employees' description of the company	Qualitatively via interview question asking employees to provide 5 adjectives to describe the firm Quantitatively via survey questions gauging employee
Employee commitment	VirtualCo employees feeling invested in VirtualCo's success and engaging in 'good citizen' behaviors	Quantitatively via survey questions and gauging employee answers to an existing instrument (Porter's Organizational Commitment

Analysis

In my qualitative analysis I used thematic coding to group interview and open-ended survey answers in the computer program nVivo. I began coding with some a priori themes, or etic codes. These included themes present in existing research on virtual work and organizational culture, the research question I was addressing, and questions from my survey and interviews. While evaluating the data I also used an inductive approach to let new codes (emic codes) emerge from the data as I read it. At the end of the first round of coding I had 25 codes. After reviewing and refining the coding several times, I ended with 8 major codes that were applicable to my research question. As Pike (1954), pointed out, these two approaches are complementary ways to study culture; the analyst can take the point of view of either the outsider (etic) or the insider (emic). Table 2 shows the eight codes I used as well as an example of the qualitative data in that category.

Table 2
QUALITATIVE THEMATIC CODES AND EXAMPLES

Code	Example/Quotation from Interview
Communication (etic code)	"I get a lot of support from Max, lots of emails and incoming calls from Max. Andrea and I will talk when we're together. Sometimes we'll call each other. I don't talk to Amanda much."
Interaction (etic code)	"The less official interaction? You know, there's very few and far between. You know, Andrea made it one of her things that she was gonna call one person once a week type of thing and she'll call up and we'll have a little chitchat and that's that..but it's not as frequently as we like 'cause everyone's running around doing different things."
Employee connectedness (etic code)	"We look out for one another. If I can't make the trade, Amanda, on vacation, will do it. Or if Samantha needs a document I can help find it even though I'm in Sweden [on vacation] for a month."
Physical office environment (emic code)	Like the social, it's really difficult. I don't know, there is no way to replicate being able to poke your head over a cubicle and start talking about last night's episode of "The Office."
Virtual Work (etic code)	"I think what I miss about most of the stuff is like I think working with people, you have that time of talking about just regular things than you would talk about or you don't talk about on email. Like there's other interactions that I miss sometimes that you don't get from working virtually. "
Work Norms (etic code)	"I remember there was one moment when we were in a team meeting in Max's office and—so we're having a meeting, we're right in the middle of it, and we don't want to be disturbed. His phone rings and Samantha, went to answer it, he didn't want to talk. And she said, "OK, no, he's not here right now, can I take a message?" And that didn't fly because he was there—so that was, like, pounded into our culture from a very early time, too. It's like, there's a way to say "no" but not lie, she lied. It's not like he fired her for it or anything like that, it's not, like, that cutthroat crazy. These are little lessons that have stuck with me in my formative years when all this integrity, and accountability, and loyalty was instilled in me."
Social Hierarchy (emic code)	"No one has titles. But Art outranks both me and Amy in terms of responsibility he is given by Max. He meets with clients without Max, he puts together the newsletter with Amy's and my help. Art also has more sway with Max than either Amy or me."
Culture (etic code)	"The culture at my prior job was fear-based; see what you can do, in competition with coworkers for boss' approval and for compensation. Max tries to understand how people want to develop – at my prior job this wasn't the case."

For the quantitative analysis, I used two different techniques in addition to initial descriptive statistical analyses. I used the Competing Values Framework (CVF) (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1981, Cameron and Quinn 1999, and Scott 2003) to measure imagined community. The CVF tool allows me to compare perceptions of culture across respondents, using a standardized and validated instrument. This will enable me to see whether the firm has succeeded in creating a shared 'imagined community', as measured by proxy via consensus in the employees' views.

The second type of quantitative analysis involves measuring imagined community using the proxy of employee organizational commitment. Employee commitment is both affective and calculative. Meyer and Allen (1991) use affective commitment to refer to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement with the organization. Employees with strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they want to do so.[3] The case study of VirtualCo focuses only on affective commitment. I explored affective commitment using the short version of Porter's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). The OCQ (Porter, et. al, 1974, and Porter et. al., 1976), is strongly correlated (.83) with Allen and Meyer's Affective Commitment Scale (Meyer and Allen, 1990), another scale often used.

To measure employee organizational commitment at VirtualCo relative to a traditional firm, there had to be some way to compare VirtualCo employees' observed feelings of commitment. My comparison data came from the 1991 National Organizations

Survey (NOS), a representative sample of United States work organizations, with data from informants about human resources policies and practices. That data source used five of the same affective Organizational Commitment (OC) questions, asked and scaled in the same way as the VirtualCo survey. I combined the answers to the five affective OC questions and created a scale for each employee. Since VirtualCo is a small organization, I used a subset of the NOS data containing small organizations, those with 20 or fewer employees. This yielded a comparison dataset of 85 observations. I created a linear regression using three types of variables to predict scores on an individual's Organizational Commitment scale: 1) theoretically relevant variables (those shown in prior research to be associated with affective organizational commitment); 2) individual-level characteristics, such as age, education, gender, marital status, and 3) firm-level characteristics, such as age of firm, what firm does, how many employees there are, and what sector the firm operates in. For each employee of VirtualCo I generated a predicted OC score from the NOS-based linear regression equation and compared it to the actual observed score for that employee.

FINDINGS

The findings from my case study are divided into two subsections. The first focuses on whether VirtualCo has a culture at all, and if so, how that is expressed (if at all) in terms of consensus about culture and employee commitment levels. The second uses the operationalized variables summarized earlier in Table 1 to understand *how* VirtualCo's culture has emerged.

Overall Impressions of Virtual Co's Culture

VirtualCo is a typical young company in many ways. Amanda, one of the analysts, called the organization "a long shadow of its leader". In many respects, Max – the charismatic leader -- is a larger-than life "father figure" to his employees. He constantly wants to teach, coach, and redirect his employees, to support and push them to get to the next level in their work and personal lives. His employees see him as a mentor, and want to learn from him. Max's dealings with his employees are very structured and follow a similar approach to what Adami (1999) laid out in dealing with dispersed employees – a great deal of control over process and output. This includes clearly defined time spent on tasks and projects and clearly defined desired outputs from employees.

Separate from the actual work produced by his employees, Max has tried to foster an environment where VirtualCo's co-workers actively look out for each other both professionally and personally, and he has nurtured and reinforced that supportiveness. Both Steve and Andrea described support from co-workers in terms of professional courtesy and development:

> *Steve: "We look out for one another. If I can't make the trade, Amanda, on vacation, will do it. Or if Samantha needs a document I can help find it even though I'm in Sweden [on vacation] for a month."*

Andrea: "It feels like there is more support than at my previous jobs. Max tries to understand how people want to develop. At my prior job that wasn't the case."

There does seem to be a visible culture at VirtualCo, driven largely by Max, supported and reinforced by his employees. The company is a demanding, intense, and task-oriented place to work. It is also supportive, with coworkers actively looking out for each other both professionally and personally. VirtualCo''s shared "imagined community" is the culmination of Max's leadership style, selection, socialization, physical proximity, work norms, and other compensating techniques. It is also an important direct determinant of consensus about the firm's culture and employee commitment. The CVF provides six questions, or categories, relating to different aspects of culture, and asks respondents to force-rank answers within each category. Each answer corresponds to a type of culture, measured on dimensions of flexibility vs. control, and internal vs. external orientation. The tool asks respondents to identify which of four archetypes of culture from the intersection of these dimensions best describes the company's approach.

Table 3 shows agreement among employees by showing the correlations in CVF cultural-type answers for each employee and each question in the CVF. The CVF questions are forced-ranking, or ipsative. These kinds of questions control response bias but can pose problems for analysis due to constraints on correlations – in other words, within each question there are artificially negative correlations.

I ran a separate correlation matrix for each type of culture, using employee responses to the six CVF questions. This allowed me to see the relationships among each employee's Clan-type answers, Hierarchy-type answers, etc. without these artificial negative correlations. I found that in general there were moderate to strong correlations among VirtualCo employees for the Clan and Hierarchy cultural type answers. The inter-employee correlations were weaker, though still present, for the Adhocracy and Market type answers. These statistical relationships would tend to indicate that there is agreement about the kind of culture VirtualCo has at an overall level, and where those cultural aspects are most prevalent.

Table 3
CORRELATION MATRIX OF EMPLOYEE CVF TYPE ANSWERS TO EACH QUESTION, BY CVF CULTURAL TYPE

		Max	Andrea	Art	Amanda	Amy	Samantha	Steve
Clan	Max	1.000						
	Andrea	**0.7317**	1.000					
	Art	**0.8672**	**0.7316**	1.000				
	Amanda	**0.6088**	0.2083	**0.4279**	1.000			
	Amy	-0.1237	**0.245**	-0.2306	-0.0771	1.000		
	Samantha	**0.715**	**0.5657**	**0.5117**	**0.5887**	**0.5352**	1.000	
	Steve	**0.8218**	**0.7011**	**0.4959**	**0.4208**	0.000	**0.5681**	1.000
Hierarchy	Max	1.000						
	Andrea	**0.6292**	1.000					
	Art	**0.7964**	**0.3843**	1.000				
	Amanda	**0.6211**	**0.4189**	**0.942**	1.000			
	Amy	**0.9203**	**0.7313**	**0.4989**	**0.3001**	1.000		
	Samantha	**0.8249**	**0.3277**	**0.9869**	**0.8904**	**0.5424**	1.000	
	Steve	**0.8498**	0.1745	**0.7334**	**0.4629**	**0.7163**	**0.8033**	1.000
Adhocracy	Max	1.0000						
	Andrea	**0.5499**	1.0000					
	Art	**0.8769**	**0.6788**	1.0000				
	Amanda	**0.9299**	**0.7201**	**0.9348**	1.0000			
	Amy	0.0627	-0.2739	-0.0641	-0.2390	1.0000		
	Samantha	**0.6972**	**0.7000**	**0.8594**	**0.7014**	0.1565	1.0000	
	Steve	0.1087	0.2214	-0.0740	-0.0621	**0.6928**	0.0858	1.0000
Market	Max	1.0000						
	Andrea	**0.5542**	1.0000					
	Art	**0.7946**	-0.0120	1.0000				
	Amanda	-0.0366	-0.3904	0.1470	1.0000			
	Amy	**0.4055**	**0.2572**	**0.5037**	-0.6325	1.0000		
	Samantha	-0.1505	0.2227	-0.5034	-0.1369	-0.3608	1.0000	
	Steve	**0.5045**	**0.4923**	**0.2506**	0.2181	0.1293	**0.4107**	1.0000

Note: Correlations >=.25 shown in bold.

According to the CVF (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1999), a Clan organization has less focus on structure and control and a greater concern for flexibility. In a Clan-type environment, employees are motivated through vision, shared goals, outputs and outcomes. The company has a strong inward focus and a sense of family and people work well together, driven by loyalty to one another and the shared cause. Rules are often communicated and reinforced normatively through social means. Leaders act as coaches and facilitators, and as the name indicates often see employees as children. As Art commented, the employees of VirtualCo see themselves as being a family:

> *"Why would you want to join a family? If you consider us a family, with all the wonderful things that come with family and all the weird, can't use certain words that might come with family. But it is, it's an unbelievably loving family."*

The second cultural area where there is strong inter-employee agreement is Hierarchy. A Hierarchy-based culture has a very traditional approach to structure and control that flows from a strict chain of command. In its most famous incarnation, this is outlined in Max Weber's view of bureaucracy (Weber, 1947). Hierarchy-based cultures often have well-defined policies, processes and procedures. And Hierarchical leaders are typically coordinators and organizers who keep a close eye on what is happening. This can be difficult to become used to, as the following quote from Amy illustrates:

> *Amy: "During the first 2 years – acclimating to his way of being -- I thought it was hell. I told Max I would design a handbook and training program for the next new hire, to make it easier for that person.*

There is moderate agreement on the items within an Adhocracy-based culture. Mintzberg (1979) referred to adhocracy as the postindustrial era's innovative organizational design, a flexible organizational form specialized for ad hoc tasks. It is characterized by several elements (Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985), with two being particularly relevant for VirtualCo: 1) the operating environment is simultaneously dynamic and complex, requiring sophisticated innovations, and 2) due to the complex and unpredictable nature of the work, organizational coordination is based on mutual adjustment and is stimulated by informal structural parameters. Coordination through direct control and standardization is generally considered undesirable.

This is important to note because at VirtualCo the management of employees is Hierarchy-based, not Adhocracy-based, so the culture has to be finely calibrated in order to avoid conflict and tension. The Adhocracy elements appear as secondary characteristics supporting the overall Clan-type culture. I would interpret the combination of cultural types as the company describing itself as a family, with a strong parental figure who can give the 'children' (employees) some flexibility and independence, but stands ready to reassert control if he thinks an employee is struggling or the process is breaking down.

Employee Commitment

The Organizational Culture/Virtual Work literature claims that working virtually leads to lower levels of employee organizational commitment as compared to working in a traditional office. I measured VirtualCo employees' feelings of commitment by asking them affective commitment questions from Porter's OCQ and comparing their answers to a linear regression generated from a subset of the NOS data containing small organizations, those with 20 or fewer employees. The adjusted R^2 for this linear regression equation was .3228. Table 4 shows the results from the linear regression. Appendix A contains more detail about the regression.

Table 4 NOS-BASED LINEAR REGRESSION OUTPUT			
	Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Firm—level characteristics	Financial Sector	-0.00412	-0.00411
	Company sells product and service	2.336**	-1.162
	Organization in existence 5 years or less	-3.007***	-0.805
	# of FTEs	0.264***	-0.0742
	% of Employees that are women	3.379*	-1.794
	% working from home	0.000154	-0.0173
Individual-level characteristics	Respondent Age (years)	-0.0610**	-0.295
	Years of Education	0.0173	-0.153
	Number of Children	-0.183	-0.232
	Married	0.83	-0.783
Job-level characteristics	Found job from someone who worked there	0.0676	-0.905
	Found job from a friend	2.385***	-0.841
	I make decisions for my job	1.095	-1.038
	I can work independently	-1.215	-0.924
	I have a lot to say on my job	1.16	-0.953
	I supervise the work of others directly	0.66	-0.866
	How many FTES do you supervise?	0.00182	-0.00249
Constant		9.892***	-2.732
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

I then generated a predicted OC score from the NOS-based linear regression equation and compared it to the actual observed score for each VirtualCo employee. Prior research on virtual employees would lead one to expect higher predicted scores than observed scores. Table 5 shows the predicted and observed scores on the organizational commitment scale for each VirtualCo employee.[4]

Table 5
PREDICTED AND OBSERVED ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT SCORES FOR EMPLOYEES OF VIRTUALCO

VirtualCo Employee	Predicted OCQ Score from NOS-based Linear Regression Model	Observed OCQ Score from Survey	Absolute Difference (Observed-Predicted)	Difference Measured in Standard Deviations from NOS Data
Max	16.53	19.00	2.47	0.72
Amy	15.34	14.00	-1.34	-0.39
Andrea	15.01	14.00	-1.01	-0.30
Amanda	13.30	14.00	0.70	0.21
Art	15.41	17.00	1.59	0.47
Steve	15.00	17.00	2.00	0.59
Samantha	13.63	17.00	3.37	0.99

The Organizational Culture literature argues that VirtualCo's affective OC scores should be lower than those of employees working in traditional physically located offices. But when comparing the observed affective OC scores with the predicted scores, five of the VirtualCo employees are not lower in absolute terms. Even the observed scores for Amy and Andrea, the two VirtualCo employees that have lower than predicted OC scores, are within one-half of one standard deviation of the predicted OC score. Overall, my findings indicated earlier that VirtualCo was able to develop a shared culture in the absence of a physical location by relying on selection, socialization, and other compensating techniques. The firm's employees have affective OC levels that are not different from those of employees working in traditional firms – this is an important manifestation of that shared culture.

Employee Selection/Person-Organization Fit

Max explicitly incorporates his assumptions, beliefs, and behavior into the work process. These beliefs and behavior are manifested in how employees are selected, coached to behave, work is organized, etc. The selection process is especially critical at VirtualCo; it occurs over months, with multiple interviews, meals, and conversations occurring between the potential hire and multiple VirtualCo employees, even when the individual in question is known by some of the current employees. As Chatman's (1991) work on selection discusses, it is important, particularly for a small firm, to be able to assess who a new person is when he or she enters the organization. As Andrea put it, "We are careful who we bring in. " VirtualCo's process also indirectly accords with the work of Wilson et al (2008), who point out that selecting individuals who have worked together before, or those with high tolerance for working out of an office or alone, can mitigate conflicts usually experienced by dispersed groups.

Socialization of Employees

After selecting employees with the right combination of specific traits, Max works hard through socialization and normative control to help set and reinforce a shared organizational image. (Van Maanen & Schein, 1978). Max encourages his employees to help each other out and also tries to support his employees as they are completing their tasks. Generally the employees of VirtualCo perceived their co-workers and Max as providing sufficient support to accomplish their tasks. In answering survey questions, one respondent disagreed with "feeling supported by the supervisor," and Max answered N/A to those questions. Andrea, the employee who feels least supported, did not work directly with Max before joining VirtualCo and sees him less than every other employee since she does not live in the New York metropolitan area.

Work Norms

Adami (1999) described process controls as controls designed to shape employee behaviors. Anderson (1983) spoke of creating a shared language to enable dispersed individuals to access a shared 'imagined community'. VirtualCo's employees are (almost) constantly working in a dispersed environment, and they communicate intensively via email and phone. Opportunities for correction or redirection are limited, so implementing preventive norms of how and when to communicate is critical. One way VirtualCo does this is through the intensively structured environment Max has instituted. They also try to control terminology, relevance, and ambiguity through common language, common symbols and operating norms, as Menchik and Tian (2008) described.

VirtualCo's communication norms and common language include internally agreed-upon definitions of words, such as *commit,* and prohibited words, such as *try*. They also have common symbols for Blackberry communication including: ? (I have a question), # (scheduling), or **** (extremely urgent). This shorthand enables all the VirtualCo employees to know what each person means in a given interaction and what the appropriate response is to a given symbol, and makes accessing the 'imagined community' of VirtualCo significantly easier. Amy explained how they came up with some of the Blackberry symbols:

> *Max sends emails as he is reviewing work -- you can get 10 emails on the same subject. [I]t was hard to know the difference between angry and excited on email. We gave Max suggestions on a Blackberry symbol for 'get back to him Monday' and to give us some breathing room for over the weekend.*

All employees mentioned the words they could and could not use, with the following example from Art illustrating how he has absorbed the rules around VirtualCo's language.

> *Art: "Our company has our own rules about certain words, so we don't use the word "commit" unless it's a definite, like there is no way in hell I'm gonna fail. So commitment, there's this spectrum of trying, commit is 100% you're going to get it done. On the flip side, whenever I hear the word "try", you're basically telling me you're not going to do it. I've seen it too many times. So in our group, we don't use the word "try." If Andrea uses the word "try," I'll call her out."*

Steve emphasized that the common language minimizes conflict.

> *Steve: "In a virtual firm that is really important because it minimizes differences and conflicts – everyone uses the same language."*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

VirtualCo is in many ways a typical young firm, one whose culture is particularly dependent upon the personality of its leader. VirtualCo has used a combination of a strong and lengthy selection process, extensive socialization, common language, and a great deal of structure in its work to create shared internalized norms. There are significant opportunities to further explore these relationships. First, the completely virtual setup will change. As

noted earlier, the company's revenues are comprised of hedge fund management fees and investment consulting fees. The growth opportunity is in the hedge fund, and the company is targeting deep-pocketed investors, since it has passed the three-year mark, an industry standard to move out of the high-risk category. However, this group of investors is loath to take risks, particularly in light of the Madoff scandal. As Max put it:

> *"Our hedge fund business is emerging. There's a lot of people that, when they ask us where are we, we don't want to start that conversation because they don't understand the virtual thing. We don't want to have to explain ourselves, or make it tough for someone to go take a chance on us."*

In September 2009, the company rented an office space where employees work two days a week. The only exception to this was Andrea, who lives in a different metropolitan area from everyone else. She is in the office one week per month. All employees expressed the belief that it would help in increasing hedge fund revenues. Some also added that they hoped it would alleviate some of the isolation they currently feel. However, many of the employees indicated that they did not think they would use the office more than the two days per week required. And several commented that Andrea would feel particularly left out, since she lives further away than anyone else. As Steve pointed out, in comments echoed by others:

> *"The office thing is not so good for Andrea. She will feel left out . She will only have access to Max in review mode. She won't have access to "warm Max" and that will drive a wedge between her and everyone else. "Warm Max" is a lot of fun to hang out with.*

Max is particularly aware that she may feel this way:

> *Max: "The benefit of Andrea being [where she is] is far greater than the benefit of forcing her to live [near all of us] and commute to the office. Will she – she may be left out, she may have a feeling of being out of the loop. My suspicion is that the weeks that Andrea comes down, a week every other month, roughly, that we'll probably spend more time than normal in the office."*

Second, the firm plans to add two employees in the next two years. The increase from 7 to 9 employees is dramatic, and it is critical to VirtualCo's ability to develop a shared 'imagined community' that the current employees socialize the new hires into how VirtualCo does things. That said, Max's need to touch and control information, his shaping of processes and, by extension, his employees also limits the ultimate size of the firm, by constraining layers of bureaucracy and demanding his own contact with all employees. Art and Steve expressed their views on the potential size of the firm. While they differed in their projections, they both think the number of employees will remain in the low double digits:

> *Art: "Once you cross the threshold of like 12 people, 11 people, something like that, and all of a sudden, vacation time and just the managing that number of people becomes—more complicated to try to make it all work."*
> *Steve: "we will only get to 25 people at the max because of how [Max] manages."*

Constraining the size of the firm makes it easier to keep the culture Max wants, which is in keeping with Hallett's (2003) view of the balance between integration and conflict within organizational cultures. Hallett describes the balance as being dependent on the number of "audiences", or individuals within the organization – "the likelihood that conflict replaces integration in the organizational culture increases as … internal audiences increase" (p. 135).

VirtualCo's ability to organize around a common image – in this case the person of Max -- is similar to those of groups involved in virtual nonprofits or virtual social movements. But there are other kinds of firms working in environments that are also virtually organized, where a common cause is not in place to hold them together virtually. Some of those firms even have employees that are not located in the same time zone. It would be interesting to explore what impact this asynchronicity, combined with lack of a common cause, could have on a company's ability to create a shared 'imagined community'.

And while employee commitment levels are not lower than those of a traditional firm, VirtualCo's employees are affected by their virtual set-up. The employees do have different job-related tensions to manage than workers in a traditional environment, and these need to be considered along with their quantitative affective commitment scores. On the one hand, the entire company works virtually, so there is an illusion of freedom; with a few exceptions, each person decides when they do their work. On the other hand, the amount of work they have to complete each week is clearly defined, which makes any longer periods of freedom unlikely. And VirtualCo employees need to manage the constant internal pressure of working because they think others are constantly working – especially since that cannot be verified since they cannot see their coworkers.

The employees of VirtualCo believe that their co-workers are always working so they should be as well. Employees' internalization of being 'always on' echoes Mead's work on the 'generalized other', the normative pressure to meet the expectations of the CEO and co-workers (Mead, 1956). Samantha explained that they all have Blackberries because "Max wants us to always be found." And a recurring theme across most of the interviews was that VirtualCo employees *assume* that their co-workers are constantly working when they are not communicating with each other, as illustrated by Andrea and Art's comments.

> *Andrea: "I'm working on developing relationships … where I can pick up the phone and ask a question – the tendency is to assume everyone is working hard and I am interfering with their work when I ask questions."*
> *Art: "Like if I took today off, it's not like we'd go out of business tomorrow, it's not like a "full of myself" feeling, it's more like a, "I don't want to mess this up and I know I'm letting teammates and clients down if I take the day off." … To the extent that anyone wants to matter, it's a huge, huge selling point."*

While there is a perception of lack of direct control , which may be related to the physical walls of the corporation, VirtualCo's employees have created their own controls to fill the void. As Jackson (2006, p. 232) points out in his case study of employees in a dispersed division, "The employees…appear to be driven by an 'inner panopticon' of high performance which transcends external surveillance and sanction. They don't wish to fail or

be seen to fail…. norms provide the focal point around which self control mechanisms cluster."

CONCLUSION

VirtualCo employees' shared view of culture has primarily been enabled by individuals' ability to virtually compensate for the lack of physical work-based interaction in their everyday lives. Appadurai (1995) argues that the rise of electronically-mediated communication has brought the role of the imagination into our everyday social lives. Schneider (1987) makes the more Meadian case that 'the people make the place'; that organizational culture is the total of all the patterned interactions that occur among and between members of the company. Wellman (2001) describes how a community, or 'network of interpersonal ties', (p.228) can exist in a "cyberplace," one with no actual physical location. VirtualCo employees have a shared language and communication norms, enabled via computer-mediated communication, that in turn shape their interactions in the virtual world. They are able to construct their organization in cyberplace, *socially,* access a shared imagined community, and feel part of VirtualCo.

The employees all see the firm's culture in the same way – like a family with a strong paternalistic leader guiding them through their work. Some of this may be due to the firm's small size. As Kotter and Heskett (1992) point out, "[larger] firms have multiple cultures...usually associated with functional groupings or multiple locations." (p.5). In this case I believe there is a heightened selection effect, where the effect of the firm being small, still seeing itself in startup mode, focused on hiring people that are known by current employees, and with an unorthodox style of organization, all combine to act as a tight screen for potential applicants for any opening at VirtualCo.

Some of this shared view of culture also comes from all the hard work Max and other employees do to ensure employees feel part of the company. The employees work hard in their day-to-day jobs and yet also seem much invested in the success of VirtualCo. Drucker (1999) and McKinlay (2005) note that the primary means of managerial control of collaborative, knowledge-based work are regulating the employees' work selves and allowing internal motivation and socialization to drive performance, while Ghosh (2004) emphasizes communication norms. VirtualCo appears to have been able to push its employees to embed its norms – both communication-based and other – and self-reinforce them.

VirtualCo has created virtual artifacts such as the weekly non-work meeting, and a company wellness program to stand in for a lack of physical artifacts, and used these artifacts to lay a foundation for how they interact. They 'do' culture in many of the same ways that a traditional organization 'does' culture. In many ways what makes this firm so interesting in discussing its culture is how *not* different it is from a firm with a physical location.

But a shared view of culture does not mean that working virtually does not affect the individual employees. In fact, virtual work does seem to have a negative effect on individuals, if not necessarily on how they act as a group or interact with each other. No

people on the phone or exchanging email messages with others does not, apparently, provide enough interaction to offset feelings of loneliness or social isolation. While the virtual nature and small size of the firm have freed its employees from bureaucracy, they have also lost the learning that goes on accidentally when people see each other at work. As Art described:

> *"I know, last month we all got together for, like, three days in a row and just worked together, and it was odd because in one sense it was hugely disruptive to our research time. So, it was hard to not want to go back and say, "I just need like three hours to wrap up this reading that I have to do for this client." But, as far as just pure satisfaction and getting bonding, it was outstanding. It was still one of the most satisfying weeks I had in quite a while."*

Much research has been done on virtual work and organizational culture. It has, generally, been done in the context of direct interaction, within the four walls of a physical office. Little research has been done on how organizational culture emerges in the absence of physical proximity and synchronous work schedules, and what the mechanisms are through which culture can be developed and maintained in a virtual environment. Even less research has focused on how an organizational culture could emerge in a service industry-based virtual company whose employees' work is collaborative.

This in-depth analysis of the culture of a completely virtual company begins to fill the gap that currently exists in the organizational culture literature regarding virtual work and its impacts on a firm's culture and its employees. Through connections with broader work on culture, we gain understanding of how a firm set up in a wholly non-traditional way can construct itself, socially, to be a community. We can see how it is possible to develop an integrated, shared culture that includes employees' feeling committed to the organization even when they are working virtually. This will become ever more important as more and more companies rely on virtual work as part of their overall approach to personnel management. When it comes to thinking about organizations, space, and culture, we may come to believe, that, as Amy put it, "in the end, walls are just walls."

ENDNOTES

1. In this article, I use the word space to refer to a potentially boundless and abstract context that represents sites of interaction, whether they are physical, psychic or cyber.
2. Since so much of VirtualCo's work is collaborative, survivor bias may exist. I believe the risk of survivor bias is outweighed by the importance of examining a setting where collaboration is a central challenge of doing business instead of being taken for granted. This paper's central argument is that culture can be created in a virtual firm, but that effort is required; if the firm is operating in a setting where the effort would not be worth the trouble, there is no way to examine that claim. The firm in my case study is still young and has had very little turnover so far. One could argue that this firm is still at a point in the lifecycle where even a sub-optimal firm would still be surviving –thus minimizing issues of survivor bias. There is some risk, still, that the co-occurrence of compensating techniques and culture could be taken as evidence that the techniques are sufficient to produce culture – when, in fact, many non-survivors tried the same techniques without success. I believe I have minimized this risk due to my single case study setup and focus on qualitative methods.
3. Calculative commitment, by contrast, refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. (p. 67).
4. Note that due to the small sample size I was not able to run tests of statistical significance.

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APPENDIX A: REGRESSION MODEL BASED ON THE 1991 NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY (NOS)

The National Organizations Survey (NOS) is a representative sample of work organizations in the United States, with data from informants about human resources policies and practices. The principal investigators for the NOS combined industry data from published government sources with these data. Topics covered include staffing practices, organizational commitment, employee benefits and incentives, and organizational structural characteristics.

Universe: All business establishments with one or more paid employees
Sampling: Cross-sectional implicit sample proportional to size of establishment

Number of observations in total sample: 727
Number of observations in sample with complete organizational commitment data: 237

I created an Organizational Commitment scale based on five questions from the NOS that were worded the same way and scaled the same way as five questions I asked in my survey of VirtualCo employees.

Table A1: Questions comprising the Organizational Commitment scale

How strongly do you agree that:	Scale
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization?	1 = Definitely disagree 4= Definitely agree
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization?	1 = Definitely disagree 4= Definitely agree
I would take any job to keep working for this organization?	1 = Definitely disagree 4= Definitely agree
I really care about the fate of this organization?	1 = Definitely disagree 4= Definitely agree
My values and the organization's values are very similar?	1 = Definitely disagree 4= Definitely agree

Since VirtualCo is a small organization, I used a subset of the NOS data containing small organizations, those with 20 or fewer employees. This yielded a comparison dataset of 85 observations. I then ran a multivariate linear regression using seventeen NOS variables -- a combination of theoretically relevant, firm-level, individual-level, and job-level characteristics-- to predict an individual's score on the Organizational Commitment scale. For the 85 observations in the small firm sub-sample of the NOS, the model showed an adjusted R^2 of .3228. The output from that model is below.
Even though not all variables were significant, they were the best estimate available, so I took a conservative approach and left them in the model. The equation gave me an individual's predicted score on the Organizational Commitment scale:

Organizational Commitment Score = $\beta 0$+ $\beta 1$ *Financial Sector* +$\beta 2$ *Company sells product and service* +$\beta 3$ *Organization been in existence 5 years or less* +$\beta 4$*# of FTEs* +$\beta 5$*% of Employees that are women* +$\beta 6$*% working from home* +$\beta 7$ *Respondent Age (years)*+$\beta 8$*Years of Education*+$\beta 9$ *Number of Children* +$\beta 10$ *Married* +$\beta 11$ *Found job from someone who worked there* +$\beta 12$ *Found job from a friend* +$\beta 13$*I make decisions for my job*+$\beta 14$ *I can work independently* +$\beta 15$ *I have a lot to say on my job* +$\beta 16$ *I supervise the work of others directly* +$\beta 17$ *How many [FTES] do you supervise?*

Table A2: Statistical Coefficients from Subsample of NOS

Source	SS	df	MS
Model	538.100243	17	31.6529555
Residual	632.087993	67	9.43414914
Total	1170.18824	84	13.9308123

Table A3: Statistical output from Subsample of NOS	
Statistics Output	Value
Number of observations	85
F (17,67)	3.36
Prob>F	.0002
R-squared	.4598
Adj. R-squared	.3228
Root MSE	3.0715

Table A4: Coefficients and Standard Errors for Variables in Equation			
	Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Firm—level characteristics	Financial Sector	-0.00412	-0.00411
	Company sells product and service	2.336**	-1.162
	Organization been in existence 5 years or less	-3.007***	-0.805
	# of FTEs	0.264***	-0.0742
	% of Employees that are women	3.379*	-1.794
	% working from home	0.000154	-0.0173
Individual-level characteristics	Respondent Age (years)	-0.0610**	-0.295
	Years of Education	0.0173	-0.153
	Number of Children	-0.183	-0.232
	Married	0.83	-0.783
Job-level characteristics	Found job from someone who worked there	0.0676	-0.905
	Found job from a friend	2.385***	-0.841
	I make decisions for my job	1.095	-1.038
	I can work independently	-1.215	-0.924
	I have a lot to say on my job	1.16	-0.953
	I supervise the work of others directly	0.66	-0.866
	How many do you supervise?	0.00182	-0.00249
Constant		9.892***	-2.732
	*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

BETWEEN LOVE AND WAR: THE EFFECTS OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT IN ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Edgar Rogelio Ramírez Solís, Tecnológico de Monterrey
Verónica Ilián Baños Monroy, Tecnológico de Monterrey

ABSTRACT

What is the relationship, ifany, between affective commitment and organizational politics? How do these two factors affect overall company performance? The main objective of this paper is to identify the influence of organizational politics on the organizational performance of the company and to find the possible influence, within the same relationship, of affective organizational commitment. We therefore designed an empirical study and applied a survey in 134 Mexican SMEs involved in footwear manufacturing. Our research indicates a strong relationship between affective commitment and organizational outcome. The literature warns about the negative influence of playing politics on overall company performance, but we found that organizational politics combined with affective commitment does not affect organizational performance and could even represent a new tool in achieving better organizational commitment.

Keywords*: Organizational politics; organizational performance; affective commitment.*

Purpose: *The aim of this paper is to identify the influence of organizational politics on organizational performance, having as a moderator the results of affective commitment measured in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) in the footwear manufacturing industry from the state of Jalisco, Mexico.*

Design/methodology/approach: *We designed an empirical study and developed a questionnaire to apply in a representative sample of 134 companies and 421 subjects. Our methodology also includes a case study and interviews. We applied the techniques of linear regression analysis and Pearson correlation to test our hypotheses as well asthe Perception of Politics Scale (POPS), which has been used widely in United the States and Canada but not in Mexico.*

Practical implications: *This study provides interesting implications for managers on how to take advantage of a common behavior: the way employees organize themselves in order to get what they want. Politics should not be seen as a dysfunctional or aberrant behavior but as an organizational advantage.*

INTRODUCTION

We understand politics as the accumulation and the exercise of power in order to reconcile different interests; that is why we believe that a company, no matter its size, is involved in politics every day (Ramirez, Baños and Orozco, 2014). Organizational politics is a fundamental aspect of organizational life and relates to power, authority and influence. Power is defined as an attempt to influence the behavior of another actor and the ability to mobilize resources on behalf of a goal or strategy (Tushman, 1977; Pfeffer, 1981; and Cobb, 1984).However, there were no significant empirical studies about organizational politics before the 1980s that had practical implications (Gandz and Murray, 1980).

In this work we show that an individual's perceptions of politics are more important than the actual presence of organizational politics. This is because individuals respond to what they perceive and not necessarily to what is objectively real (Weick, 1979; and Ferris et al, 1994). Analyzing perceived politics is useful for a more comprehensive understanding of the work environment. An individual in a political setting may have a belief that hard work will not be consistently rewarded; as organizations with higher levels of politics are not concerned much with the personal needs of subordinates. Employees' attitudes toward their work, organizational commitment for example, also seem to be related to the perceived presence of politics (Cropanzano et al, 1997). Sometimes lower perceptions of politics result in higher employee satisfaction, and consistent feedback environments are associated with lower perceptions of organizational politics (Rosen et al, 2006). Political behavior may be used to predict important work outcomes (Cohen and Vigoda, 1999), aspolitical involvement increases job satisfaction, organizational commitment and participation in decision making. The negative relationship between political participation and performance shows that strictly political involvement seems to have negative consequences for behavior and attitudes at work. It is possible that political behavior has different effects in different cultures; as we will demonstrate in this paper, the effects of organizational politics are not necessarily negative, at least in Mexico.

Some performance variables are related to perceptions of organizational politics, but differ substantially across sectors and are higher in the public than in the private sector (Bodla and Danish, 2008). The behavior of people at work is at least as important as their feelings (Randall et al, 1999). Various characteristics of the organization and the job are associated with perceived politics, and politics, in turn, predicts various outcomes. People don't react to politics in the same way across different cultures. Higher-status individuals are in a better position to shape and benefit from political decision-making, meaning that politics has a less deleterious impact onattitudes among high-status individuals. Individuals who perceive their organizational

environment to be highly political but are reluctant to leave the organization, engage in political behavior as a mechanism of control through which their situation can be made more bearable. On the other hand, employees who choose to stay with the organization although they are dissatisfied might engage in lesser political behavior, such as absenteeism, as responses to a highly political environment (Harrell-Cook et al, 1999).

A number of studies have found perceived politics to be indicators of various organizational outcomes, including psychological states such as job stress and burnout, and employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job ambiguity, scarcity of resources and trust climate are significant predictors of perceptions of organizational politics. These perceptions,in turn, mediate the effects of these situational antecedents on job stress, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Specifically, employees who perceive high levels of politics in their workplace report higher levels of stress, lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of intention to quit than do employees who perceive a low level of politics (Poon, 2003). In a recent study, Rosen et al. (2009) examined the role of emotions in mediating the effects of perceived politics on unfavorable employee outcomes. They proposed that frustration translates employees' perceptions of politics into lower levels of performance and increased organizational withdrawal (i.e., turnover intentions) through a mediational path that involves job satisfaction. In this work we demonstrate that perceptions of organizational politics may lead to better performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical contributions on organizational politics

Organizational politics has been a field of study since the 1970's, although it has been defineddifferently by different authors. Pettigrew (1973) defined organizational politics as the strategies executed by individuals or groups of individuals when they want to advance themselves or their ideas, regardless of whether or not those ideas would help the company. Mayes and Allen (1977) define politics as the use of influence for ends or means that are not approved by firms. An important author in the field, Pfeffer (1981), defines organizational politics as "the study of power in action". This definition includes all influence processes that occur in workplace and involves a "market place" in which individuals or groups interact to exchange certain outcomes (Blau, 1964; Rusbult and Farrel, 1983; and Rusbult et al, 1988).

Although an organizational culture is comprised of many elements, the political aspect is the most crucial one as it is adverse to most organizational concerns (Riley, 1983). Altman et al (1985) argued that the intent of organizational politics is to protect or enhance an individual's self-interest and to further another person's or group's interests or goals through legitimate, as well as non-sanctioned means. Political behavior and the use of power affect almost every important decision in an organization (Pfeffer, 1981). When asked to talk about political behavior in the workplace, employees typically describe it in negative terms and associate organizational politics with self-serving behavior that promotes personal objectives, usually at

the expense of others (Vigoda, 2000). Kacmar and Ferris (1991), and Ferris and Kacmar (1992) have mentioned that the higher the perceptions of politics in the eyes of an individual, the lower that person's eyes are on the level of organizational justice.

Organizations with a very high political environment tend to reinforce the behavior of those employees who: (1) engage in the tactical use of influence, (2) take credit for the work of others, (3) are members of powerful coalitions, and (4) have connections to high-ranking allies. As organizations reward these activities, demands are placed on workers to engage in political behaviors to compete for resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Political activities in a company should be delineated so we can discussthe organizational politics presented in the empirical study examined in this work. In this sense, within a company, what kinds of activities can be considered as politics? In the definition that we proposed, derived from the contributions of different authors (Butcher & Clarke, 2003; Connor & Morrison, 2001; Drory, 1993; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997), the term organizational politics is used to refer to the conscious behavior that individuals, with the strategic intentionality of obtaining or improving positions of privilege within the group, use to reconcile different and even conflicting interests and objectives.

In common with some other authors, we identify three independent lines of research in the area of organizational politics: the first focuses on influence tactics initiated by members of the organization members (Kipnis et al, 1980; Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990; Zanzi and O'Neill, 2001; Wells and Kipnis, 2001). In this sense political behavior represents an opportunity rather than a constraint for organizational actors (Pfeffer, 1981; Valle and Perre, 2000). The second focuses on employees' subjective perceptions of politics (POP), rather than on influence-tactics or actual political behavior (Ferris et al.,1989; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Parker et al., 1995; Rosen et al., 2006). This trend seems to have dominated the respective literature (Vigoda, 2003: 7-8). The third has been recently advanced by scholars and is based on the idea that political skill appears to affect the enactment of political behavior in organizations (Ferris et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2007b; Kolodinsky et al., 2007).

Previous studies ofcompany politics have focused on variables such as organizational results, anxiety at work, commitment of employees to the company, job satisfaction and personal factors (Randall et al., 1999). They have also coveredcontext-based performanceand personality (Witt et al., 2002), the way in which employees treat each other in order to impress their bosses (Zivnuska, et al., 2004), and the size of the enterprise as it relates to perceived independence (Conner, 2006). Nevertheless, we have not been able to find studies that reveal a relationship between office politics and organizational outcomes which also have affective commitment as a moderating variable.

Many authors argue that the presence of organizational politics within the organization is a dangerous and negative factor as it relates tolabor, particularly in terms ofemployee performance and organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, empirical research seeks to identify a set of factors that may have the potential to mitigate the harmful effects of perceived politics. Findings support the idea that employees who are in position to properly assess the underlying

rationale of organizational behavior and exert a certain control over their respective environment are less likely to report the adverse effects associated with POP (Bozeman et al., 2001; Valle and Perrewe, 2000).Variables affecting the POP-employee outcomes relationship could be categorized as follows:dispositional or attitudinal factors, such as higher levels of commitment (Hochwarter et al., 1999), self-efficacy (Bozeman et al., 2001; Valle et al. , 2003), positive affective dispositions (Hochwarter and Treadway, 2003), prosocial behavior (Baruch et al., 2004), reciprocity (Setton et al., 1996), personal reputation (Hochwarter et al. , 2007) and need for achievement (Byrne et al. , 2005). Situational factors, such as high levels of informal supervisor and coworker feedback (Rosen et al., 2006), increased levels of cooperation (Harris et al., 2005), teamwork perceptions (Valle and Witt, 2001), workplace spirituality (Kolodinsky et al., 2003), trust and voice orientation (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006) can also be observed along withethical and normative factors such as procedural and interactional justice (Byrne, 2005), distributive justice (Harris et al., 2007a), fair procedures and fair treatment of employees (Cropanzano et al., 1995), fairness and equity (Andrews and Kacmar, 2001; Aryee et al., 2004; Beugre and Liverpool, 2006).

Until now, the focus has been on the self-serving nature of political behavior in the workplace. As already indicated, such self-interested behavior is viewed as a negative form of organizational politics, one generally associated with detrimental organizational outcomes. However, there is a trend in the respective literature that discusses the possibility of positive political behavior in the workplace. Any behavior that might be deemed political is not necessarily detrimental to the organization and its members (Pfeffer, 1992). Ferris et al. (2002) have suggested that focusing on the negative aspects of political behavior might block the possible benefits and functionality received from organizational politics within the organization. Positive and negative politics share a self-serving aspect: the difference is who benefits from the outcomes. Fedo et al. (2008) adopt this perspective: they claim that positive politics is functional rather than dysfunctional and focus on the perceived benefits of political behavior. Their findings indicate that perceptions of positive politics were significant in predicting important employee outcomes (job satisfaction, supervision and co-worker satisfaction, psychological contract), these being positively related to beneficial reactions.

Another trend in literature does not focus uniquely on the argument that justifies positive politics in terms of functional aspects or beneficial outcomes. A legitimate concern should then be to identify the key attributes of positive political processes. To be more specific, Ammeter et al. (2002) view organizational politics as the constructive management of shared meaning that is "a neutral and inherently necessary component of organizational functioning". Gunn and Chen (2006) argue that persuasion, reference to super-ordinate goals, development of coalitions and networking are some positive political tactics that can be beneficial to the organization to the extent that they enhance the effectiveness of strategic management processes and coincide with primary organizational objectives.

Constructive politics is based, among others factors, on specific motivation: causes worthy of pursuit, , responsibility, seeking the well-being of the organization good rather than self-interest, and avoiding the need to resort to any means to justify ends. It is also notable that constructive organizational politics contributes to greater organizational democracy, since it facilitates the reconciliation of diverse stakeholders' interests and competing views.

According to Butcher and Clarke (2006) effective conflict management is inherently a political activity. The objectives of management consist of the reconciliation of such competing causes in ways which reflect transparency and bring benefits to both individuals and organizations. Constructive political behavior of this type is better appreciated when its presuppositions are further specified. Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller (2006) defend such a view: they argue that it is possible to move from a negative to a positive conception of organizational politics, as long as "a shift in thoughtand behavior" takes place.

Organizational politics in a company is behavior that occurs informally within the business organization and includes intentional acts of influence designed to protect the career of the individual when there are different and conflicting courses of action in the enterprise (Connor and Morrison, 2001; Drory, 1993). Organizational politics hasalso been related to social influence, for example being directedtowards those who can provide rewards that help to promote or protect the personal interests of the individual (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997).

Theoretical contributions on organizational commitment

The most commonly cited definition of organizational commitment in research work was used for the first time in the 70's by the authors Lyman Porter, Richard Steers, Richard Mowday and Paul Boulian (1974). Organizational commitment, according to these authors, refers to "the relative force of identification and involvement of an individual in relation to a particular organization" (Porter et al., 1974: 604). An individual's commitment to an organization is characterized at least by three factors: 1) a strong belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, 2) the willingness to devote a considerable amount of effort to the organization and 3) a desire to remain as a member of the organization (Ibíd.). These 3 factors form the three components of organizational commitment outlined by Meyer et al. (1993); affective, continuance and normative.

In 1979, a tool was created to measure commitment in an organization: the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). It represents the most popular measure of the construct, being used in 103 of 174 studies reviewed by Mathieu and Zajac (1990). Based on this analysis, Mathieu and Zajac propose an alternative model of commitment to Steers, linking the commitment results to both the individual and the organization. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) define 2 types of commitment: attitudinal and intentional. Intentional commitment is the result of the negotiations between the person and the company related to extra benefits or time investments. Attitudinal commitment is summarized by ways in which the individual regards the company.

During the 80's and 90's a significant amount of studies related to this subject appeared. By 2001, 93 research works had been published about organizational commitment and how it related to job performance (Riketta, 2002). Commitment has also been studied in relation to labor turnover both present and future (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1993), and with absenteeism (Gellatly, 1995). In the 21st century, many examples of research relating to employee commitment to a company are those associated with human resources practices (Meyer and Smith, 2000). Research has also been carried out into professionalism and the level of commitment (Bartol, 1979), the relationship between commitment and the support of the supervisors (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003; Cheng, Jiang and Riley, 2003) and organizational characteristics (Fiorito et al., 2007). Different meta-analyses have also been done on published studies which deal exclusively with commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Blau & St. John, 1993; Cohen & Hudecek, 1993; Riketta, 2002).

In the literature we found that organizational commitment is divided into three factors: affective, continuance and normative. For our analysis we are focusing on affective commitment exclusively, this being the factor which works as a moderator on the relationship between organizational politics and organizational performance. According to Meyer et al. (1993) affective commitment is defined as the sense of belonging that an individual feels for their organization, but also the pride, understanding and empathy that they have for organizational goals and values.

Individuals that are highly committed to their organization present a high level of involvement and loyalty to it. These behaviors also relate tobetter performance and better organizational outcomes (Meyer et al., 1989), as committed individuals work harder than those that are not dedicated (Chelte and Tausky 1986; Leong, Randall and Cote, 1994). Not only does the theory suggest this positive correlation but also empirical research has proved that there is strong a relationship between affective commitment and job performance (Chang & Chen, 2011). On the other hand, according to Randall et al. (1999) affective commitment is negatively related to the perceived level of organizational politics in an enterprise. However, our study proves the opposite: we noticed that Mexican companies have better outcomes and performance when their employees perceive organizational politics in the workplace.

Relationship between Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Organizational Commitment

Since this study focuses on moderators of the POPs–outcome relationship, we review some studies that examine the relationship between POPs and organizational commitment.Organizational commitment is important because it impacts work attitudes such as job satisfaction, performance, and turnover intention (Karadal and Arasli 2009). Previous studies have suggested that POPs have detrimental effects on the organizational commitment of employees. Cropanzano et al. (1997) provided a theoretical basis for why POPs could have negative effects on organizational commitment. They argued that a workplace involves a market place in which different individuals and groups interact to exchange outcomes. They assumed that each of us works to obtain certain objectives, and that to obtain these objectives, work requires a

considerable expenditure of effort. Consequently, choosing to affiliate with agiven firm can be seen as an investment of personal resources.

When the marketplace is political, individuals attain rewards through competition and by amassing power. Since not everyone can belong to the strongest cabal, many individuals will have trouble fulfilling their aspirations, and might see their work environment as unsatisfying and stressful. Moreover, in a political work environment, rewards are allocated based on power, and the rules may change from one day to the next. This uncertainty causes individuals to have less confidence that their efforts will lead to any beneficial outcomes, and thus they are less likely to invest additional resources in the organization. Therefore, in a political work environment, individuals see their long-term contribution to the organization as a risky investment, and are more likely to withdraw than those in a less political work environment (Cropanzano et al.1997). On the basis of this argument, it can be assumed that POPs are negatively related to organizational commitment, and, in fact, several empirical studies have found this: (Drory 1993; Nye and Witt, 1993; Maslyn and Fedor, 1998; Witt 1998; Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda-Gadot et al. 2003).

There is a vast amount of evidence in the respective literature indicating the negative effects of self-serving political behavior in the workplace: the evidence shows it is detrimental to both organizational commitment and efficiency. POP is also associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hochwarter, 2007; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Witt et al., 2000), reduced levels of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Randall et al., 1999) and overall organizational performance (Vigoda, 2000), as well as increased levels of negligent behavior (Vigoda, 2000). Moreover, higher levels of perceived politics were indicative of negative psychological states such as job anxiety and stress-related outcomes (Ferris et al., 1996; Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2002), as well as of intention to quit and other withdrawal behaviors (Bozeman et al., 2001; Poon, 2004; Randall et al., 1999).

A politically charged workplace was also discovered to inhibit employees' willingness to engage in helping their co-workers. This stemmed from supervisor trust: the benefits of employee helpfulness based on trust in supervisors were attenuated in political climates (Poon, 2006). Miller et al. (2008), in an important meta-analysis of 79 independent samples from 59 published and unpublished papers, provide a comprehensive examination of the relationship between POP and key employee attitudes. The findings indicate the following: a strong negative relationship between POP on the one hand, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the other; a moderately positive relationship between POP and the outcomes of work-related stress and turnover intentions; a statistically non-significant relationship between POP and job performance; and. the existence of moderating variables (such as age, work setting, or cultural differences) that exert certain contingent effects on particular POP relationships. A second important meta-analytic examination is presented in Chang et al. (2009).

Many authors conclude that perceived politics is entirely detrimental to organizational commitment, as POP are hardly in a position to generate beneficial outcomes. On the contrary, our findings suggest that higher levels of POP could be associated with better perception of affective commitment and organizational performance.

Relationship between Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Organizational Performance

Many authors have provided two explanations that link perceptions of organizational politics to negative work performance. First, Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that politics are a source of stress that elicits strain responses from employees. Other theorists have suggested that perceptions of organizational politics are detrimental to the maintenance of healthy employee-organization exchange relationships (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004). In this sense, this research is counter- intuitive because we found that organizational politics can contribute toorganizational welfare.

In highly political organizations, rewards are tied to relationships, power, and other less objective factors. As a result, "the immediate environment becomes unpredictable because the unwritten rules for success change as the power of those playing the political game varies" (Hall et al., 2004: 244). Therefore, it is difficult for employees to predict if their behaviors will lead to rewards in political work contexts, and they are likely to perceive weaker relationships between performance and the attainment of desired outcomes (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997). Supporting this perspective, Rosen et al. (2006) demonstrated that perceptions of organizational politics are associated with performance through employee morale. In their study employee morale and job performance were conceptualized as aggregate latent constructs.

The morale construct represented general employee attitudes and was comprised of job satisfaction and affective commitment and the performance construct consisted of task performance, which captured behaviors related to both the technical cores of organizations and behaviors that contribute to the psychosocial contexts of workplaces (Organ, 1997). Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that lower morale reflects judgments that reward allocation processes that are arbitrary and unfair. Employees holding less favorable attitudes also feel less obligated to reciprocate with behaviors that enhance the performance of their organization. These authors provided evidence, albeit indirectly, that morale is part of the social exchange mechanism that links perceptions of organizational politics to performance.

Miller et al. (2008) provide a comprehensive examination of the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and key employee attitudes (fundamental concept of organizational climate) in their review of 59 published and unpublished papers. Their major findings are: a strong negative relationship between POP and job satisfaction and organizational commitment; a moderately positive relationship between POP and job performance, and the existence of moderating variables (such as age, work setting, or cultural differences) that exert certain contingent effects on particular POP relationships. We found that our work could be explained bycultural differences.

Most of the literature shows the negative effects of POP but empirical research seeks to identify a set of factors that may have the potential to mitigate the harmful effects of perceived politics. Findings support the idea that employees who are in position to properly assess the underlying rationale of organizational behavior and exert a certain control over their respective environment are less likely to report adverse effects associated with POP (Bozeman et al., 2001).

Ferris et al. (1989) and Drory (1993) found that perceptions of politics were negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This negative relationship was also verified by Vigoda and Kapun (2005) and in a later study by Bodla and Danish (2008) in both public and private sectors. They suggested that employees are sensitive to political decisions made in their environment and react in various perceptual and behavioral ways. However, Parker et al (1995) found that workplace politics were not related to job satisfaction in any significant way. Cropanzano et al. (1997) also found empirical evidence about the effect of perceptions of organizational politics on job involvement.

METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESIS

Sample

For the purposes of the present study the number of companies provided by the system of Mexican Business Information was taken as valid (SIEM, 2013).To these 117 companies we added 17 more to bring us closer to the number of companies that the Footwear Chamber of Commerce said was correct. The study then considered a census of 134 companies; those that we were able to locate using the complete list that the Footwear Chamber of Commerce provided, as well as those that we were able to locate through the yellow pages and information from other companies, using a snowball strategy or multiplier. In this way we reached enterprises and workshops that did not appear in any type of record. We interviewed 421 employees at different organizational levels in the 134 companies we addressed: the results of this study are based on the 421 answers to the data we collected.

Design of information-collection instrument

As organizational politics is usually covert or, indeed, not acknowledged to exist at all, how can we study it inside an organization? The solution to this problem is resolved if, as in the survey we used in our study, we asked about organizational politics related to “others”. In this way we obtained information because individuals are willing to talk about what they perceive in the conduct of their peers.

Another difficulty involved in the perception of organizational politics is that the same conduct can be considered as political by one observer and non-political by another observer depending on previous experience and the frame of reference of each observer. However, since the questions in the data collection instrument were designed with regard to how organizational politics relates to concrete and specific behaviors that respondents could identify in their companions or superiors, it was possible to reach valid conclusions.

Despite the general idea that organizational politics in a company can be studied in order to analyze organizational support, it has been demonstrated using multiple regression analysis that organizational politics represents a useful construct and one worth of separate study (Randall et al., 1999). The study also used multiple regression analysis to verify the importance of each variable and the reliability of their respective correlations.

According to Kacmar and Ferris (1991) the perception of organizational politics consists of the perception of the individual about the political activities of others, not themselves. These authors proposed three categories into which the perception of organizational politics can be divided: general political behavior, 'go along to get ahead' (meaning agree out of self-interest and pretend to agree with one's boss, rather than be passive, if one wishes to achieve promotion)and payment and promotion policies. We will review each one of these factors below:

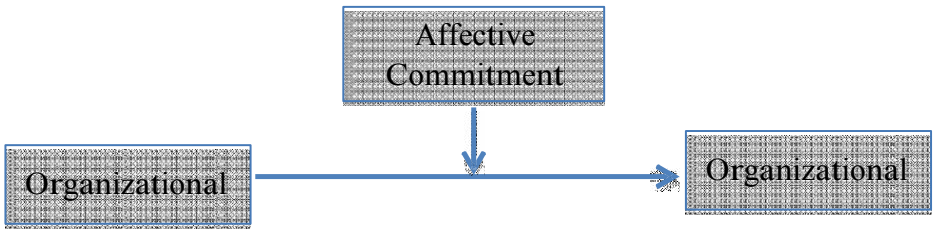
1. General political behavior (GPG): this behavior is related to active and visible attempts of the individuals to influence others for their benefit. The literature tells us that political behavior in a company will increase if there are no rules governing effective exercise of power (Fiol, O´Connor and Aguinis, 2001; Kacmar et al., 1990; Madison et al., 1980). In the absence of specific rules for guidance, individuals have few clues to know what acceptable behavior means. Therefore, they will develop their own rules.

2. Political behavior of permanency (PBP): this behavior refers to the apparent lack of political action of the individual. The conflict is consistently related to company policy, the essence of this connection is that often political conduct is complacent and therefore has the potential to threaten the interests of others. According to Drory and Romm (1990), the existence ofconflict is an inevitable element in a company and that is why some individuals may wish to avoid it. They are not therefore resistant to other people's attempts to influence them;this type of political behavior is called "passivity".

3. Payments and promotions (P&P): this factor relates to how the organization rewards political maneuvering through the establishment of regulations concerning payments and promotions (Kacmar and Ferris, 1993). Even though company decision-makers are not aware of it thehuman resources systems utilized today tend to reward those individuals who match certain behaviors andpenalize individuals who do not cope with such conduct.

In a review of the Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS), the scale proposed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991), the authors Kacmar and Carlson (1997) proposed new items for the same three factors described above. This is the instrument we used in our empirical research.

Hypothesis



Since politics can be a part of organizational reality and has the potential to contribute to organizational effectiveness (Butcher and Clarke, 2003; Ferris et al., 1996; 2007; Kacmar and Carlson, 1997), it is by nature participative as well as inclusive. It is a concept fundamental to organizational commitment and also fundamental for organizational performance. This being the case, we present our first hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Perception of Organizational Politics (POPs) is positively related to Organizational Performance.

However, the results of empirical studies have been mixed. Ferris et al. (1996) found that understanding mitigated the negative effects of POPs on job anxiety and satisfaction with one's supervisor, but did not moderate the effect of POPs on general satisfaction. Kacmar et al. (1999) showed that understanding attenuates the negative effects of POPs on job satisfaction, but does not moderate the effect of POPs on anxiety.

In different research affective commitment has always shown a significant relationship with organizational outcomes (Meyer et al., 1989; Cheng et al., 2003; Fiorito et al., 2007; Po-Chien & Shyn-Jer, 2011). Because of this, we present a second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Affective Commitment (AC) has no influence on the relationship between POPs and Organizational Performance.

RESULTS

After making a correlation betweenthe Perception of Organizational Politics (POPs) and the Affective Commitment (AC) (see Table 1), we can see that there is a weak negative relationship between both variables. This is a surprising result because in the scenario we assumed that the perception of POPs would mean less commitment from the employee. Contrary to what was expected, the POP variablesdo not have a significant influence on Affective Commitment. According to the results of the survey, while both owners and employees areaware of the existence of political tactics, this does not affect the commitment they feel towards the company (Table 2).

Table 1
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND POPS CORRELATIONS

		PERFORM	AC	POPs
PERFORM	Pearson coefficients	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	421		
AC	Pearson coefficients	.044	1	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.364		870
	N	421	21	21
POPs	Pearson coefficients	.806**	.008	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	870	
	N	421	21	21

**Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE, AC AND THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF POPS CORRELATIONS

		PERFORM	AC	GPG	PBP	P and P
PERFORM	Pearson Coefficients	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	421				
AC	Pearson Coefficients	.044	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.364				
	N	421	421			
GPG	Pearson Coefficients	.671**	-.070	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.152			
	N	421	421	421		
PBP	Pearson Coefficients	.727**	.093	.511**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.057	.000		
	N	421	421	421	421	
P and P	Pearson Coefficients	.620**	-.046	.533**	.599**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.342	.000	.000	
	N	421	421	421	421	421

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

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

All the components of the POPs have high correlations with the performance of the company but there is a strong negative correlation between performance and affective commitment, particularly with the GPG (-. 070) and P and P (-. 046) dimensions.

Conversely, the PBP has a correlation between average and considerable with the perception of the P and P of the company, and a correlation between weak and average with the affective commitment (AC). The important thing in this table is the high correlation between each one of the dimensions of POPs and the performance of the company that supports hypothesis 1.

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandarized coefficients		Normalized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Type error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.345	.258		5.223	.000
	AC	.090	.077	.040	1.169	.243
	GPG	.193	.028	.285	6.771	.000
	PBP	.242	.030	.367	8.151	.000
	P and P	.142	.031	.204	4.523	.000
a. Dependent variable PERFORM						

This tells us that while employees are aware of the political manoeuvers of their coworkers; this does not affect their perception of their commitment to the company negatively.

When we carried out the analysis between the relationship between POPS and the perceived performance of the firm, the results were even higher than we expected (Table 1 and table 2). All correlation coefficients have significance at 0.01 level, with this result we accept hypothesis 1, which establishes a higher perception of organizational politics, corresponding to a higher perception of the firm`s performance.

In order to test hypothesis 2, an OLS regression analysis was held. Table 3 shows the results of introducing the Commitment Affective variable.

TABLE 3
OLS REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS 2 (A) COEFFICIENTS[A]

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Normalized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Type error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.629	.100		16.327	.000
POPs	.578	.028	.715	20.957	.000

a. Dependent variable PERFORM

The R^2 of the model is 0.512 with a level of significance of .000, which means that Hypothesis 2 is supported and accepted in part, because in this OLS analysis we haven´t added AC as a moderatingvariable.

TABLE 4
OLS REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS 2 (B) COEFFICIENTS[A]

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Normalized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Type error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.279	.255		5.022	00
AC	.113	.076	.051	1.489	137
POPs	.579	.028	.716	20.999	000

a. Dependent variable PERFORM

The R^2 of the model improves to 0.514,meaning .002 of improvement when the variable Affective Commitment is added to the model. Unfortunately, AC has a Beta of .113 with a level of significance of .137 (above .000), which means that this variable (AC) does not add any value to the model. Therefore hypothesis 2 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

As we can observe from the previous section, even when the results are significant statistically (except for the beta of Affective Commitment in themultiple regression model and the level of significance result), it is necessary to emphasize some details.

First of all, the R^2 of both models (0.512 and 0.514 each one) indicates that if there is a good explanation forthe model, the remaining percentage that is left without explanation opens the opportunity to look for new ways to mitigate the adverse effects of AC in the general results of the company.

Findings support the idea that employees who are in a position to properly assess the underlying rationale of organizational behavior and exert a certain control over their respective environments are less likely to report adverse effects associated with POP (Bozeman et al., 2001). In our study we found that POPs is positively related to organizational performance, nevertheless not all political actions are beneficial and many of them could be dangerous fororganizational commitment.

We found that perception of organizational politics is not always a bad influence as some authors suggest (Mintzberg, 1984; Wilson, 1995; Connor y Morrison, 2001; Poon, 2003), instead POPS can be related to higher perceptions of performance, as revealed in this study.

The surprising results about the weak relationship between organizational politics and performance are perhaps justified becauseemployees perceived that politics is just self-interest, designed to get people what they want, and does not necessarily impact on an organization´s perceived performance.

This result is counterintuitive and counter-theoretical because some authors have found that POPS is related to a) lower levels of organizational commitment (Maslyn and Fedor, 1998), and lower satisfaction in the workplace (Ferris et al., 1996; Wilson, 1999); and with b) higher levels of work-related anxiety (Ferris et al., 1996) and intention to leave the company (Kacmar et al., 1999; Poon, 2002).

Another finding in this study is related to the lack of/weak relationship between performance and affective commitment. We think this happens because in the shoemaking industry in Mexico there is a high level of turnover and this situation does not allow employees to have enough time to understand, love and keep working for the company long enough to be committed to it. This is another interesting finding which could lead to a better understanding of SMEs in emergent economies.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the objectives of this work was to understand the nature of organizational politics and its relationship toorganizational commitment in order to improve communication in a company andparticipation between employees Although we are aware that political tactics are linked to power and conflict and are associated with an unhealthy organizational climate, we in fact demonstrated the opposite: some kinds of politics can be beneficial for the firm. Therefore, it is possible to reconcile both the legitimate interests of owners and managers with the needs of employees.

This study empirically examines the relationship between perceived organizational politics and the commitment of employees at work. It was found that perceived organizational politics are negatively related to affective commitment but positively related to organizational performance.

We can also conclude that because of the sector and industry in which the survey was run, it is possible that gender, company age and, most importantly, employee seniority could affect the results we obtained: we found a weak relationship between affective commitment and performance and a weak relationship between organizational politics and affective commitment. Perhaps the age of the employees and the time they were working for the company affected their commitment to it, and because the shoemaking industry in Mexicohas a high staff turnover rate, it is a situation that should be addressed in further studies.

The findings are important for public administrators and policy makers to deal with the consequences of politics in order to enhance the performance of organizations by introducing transparent and merit-based hiring policies. Understanding of corporate culture among employees and their participation in decision-making, especially in young workers, reduces the effect of politics in organizations. It is possible that a multicultural sample could provide much more reliable knowledge about differences in perceptions of politics and relationship with organizational performance. Therefore, future studies should explore this option more thoroughly for wider generalizations to be made. In addition, it may also be useful to extend our view and to examine the relationship between politics and gender or politics and sector composition. Moreover, job tenure may also be a considerable variable when judging perceptions of organizational politics.

Political action in the company can also be characterized by a balance between self-interest and the interests of others, negotiations over scarce resources where both sides gain, addressing problems and making decisions, opening ways of achieving action and ensuring participation ofgroup members, etc. We argue that politics is inherent to human behavior and therefore also inherent to the operation of any company and could be regarded as the foundation of a healthy organizational climate.

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THE EFFECTS OF HOME COUNTRY, GENDER, AND POSITION ON LISTENING BEHAVIORS

Deborah B Roebuck, Kennesaw State University
Reginald L Bell, Prairie View A & M University
Reeta Raina, Foundation for Organizational Research and Education
Cheng Ean (Catherine) Lee, Sunway University

ABSTRACT

Regardless of national culture, often listening is mentioned as an important component for effective business operations. In addition, understanding how individuals of different national cultures perceive and process listening is fundamental to our global world of work. The present study used Glenn and Pood (1989) Listening Self-Inventory to examine the distracted and attentive listening behaviors of male and female managers and non-managers who worked full time in the countries of India, Malaysia, and the United States of America (USA). Findings in this study suggest USA females and males, in general, are less likely to be attentive listeners than the Indian and Malaysian respondents are. USA and Malaysian managers are less prone to be attentive listeners than non-managers while Indian managers are more likely to be attentive listeners. Regarding distracted listening behaviors, males are more prone to engage in distracted listening than females while managers are less likely to engage in distracted listening than non-managers. USA managers are more distracted in their listening than non-managers while Indian and Malaysian managers are less distracted listeners than the non-managers are. This study indicates differing national cultures, organizational position and gender can affect listening in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

Frequently listening isstated as an important component and a necessary skill for the workplace (Brownell, 1990, 1994; DiSalvo, 1980; Schwartz, 2004;Sypher, Bostrom,& Seibert, 1989; Wacker & Hawkins, 1995). For over 50 years, researchers have been showing listening as a highly desirable workplace skill for both managers and employees (Cooper, 1997; Coopman, 2001, Husband, Cooper,&Monsour, 1988; Nichols & Stevens, 1957; Rogers &Roethlisberger, 1952; Sypher, 1984). Goby and Lewis (2000) stated that listening is rated in the top 10 practices for business effectiveness, but it is a skill that is frequently overlooked and taken for granted. Managers and employees often cite listening as a weakness within employee communication (Lewis &Reinsch, 1988).

In today's workplace, listening is also impacted by the fact that more business is conducted globally, which requires an awareness of listening behaviors of other cultures (Kumbruck&Derboven, 2005).Given that work has become more global and that effective workplace communication between managers and non-managers is needed to meet goals andto improve working relationships,an understanding ofthe differences in listening behaviors between managers and non-managers who are males and females in different countries is worthy of study.

Workplace listening is important for several reasons. First, listening is linked to the building of knowledge and helps organizations develop their intellectual capital (Schwartz,

2004). Second, listening helps managers develop their competencies to deal with employee issues (Crittenden & Crittenden, 1985). Third, organizations that emphasize the importance of listening have employees who aligned their actions with organizational goals(Walters, 2005). Fourth, Cunningham (1992) has stated that listening is needed for effective business practices. If the listening practices of managers and non-managers who work in various countries can be understood, then effective listening behaviors can be identified, which will lead to an understanding of the role of listening within the workplace. Before exploring workplace listening further, it is necessary to define listening and explain the theory surrounding this competency.

A Definition and Theory of Listening

According to Witkin and Trochim (1997), there is no universal definition of listening. The International Listening Association offered the following definition of listening: "The process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and or nonverbal messages" (Emmert, 1996, p. 2–3). Purdy expanded the above definition by defining listening as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings" (1996, p. 8). Flynn, Valikoski, andGrau(2008, p. 143) argued that "listening involves hearing and cognition and assumes the ability to selectively perceive, interpret, understand, assign meaning, react, remember, and analyze what is heard".

According to Witkin (1990), listening research was conducted for a number of years without any theoretical base, but now approximately 13 theoretical perspectives for listening have been established (Wolvin&Coakley, 1993). However, listening research is still not grounded in theory due to a lack of testable theories.

Listening is performed cognitively and perceived behaviorally. Nevertheless, Witkin(1990) stated listening cognitions and behaviors are not always congruent. Up to and including the year 2002, all listening models and definitions could be traced to linear theorists of attention and memory research or to theorists who grounded their work in the linear paradigm (Janusik, 2002). Janusik (2007) took the first step with her research to validate the conversational listening span, which builds a more integrated listening model including cognitive psychology and communication.

It seems that listening has largely been defined in the academic literature as a construct, one with a single definition and without explicitly theorizing about its nature (Bodie& Fitch-Hauser, 2010, Bodie, 2011; Bostrom, 2011). However, Bodie (2011) argued that listening should be viewed as a theoretical term with the theoretical structure a kind of "social context." In this way, listening is allowed various meanings depending on the practical purpose pursued by an individual or team of scholars. This structure could lay theories of listening, or "what people say or believe about listening (Purdy, 2011 p. 137), or one of various scholarly theories of a particular type or mode of listening. This perspective is helpful as we study listening behaviors of individuals in relationship to organizational position, gender, and national culture. Even though the field of listening has struggled to formulate a legitimate theory, listening is considered one of the most crucial skills for managers and employees in organizations.

Many studies stated how important listening is to the workplace, but in a generalized manner (Buhler, 2001; Crittenden & Crittenden, 1985; Goby & Lewis, 2000; Schwartz, 2004). In addition, listening research has provided little insight into demographic information, such as gender and organizational variables such as position, and how those may influence listening

(Cooper, 1997). Orbe and Bruess (2005) havesuggested cultural influences on listening may pose a challenge for listeners in the 21st century. Employees may be expected to listen and communicate with a diverse workforce that comes from different cultures that display specific listening behaviors (Bentley, 2000). Working professionals may find themselves listening to an individual from another culture that does not speak with the same semiotic code. Therefore, the next sections will discuss the relevance of listening to organizational position, gender and national culture.

The Relevance of Organizational Position to Listening

Listening behaviors are more frequently reported by senior managers than mid-level managers (Brownell, 1994). Managers have scored higher than non-mangers, on average, on critical listening, which is defined as listening to critically assess a message with the intent to either accept or reject the message based upon what the individual heard and perceived (Welch & Mickelson, 2013). These researchers found that increased listening competency is associated with more managerial responsibility and that the need for listening further increases as the individual gains more experience. Leung (2005), as well as others, suggest empathy and listening skills play a central role in cognitive processes and behaviors needed for management and leadership (George, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Mandell&Pherrani, 2003; Salovey& Mayer, 1990; Sosik&Megerian, 1999).

Listening helps managers not only to understand others, but also increases self-awareness. Since managers need to deal with employee issues, effective listening behaviors can help managers to become successful supervisors (Crittenden & Crittenden, 1985). Managers can create strong organizational cultures that value listening by demonstrating effective listening behaviors themselves (Flynn, Valikoski,&Grau, 2008).

Effective listening brings new ideas forward and allows people to voice their opinions, thoughts and experiences (Bachelet, Kawamura,&Tennenhaus Eisler, 2013). Senecal and Burke (1992) found that listening helped gain coworkers support by providing them with recognition and making them feel that they were valued members of the organization. In addition, listening helped people to obtain job-related knowledge that allowed them to perform their jobs better, to establish rapport with others and to improve interpersonal relations (Floyd, 1985). Listening is a highly desirable workplace skill for both managers and non-managers (Cooper, 1997; Coopman, 2001; Husband,Cooper,& Monsour, 1988; Nichols & Stevens, 1957; Rogers &Roethlisberger, 1952; Sypher, 1984).

In general, organizational position has been shown to influence managers' perceptions of their own listening abilities (Brownell, 1990). In the past, a major congruency issue existed between middle managers' impressions of their own listening skills versus how their employees viewed these middle managers' actual listening skills (Brownell, 1990; 2003). This fact further justifies the need for studying differences between managers and non-managers empirically on the listening variable.

The Relevance of Gender to Listening

According to Collins (2006), men and women listen differently. Men tend to structure their listening in terms of goals, thereby, focusing more on listening to information related to the current task. Women, on the other hand, connect with the emotional message and undertones of a conversation. They tend to be more concerned with the occurrence of the conversation than with the pertinent information discussed. Women often interject with small acknowledgements such as 'yes," "I see" and "mm-hmm" to show the speaker that they are actively listening and processing the information. Men tend to listen silently, interjecting sparsely and usually only asking for clarification. The differences in listening style can cause women to assume that men are not listening while men may think that women "overlisten" (Watson & Barker, 1984).

People associate women with the listening role and thus perceive women to be better listeners (Burke & Collins, 2001; Borisoff& Merrill, 1998, Barker, Pearce,& Johnson, 1992; Borisoff& Hahn, 1992; Brownell, 1990). Rubin (1982) and Pearson, Turner, and Todd-Mancillas (1991) found women are taught a muted form of communication that does not encourage a raised voice or expression of opinion. Therefore, men speak up more than women do; and people perceive women to be better listeners. Heath (2006) believes that women are perceived better listeners because they listen to the issue and do not just hear words, but also listen for content and delivery.

Collar (2005) revealed female psychological counselors were good listeners as they understood effective or ineffective psychological reactions better than male psychological counselors, but Collins (2006) stated that women when compared to men may be better at interpreting emotion, but this difference is not valid when women are compared with men who are trained as counselors and other therapeutic professionals.

In a study by Welch and Mickelson (2013), a gender difference in therapeutic listening was found with female managers indicating they use more therapeutic listening than male managers do. Therapeutic listening involves emotional understanding whereby individuals often act as sounding boards to allow another person to vent. When therapeutic listening is used, the individual listens with empathy and understanding (Wolvin&Coakley, 1993). This study also found that female middle managers had a higher mean for comprehensive listening than did the male middle managers, thus, showing that women, when listening, pay more attention to the details than men do. Schein's (1992) research on organizational culture also found that male and female managers have different beliefs about listening and approach their organizational culture differently based upon these beliefs. Therefore, how men and women perceive their listening behaviors may influence organizational culture.

It seems that women give more attention to the speaker, paraphrase messages, and ask questions, which shows they may display more effective listening behaviors than their male counterparts do (Levitt, 2001; Trenholm & Jensen, 2004; Devito, 2007). In addition, gender differences have occurred in how managers perceive the usefulness of different forms of listening (Welch & Mickelson, 2013).

The Relevance of National Culture to Listening

Wolvin (1987) suggests that people from different cultures have different perceptions of listening. Scholars have acknowledged the influence of culture on perceptions and patterns of listening (Brownell, 2012; Hall, 1976; Kiewitz, Weaver, Brosius,&Weimann, 1997,

Orbe&Bruess, 2005; Purdy, 2000; Rogers &Farson, 1986; Wolvin, 1987; Wolvin&Coakley, 1988, Zohoori, 2013). Individuals from different countries may perceive listening behaviors differently, approach listening in different ways, and display specific listening styles that reflect the influence of a person's cultural background (Kiewitz, Weaver, Brosius,&Weimann,1997; Lewis, 1999; Aaronson & Scarborough, 1977; Langer, 1980; Shiffin& Schneider,1977)

Mujtaba and Pohlman (2010) stated that working professionals tend to behave according to how they are socialized within their respective cultures. This is called the global-culture approach that assumes organizations conform to the culture and practice of their own group (Zaidman, 2001). Adler (1986) argued national culture has a greater impact on employees than organizational culture.

Brownell (2006) found that "listeners often look to the context of the situation for additional cues to make sense of what they hear" (p. 48). Based upon her belief, it would seem that members of high-context cultures such as Malaysia and India might perceive and process listening differently than do members of low-context cultures such as the USA. Individual expectations for what is considered appropriate social behavior and communication, which includes listening, seem to be determined by an individual's particular national culture (Hall, 1976; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). As Hall (1976) explained, members of high-context cultures consider thelistener responsible for the effective outcomes of communication due to their sensitivity to nonverbal cues in the communication environment, whereas members of low-context cultures hold the communicator accountable for effective outcomes due to their dependence on verbal cues.

Listening in a high-context culture requires an active listener who "does not passively absorb the words which are spoken, but [who] actively tries to grasp the facts and feelings in what he hears,to help the speaker work out his own problems" (Rogers &Farson, 1986, p. 149). Culturally, individuals in the USA are described as members of the low-context culture (Hall, 1976) and individualistic (Hofstede, 1980). On the other hand,Indians and Malaysians are characterized by their collectivistic orientation (Hofstede, 1980) andare considered members of a high-context culture (Hall, 1976). Indians and Malaysians, as members of a high-context and collectivistic culture, are more likely to perceive listening differently than individuals from USA who are members of a low-context and individualistic culture.

Rationale and Purpose of the Study

Clearly national culture does influence listening, but no studies could be found that compared USA working professionals' perceptions and orientations toward listening with working professionals in Malaysia and India. Little published research could be found that investigated listening behaviors within and across different cultures (Bonk, 2000; Imhof, 1998, 2004; Seo, 2002).

Flynn, Valikoski, andGrau (2008) has stated that much of the relevant academic research concerning listening is aging, and thus it lacks empirical research. Most research about listening in the business context is prescriptive or descriptive in nature. The majority of research on listening is based on intuitive and largely anecdotal data (Flynn &Bodie, 2007). Despite the acknowledged importance of workplace listening, little empirical evidence is available, and empirical research regarding listening as an organizational variable appears to be almost nonexistent. Bostrom (1990) and Cooper (1997) concluded little progress has occurred in the last 20 years regarding listening competency in organizations.

While listening is commonly known to have two dimensions—people are believed to be either good or bad listeners—only a handful of studies have ventured deep enough to determine the dimensions of the listening construct. Little is known about how those dimensions correlate with meaningful independent variables studied in the academic literature, i.e. gender, years of experience, age, educational level, type of position held within an organization, and national culture (Bonk, 2000; Imhof, 1998, 2004; Imhof&Janusik, 2006; Seo, 2002). Continued developments in global business suggest a heightened need for more cross-national comparative of management studies of listening (Budhwar, Woldu, &Ogbonna, 2008)

Evidence can be found that gender, position, national culture and effective listening all impact the achievement of organizational missions (Bell & Martin, 2014; Borisoff& Hahn, 1992; Burke & Collins, 2001; Hass & Arnold, 1995). However, those four dimensions have never been explored together in an empirical investigation to ascertain their relevance on perceptions of effective listening. It is not known whether the perceptions of males versus females, the position a person holds within an organization (managers versus non-managers) where individuals live, for example India, USA or Malaysia, have scientifically different perceptions of one or more of the true dimensions of the listening construct. It is also not known if the interaction of these variables is meaningful. In other words, will these independent variables interact in a way that has an effect on the magnitude of their perceptions of the listening behaviors in which they engage? Is listening dependent on these factors?

Therefore this study will explore the listening skills of managers and non-managers from three countries — India, Malaysia, and the USA. It will specifically examine the self-perceived listening behaviors of managers and non-managers from these three countries in relationship to organizational position, gender, and national culture. We therefore hypothesize:

H_1: There is no main-effect of organizational position on the perceptions of listening behavior.

H_2: There is no main-effect of gender on the perceptions of listening behavior.

H_3: There is no two-way interaction effect of gender and organizational position on the perceptions of listening behavior.

H_4: There is no main-effect of national culture on the perceptions of listening behavior.

H_5: There is no two-way interaction effect of national culture and organizational position on listening behavior.

H_6: There is no two-way interaction effect of national culture and gender on the perceptions of listening behavior.

H_7: There is no three-way interaction effect of organizational position and gender across national cultures on the perceptions of listening behavior.

SURVEY, DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS

According to Pearce, Johnson, and Barker (2003), several listening self-inventories have been created to meet the needs of organizational executives, trainers, and academicians to provide an instrument to help those in the workplace—managers in particular—to quickly review their listening effectiveness. The Listening Self-Inventory by Glenn and Pood (1989) was chosen for this research study as it was designed to help managers identify barriers impacting their

individual listening performance and consequently improve their listening skills. In addition, this self-inventory could help advance cross-cultural understanding and management of listening as well as test the capability of this assessment in a cross-cultural management context.

After Institutional Review Board approval was obtained, the listening-self inventory and demographic questions were distributed to both managers and non-managers of the three countries of India, Malaysia, and the USA.

The 15 questions of the self-inventory measured a respondent's perception of the magnitude of his or her own engagement in listening behaviors. Administered electronically via the Internet, the survey respondents could select from a range of "Definitely yes," "Probably yes," "Maybe," "Probably not" or "Definitely not" on each item.

According to Spector (1994), the use of self-report studies should not be automatically dismissed as being an inferior methodology, but they should be encouraged, where appropriate. He further stated that self-reports can be quite useful in providing a picture of how people feel and can provide inter-correlations among various feelings and perceptions.

Proficiency in English

All the international participants were proficient in reading English. The English language literacy in Malaysia and in India is similar. English is not the first language, but it is used as a medium of instruction from nursery throughout the educational system. The questionnaire used an English language version, whichwas similar toother English language questionnaires used by researchers (Bochner, 1994; Furnham&Muhiudee, 1984; Schumaker& Barraclough, 1989). All surveys from the three countries were deemed to have no inherent bias in language.

Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square Tests

To ascertain if significant differences exist in the relative frequency of descriptive and categorical variables, Chi-Square tests were run using SPSS 22.0. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the independent variables of organizational position, gender, and national culture. Of the 504 respondents who indicated their gender, 203 were female and 301 were male. Malaysia, USA and India had 151, 176, and 184 responses respectively. There were 199 managers and 230 non-managers who responded from 13 industries and fields. A list of those industries and fields respondents mentioned specifically more than twice follows:

- Advertising
- Annunciation
- Audit
- Auditing
- Business Intelligence
- Communication
- Consulting
- Consulting& Publishing
- Consulting engineer
- Consumer Products
- Energy
- Engineering
- Entertainment
- Environment Management
- Events Management
- Exploration&Mobiling
- Export Import
- F&B Customer Service Line
- FederalLaw Enforcement
- Field Manager, Iffco, (Field Job)
- Film
- Food & Beverage
- GIS
- Government
- Hospitality
- HR Consulting
- Legal
- Lumber Distribution
- Management
- Marketing
- Media Agency
- Military
- Mobile
- NGO
- Nonprofit/Charity
- Office Automation
- Oil & Gas
- Operations
- Pharma & Consumer
- PrintCommunications (Media)
- Psychological Publishing
- Public Accounting
- Public Relations
- Railways Equipment
- Recruitment
- Research& Development

- Restaurant Industry
- Restaurant/Hospitality
- Risk Consulting
- sales and service of heavy equipment
- Sales Engineering
- Shipping
- Sport and Fitness
- Telecommunications
- Television/ entertainment
- Thermal Power Project
- ToolRoom Engineering
- Training
- Wireless Telecom

Although age, educational attainment and organizational size are not variables to be tested in this study, they are also included in Table 1. The individuals worked in both managerial and non-managerial positions in firms across various sectors. Management level was comprised of personnel who were involved in policy making, planning, decision making processes, organizing and controlling business activity, procurement, manufacturing, marketing, finance, and human resources while the non-managerial level were involved at the operation levels only. This sample was taken cross 13 different industries including banking or finance, construction, education, insurance, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, production, real estate, retail, sales, service, transportation, and other. We also show a number of fields on the previous page in which respondents said they worked.

Table 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GENDER, NATIONAL CULTURE AND MANAGEMENT POSITION

Demographics		Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
Gender	Females	203	39.6	40.3
	Males	301	58.7	100.0
	Total	504	98.2	
	Missing	9	1.8	
Total		513	100.0	
National culture	Malaysia	151	29.4	29.5
	USA	176	34.3	64.0
	India	184	35.9	100.0
	Total	511	99.6	
	Missing	2	.4	
Total		513	100.0	
Organizational position	Managers	199	38.8	46.4
	Non-Managers	230	44.8	100.0
	Total	429	83.6	
	Missing	84	16.4	
Total		513	100.0	
Education Attainment	High School to Assoc.	66	12.9	13.3
	Bachelors	250	48.7	63.7
	Masters	137	26.7	91.3
	Doctoral, Prof, other Adv.	43	8.4	100.0
	Total	496	96.7	
	Missing	17	3.3	
Total		513	100.0	
Age	≤ 20 to 30 years old	302	58.9	60.6
	31 to 40 years old	81	15.8	76.9
	41 to 50 years old	58	11.3	88.6
	51 and older	57	11.1	100.0
	Total	498	97.1	
	Missing	15	2.9	
Total		513	100.0	
Organization Size	1 to 20 employees	102	19.9	22.9
	21 to 100 employees	92	17.9	43.5
	101 to 500 employees	124	24.2	71.3
	500 or more employees.	128	25.0	100.0
	Total	446	86.9	
	Missing	67	13.1	
Total		513	100.0	

Some preliminary Chi-Square tests with a Pearson coefficient showed a significant difference between the relative frequency of males and females across national culture. Table 2 illustrates a significant Pearson p= 0.000, with Chi-Square = 34.893. Therefore, among the 301 males who completed the survey, the 136 observed count of India males exceeded the expected count of 105.2 significantly. The 90 observed USA females exceeded their expected count of 70.8 significantly. India females, to the contrary, with an observed count of 40, were a bit under represented with an expected count of 70.8. However, the breakdown was 176 USA, 176 India, and 150 Malaysia.Furthermore, the Goodman and Kruskal's (1972) tau test showed national culture as independent variable accounts for 7.0% (p= 0.001) of the error in gender as a dependent variable; on the other hand, when gender was independent variable, it accounted for only 3.6% (p=0.023) of the error in national culture as dependent variable.

Table 2
TEST OF RELATIVE FREQUENCY BETWEEN GENDER AND NATIONAL CULTURE

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
USA	Count	86	90	176
	Expected	(105.2)	(70.8)	
India	Count	136	40	176
	Expected Count	(105.2)	(70.8)	
Malaysia	Count	78	72	150
	Expected Count	(89.6)	(60.4)	
Total	Count	300	202	502
Chi-square = 34.893, Degrees of Freedom=2, Significance = .000				
Goodman and Kruskal's Tau Test for Gender and Culture				
	Value		Std. Error	Sig.
National Culture Dependent	0.036		0.011	0.023
Gender Dependent	0.070		0.021	0.001

Table 3 illustrates a non-significant Pearson, p= 0.286, with Chi-Square = 2.502. In this case, Goodman and Kruskal Tau (1972) indicates that neither country nor gender predict each other significantly. Nevertheless, there were 211 USA males and females with 0-5 years of work experience, 81 with 6-10 years, and 161 with 11 or more years of work experience. The relative frequency of males and females across the three levels of work experience is the same.

Table 3
TEST OF RELATIVE FREQUENCY BETWEEN GENDER AND YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
0 to 5years	USA	120	91	211
	Expected Count	(127.2)	(83.8)	
6 to 10years	Count	54	27	81
	Expected Count	(48.8)	(32.2)	
11years or more	Count	99	62	161
	Expected Count	(97.0)	(64.0)	
Total	Count	273	180	453
Chi-square = 2.502, Degrees of Freedom=2, Significance = .286				
Goodman and Kruskal's Tau Test for Gender and Years of Work Experience				
	Value	Std. Error		Sig.
Experience Dependent	0.003	0.004		0.299
Gender Dependent	0.006	0.007		0.287

Table 4 illustrates a significant Pearson,p= 0.000, with Chi-Square = 38.074. Professionals differ in their relative frequency or percentage among USA, India and Malaysia residency, with Pearson Chi-Square p= .000. The relative frequency or percentage of managers and non-managers in this study are not equal in terms of their national culture. Managers are significantly clustered in the USA sample with a 98 observed count for USA managers compared to an 80 expected count for USA managers; where as in India observed count contained 93 non-managers compared to an expected count of 64.5 non-managers. A Chi-Square with Pearson correlations showed a significant difference between the relative frequency of males and females across three levels of work experience. Furthermore, the Goodman and Kruskal's (1972) tau test showed organizational position as independent variable accounting for only 4.2% of the error in national culture as a dependent variable; on the other hand, when national culture was an independent variable, it accounted for 8.9% of the error in management position as a dependent variable.

Table 4
TEST OF RELATIVE FREQUENCY BETWEEN MANAGERS AND NON-MANAGERS ON NATIONAL CULTURE

			Organizational Position		Total
			Managers	Non-Managers	
Country	USA	Count	98	75	173
		Expected Count	80.0	93.0	173.0
		% of Total	22.9%	17.5%	40.4%
	India	Count	27	93	120
		Expected Count	55.5	64.5	120.0
		% of Total	6.3%	21.7%	28.0%
	Malaysia	Count	73	62	135
		Expected Count	62.5	72.5	135.0
		% of Total	17.1%	14.5%	31.5%
Total		Count	198	230	428
		Expected Count	198.0	230.0	428.0
		% of Total	46.3%	53.7%	100.0%

Chi-square = 38.074, Degrees of Freedom=2, Significance = 0.000

Goodman and Kruskal's Tau Test for Gender and Organizational Position

	Value	Std. Error	Sig.
National Culture Dependent	0.042	0.013	0.000
Organizational Position Dependent	0.089	0.025	0.000

Scale Reliability

Fifteen variables (survey questions 1-15) were selected to represent the listening construct as described in current literature. Scale reliability was .597, standardized items was .592. The scale reliability could not be improved when deleting any of the items. When dealing with a lower than .70 alpha, a lower alpha is often influenced by the number of items, i.e., fewer items often result in lower alphas. An alpha of .70 is normally acceptable, but only when the assumption is that the construct to be measured is unidimensional (Cortina, 1993). It is not proper for the researcher to immediately assume that the listening construct is unidimensional. Most researchers have found that listening is at a minimum a two-dimensional construct: good and bad listening behaviors.Furthermore, when the number of dimensions of a single construct is unknown, a principal component factor analysis is normally required to determine the true number of dimensions of a construct in question (Cortina, 1993). In fact, Cortina (1993) warns against misinterpreting high alphas:

The problem with interpretation arises when large alpha is taken to mean that the test is unidimensional. One solution to such problems with the statistic is to use one of the many factor-analytic techniques currently available to make sure that there are no large departures from unidimensionality. This provides information similar to that provided by the estimate of precision. If this analysis suggests the existence of only one factor, then alpha can be used to conclude that the set of items is unidimensional. (p. 103)

The number of dimensions repeatedly reported in the literature for the listening construct is two types of listeners: good listeners and bad listeners (Imhof, 2004; Imhof&Janusik, 2006; Worthington &Bodie, 2008). Therefore, a factor analysis was done.

Sampling Adequacy and Factor Analysis

Table 5 illustrates the gauge for sampling adequacy using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy Test, which was .709 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 735.543, with degrees of freedom at 105, with p= .000., along with means and standard deviations. The communalities average is .524; nonetheless, our sample size of 474 useable surveys was well above the sample size threshold of 300. Based on these results, we deemed the sample size appropriate for factor analysis. Responses to the 15 items measuring listening behaviors were subjected to an un-rotated Principal Component Factor Analysis, with a Scree Plot (in IBM's SPSS 22.0). The Scree Plot suggested five factors. An unrotated initial solution also suggested five factors with an eigenvalue of one criterion. Five factors explained 52.444 percent of variance. Some items correlated a bit high on more than one factor in the initial solution and thus the result was a two-factor solution rather than a five-factor solution.

Table 5
MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, COMMUNALITIES, KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.709
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		735.543
	Df		105
	Sig.		.000
Communalities and Survey Items	Mean	Std. Dv.	Extraction
BL1: I frequently attempt to listen to several conversations at the same time.	2.966	1.200	.463
GL2: I like people to give me only the facts and then let me make my own interpretations.	2.439	1.095	.607
BL3: I sometime pretend to pay attention to people.	2.606	1.140	.447
GL4: I consider myself a good judge of non-verbal communications.	2.276	0.989	.650
BL5: I usually know what another person is going to say before he or she says it.	2.892	0.884	.698
BL6: I usually end conversations that do not interest me by diverting my attention from the speaker.	3.059	1.142	.465
GL7: I frequently nod, frown, or whatever to let the speaker know how I feel about what he or she is saying.	2.122	1.045	.434
GL8: I usually respond immediately when someone has finished talking.	2.475	0.997	.542
BL9: I evaluate what is being said while it is being said.	2.055	0.909	.539
BL10: I usually formulate a response while the other person is still talking.	2.544	1.042	.572
BL11: The speaker's delivery style frequently keeps me from listening to content.	2.468	1.061	.340
GL12: I usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at the meaning.	2.084	0.943	.585
GL13: I make a concerted effort to understand other people's point of view.	1.854	0.831	.548
BL14: I frequently hear what I expect to hear rather than what is said.	3.304	1.020	.370
GL15: Most people feel that I have understood their point of view when we disagree.	2.532	0.922	.607
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Average Communalities .524.			
Note: Total useable survey responses were = 474			

The rotated factor matrix with component loadings and named factors are shown in Table 6.A two-factor solution was more parsimonious than a five-factor solution with a cut-off of .40. A variable was said to load on a factor if it had a component loading of .40 or higher on that factor and less than .40 on any other factors (Devellis, 1991; Hatcher, 1994; Kachigan, 1991; Russell, 2002). Two factors were deemed appropriate for further analysis. Neither factor had a factor score greater than ±2 in the initial Factor Score Covariance Matrix, thus allowing us to surmise the factors to be orthogonal, or uncorrelated (Gorsuch,1983). The derived factors were indicative of two dimensions of listening, with a Rotation Sums of Squared Loading 1.883 for factor 1; and 1.217 for factor 2. Shown in Table 6 is the result of aPrincipal Axis Factoring with Varimax Rotation used to extract the final two factors, which converged in only 3 iterations, with item descriptions in the Table's footnotes. Only six items (BL3, BL1, BL10, BL6, GL13 and GL4) survived the rotation, and the other nine items were not considered when naming the factors.

Table 6
FACTOR ANALYSIS PATTERN MATRIX RESULTS WITH ITEMS THAT SURVIVED THE ROTATION

Rotated Factor Matrix[a]	Factors	
	Distracted Listener	Attentive Listener
BL3: I sometime pretend to pay attention to people.	.504	
BL1: I frequently attempt to listen to several conversations at the same time.	.459	
BL10: I usually formulate a response while the other person is still talking.	.458	
BL6: I usually end conversations that do not interest me by diverting my attention from the speaker.	.422	
BL11: The speaker's delivery style frequently keeps me from listening to content.		
GL8: I usually respond immediately when someone has finished talking.		
BL5: I usually know what another person is going to say before he or she says it.		
GL7: I frequently nod, frown, or whatever to let the speaker know how I feel about what he or she is saying.		
GL2: I like people to give me only the facts and then let me make my own interpretations.		
GL13: I make a concerted effort to understand other people's point of view.		.674
GL4: I consider myself a good judge of non-verbal communications.		.419
GL12: I usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at the meaning.		
BL9: I evaluate what is being said while it is being said.		
BL14: I frequently hear what I expect to hear rather than what is said.		
GL15: Most people feel that I have understood their point of view when we disagree.		
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring; Rotation Method: Varimaxwith Kaiser Normalization.[a]		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

RESULTS

Table 7 illustrates the means and standard deviations for males and females on distracted listening across three countries. Our two factors derived from the Principal Axis Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation were used as dependent variables in our factorial ANOVA tests. IMB's SPSS 22.0 gives the option of saving factors as regression scores for each of the 394 survey respondents retained in the factor analysis.

We reject H_1 because there is a main effect of organizational position held on perceptions of distracted listening behavior. A main effect of position occurred on perceptions of distracted listening behavior, with F (1, 382) = 18.159, p = .000. Position, with a small size effect (n^2= .045) accounts for 4.5% of the variance in the dependent variable: distracted listener.

We reject H_2 because there is a main-effect of gender on perceptions of distracted listening behavior. A main-effect occurred with gender on perceptions of distracted listening behavior, with F (1, 382) = 5.234, p = .023. Gender, with a small size effect (n^2= .014) accounts for 1.4% of the variance in the dependent variable: distracted listener.

We reject H_5 because there is a two-way interaction effect between national culture and organizational position on perceptions of distracted listening behavior. As a two-way interaction effect between national culture and position on perceptions of distracted listening behavior occurred, with F (2, 382) = 12.943, p= .000. Country * Position, with a medium effect size (n^2= .063) accounts for 6.3% of the variance in the dependent variable: distracted listener.

Table 7
MEANS AND STD. DEVIATIONS FOR DISTRACTED LISTENER WITH THREE INDEPENDENTS (N = 394)

Dependent Variable: Distracted Listener

Gender	National Culture	Org. Position	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	USA	Manager	.144	.913	54
		Non-Manager	.187	.856	28
		Total	.159	.889	82
	India	Manager	-.122	.727	20
		Non-Manager	.166	.743	61
		Total	.095	.745	81
	Malaysia	Manager	-.418	.740	39
		Non-Manager	.641	.670	26
		Total	.005	.880	65
	Total	Manager	-.097	.857	113
		Non-Manager	.279	.776	115
		Total	.092	.837	228
Female	USA	Manager	-.008	.878	41
		Non-Manager	-.239	.810	43
		Total	-.126	.847	84
	India	Manager	-.414	.734	5
		Non-Manager	.383	.655	10
		Total	.117	.762	15
	Malaysia	Manager	-.581	.813	31
		Non-Manager	.063	.686	36
		Total	-.235	.809	67
	Total	Manager	-.265	.880	77
		Non-Manager	-.047	.767	89
		Total	-.148	.826	166
Total	USA	Manager	.079	.897	95
		Non-Manager	-.071	.849	71
		Total	.015	.877	166
	India	Manager	-.180	.723	25
		Non-Manager	.197	.731	71
		Total	.098	.744	96
	Malaysia	Manager	-.491	.772	70
		Non-Manager	.305	.732	62
		Total	-.117	.850	132
	Total	Manager	-.165	.868	190
		Non-Manager	.136	.787	204
		Total	-.009	.839	394

For the distracted listener factor, the male mean is .100, while the female mean is -.133, with a -.233 negative mean difference. Therefore, males are significantly more prone to engage in distracted listening than females. The type of position held was highly significant (p= .000) and managers had mean of -.233, while non-managers had a mean of .200, with a -.433 negative mean difference. Therefore, managers were less likely to engage in distracted listening than non-managers. The only two-way interaction that was highly significant was between national culture and position, with p= .000. USA managers (mean= .068) are more prone to be distracted listeners than non-managers (mean= -.026); Indian managers are less likely to be distracted listeners (mean= -.268) than non-managers (mean= .274); and Malaysian managers are less likely to be distracted listeners (mean= -.500) than non-managers (mean= .352).

Table 8 illustrates the Tests of Between-Subject Effects for the three-factor model on distracted listening. Also in Table 8 are the means tests for gender, organizational position and country main effects and interaction effects, both two-way and three-way. The R Squared = .133 (Adjusted R Squared = .109), indicates the independent variables accounted for 10.9% of the variance in the three-way model and interact with the dependent variable (distracted listening) in a meaningful way, either as a main effect or in a two-way interaction.

Table 8
ANOVA FOR TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECT EFFECTS DISTRACTED LISTENER WITH THREE-WAY INTERACTION TEST (N = 394)

Dependent Variable: Distracted Listener Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	36.961[a]	11	3.360	5.349	.000	.133[a]
Intercept	.067	1	.067	.107	.744	.000
Gender	3.288	1	3.288	5.234	*.023	.014
Country	.664	2	.332	.529	.590	.003
Org. Pos.	11.407	1	11.407	18.159	***.000	.045
Gender * Country	.900	2	.450	.717	.489	.004
Gender * Org. Pos.	.055	1	.055	.087	.768	.000
Country * Org. Pos.	16.261	2	8.131	12.943	***.000	.063
Gender * Country * Org. Pos.	1.783	2	.891	1.419	.243	.007
Error	239.973	382	.628			
Total	276.966	394				
Corrected Total	276.935	393				

a. R Squared = .133 (Adjusted R Squared = .109). NOTE: ***p< .001; **p< .01; *p< .05.

Although there was no three-way interaction effect (p= .243), Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the plot, range is from -1.0 to +1.0, based on the regression scores generated and saved while running the Principle Axis Factor Analysis, of the estimated marginal means of distracted listener with gender on the separate lines, national culture on the horizontal line, and manager versus non-managers on the separate plots. The Figure 1 plot clearly indicates male managers are more prone to distraction than female managers in all three countries. The Figure 2 plot clearly indicates male non-managers are more prone to distraction than female non-managers in USA and Malaysia are; however, the opposite is true for India female non-managers who appear to be more distracted than their male counterparts are.

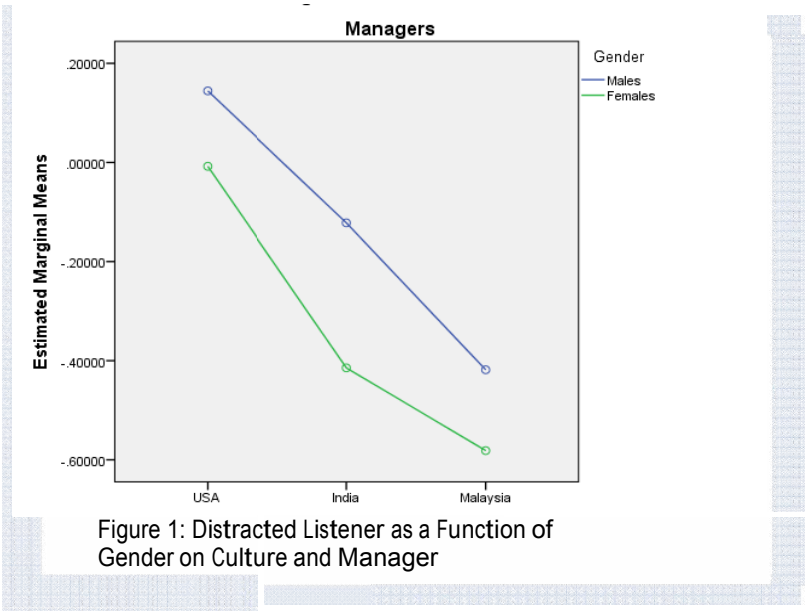

Figure 1: Distracted Listener as a Function of Gender on Culture and Manager

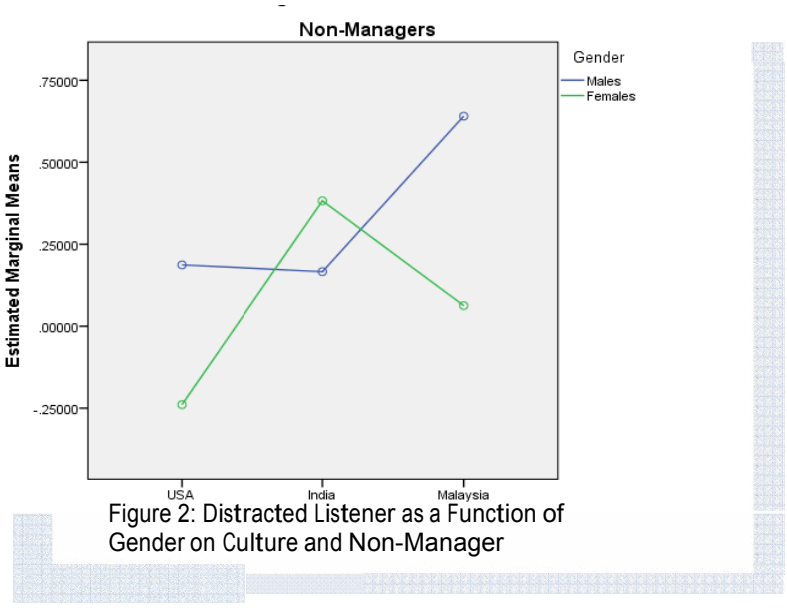

Figure 2: Distracted Listener as a Function of Gender on Culture and Non-Manager

Table 9 illustrates the means and standard deviations for males and females on attentive listening across three countries.We reject H_4 because there is a main effect of national culture on perceptions of attentive listening behavior, with F (2, 382) = 23.879, p= .000. National culture, with a large effect size (n^2= .111) accounts for 11.1% of the variance in the dependent variable: attentive listener.

We reject H_5 because there is a no two-way interaction effect between national culture and organizational position on perceptions of attentive listening behavior. There is a two-way

interaction effect between national culture and position on perceptions of attentive listening behavior, with F (2, 382) = 5.526, p= .004. Country * position, with a small effect size (n^2= .028) accounts for 2.8% of the variance in the dependent variable: attentive listener.

We reject H_6 because there is a two-way interaction effect between national culture and gender on perceptions of attentive listening behavior. There is a two-way interaction effect between gender and national culture on perceptions of attentive listening behavior, with F (2, 382) = 3.386, p = .035. Gender * National culture, with a small effect size (n^2= .017) accounts for 1.7% of the variance in the dependent variable: attentive listener.

For the attentive listener factor, the national culture variable is significant, with p= .000. Means for USA, India, and Malaysia are -.313, .234, and .28 respectively. Only the USA differed from India and Malaysia, while India and Malaysia did not differ. The negative mean difference between the USA and India was -547, and between USA and Malaysia was -598. Therefore, respondents from the USA are indicating they are less likely to be attentive listeners than respondents from India or Malaysia are.

Depending on the national culture, males differ significantly from females in a two-way interaction effect. The two-way interaction was significant between national culture and gender, with p= .035. USA males (mean= -.335) are less prone to be attentive listeners than Indian males (mean= .073) and Malaysian males (mean= .439); Similarly, USA females are less likely to be attentive listeners (mean= -.292) than Indian females (mean= .394) and Malaysian females (mean= -.130).

Table 9
MEANS AND STD. DEVIATIONS FOR ATTENTIVE LISTENER WITH THREE INDEPENDENTS (N = 394)

Dependent Variable: Attentive Listener

Gender	National Culture	Pos. Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	USA	Manager	-.353	.760	54
		Non-Manager	-.317	.864	28
		Total	-.341	.792	82
	India	Manager	.094	.638	20
		Non-Manager	.051	.661	61
		Total	.062	.651	81
	Malaysia	Manager	.152	.694	39
		Non-Manager	.727	.857	26
		Total	.382	.808	65
	Total	Manager	-.100	.752	113
		Non-Manager	.114	.837	115
		Total	.008	.801	228
Female	USA	Manager	-.424	.707	41
		Non-Manager	-.160	.796	43
		Total	-.289	.761	84
	India	Manager	.580	.967	5
		Non-Manager	.209	.624	10
		Total	.332	.741	15
	Malaysia	Manager	-.181	.745	31
		Non-Manager	.442	.990	36
		Total	.154	.933	67
	Total	Manager	-.261	.771	77
		Non-Manager	.125	.902	89
		Total	-.054	.863	166
Total	USA	Manager	-.384	.734	95
		Non-Manager	-.222	.821	71
		Total	-.314	.774	166
	India	Manager	.191	.719	25
		Non-Manager	.073	.654	71
		Total	.104	.669	96

	Malaysia	Manager	.004	.731	70
		Non-Manager	.562	.940	62
		Total	.266	.878	132
	Total	Manager	-.165	.762	190
		Non-Manager	.119	.864	204
		Total	-.018	.827	394

Table 10 illustrates the tests of between-subject effects for the three-factor model on attentive listening. Also in Table 10 are the means tests for gender, organizational position and country main effects and interaction effects, both two-way and three-way. The other two-way interaction that was significant was between national culture and position. USA managers (mean= -.389) are less prone to be attentive listeners than non-managers (mean= -.238); Indian managers are more likely to be attentive listeners (mean= .337) than non-managers (mean= .130); and Malaysian managers are less likely to be attentive listeners (mean= -.015) than non-managers (mean= .585). The R Squared = .160 (Adjusted R Squared = .136) indicated the independent variables accounted for 13.6% of the variance in the three-way model and interacted with the dependent variable (attentive listening) in a meaningful way, either as a main effect or in two-way interactions.

Table 10
ANOVA FOR TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECT EFFECTS ATTENTIVE LISTENER WITH THREE-WAY INTERACTION TEST (N = 394)

Dependent Variable: Attentive Listener--Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	43.040[a]	11	3.913	6.612	.000	.160[a]
Intercept	1.134	1	1.134	1.917	.167	.005
Gender	.021	1	.021	.036	.849	.000
Country	28.262	2	14.131	23.879	***.000	.111
Org. Pos.	1.984	1	1.984	3.353	.068	.009
Gender * Country	4.007	2	2.003	3.386	*.035	.017
Gender * Org. Pos.	.005	1	.005	.008	.929	.000
Country * Org. Pos.	6.540	2	3.270	5.526	**.004	.028
Gender * Country * Pos. Type	.681	2	.340	.575	.563	.003
Error	226.056	382	.592			
Total	269.223	394				
Corrected Total	269.096	393				

a. R Squared = .160 (Adjusted R Squared = .136) NOTE: ***p< .001; **p< .01; *p< .05

Although there was no three-way interaction effect (p= .563), Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the plot,range is from -1.0 to +1.0, based on the regression scores generated and saved while running the Principle Axis Factor Analysis, of the estimated marginal means of distracted listener with gender on the separate lines, national culture on the horizontal line, and manager vs. non-managers on the separate plots. The Figure 3 plot clearly indicates male managers in the USA and Malaysia perceive they are more prone to be attentive listeners than female managers, except in India, where female managers perceive they are more attentive. The Figure 4 plot clearly indicates USA and India female non-managers are more prone to attentive than male non-managers in USA and India, however, the opposite is true for Malaysia female non-managers who appear to be less attentive than their male counterparts.Women are found to be more attentive and less distracted when listening to people.

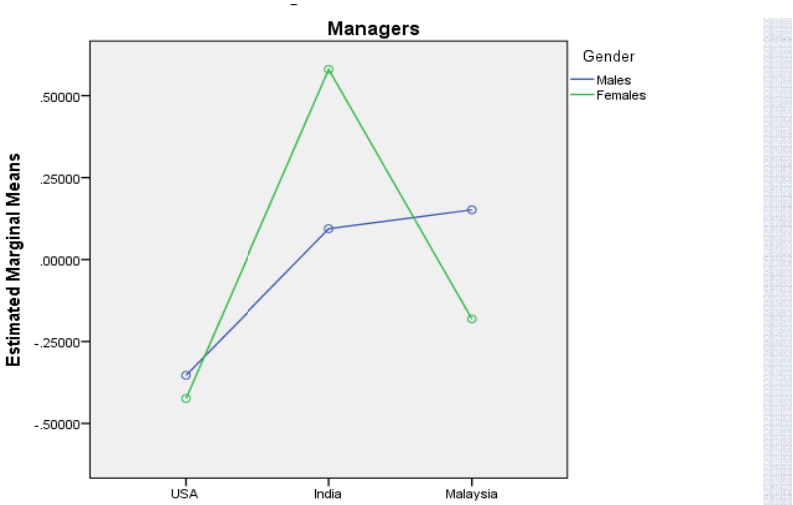

Figure 3: Attentive as a Function of Gender on Culture and Managers

Figure 4: Attentive Listener as a Function of Gender on Cullture and Non-Managers

Reduced Models for Distracted and Attentive Listeners

Figures 1 and 2 Plots indicate that male managers perceive they are distracted and attentive listeners, significantly moreso than their female counterparts in each country. This seems to be a contradiction. Table 9 earlier showed there were only five female managers from Malaysia, which might inflate the significant tests in the three factors ANOVA model. Moreover,

the earlier Chi-Square test showed the relative frequency of men and women to differ across national cultures;when these types of issues appear in the data,it is always a good idea to run a reduced model to ascertain if these differences across cultures are maintained when gender is removed as a variable from both factorial ANOVA models. The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for both models (distracted and attentive listener models) were non-significant (p=.189 for distracted listener and p= .039 for attentive listener). Sample sizes were deemed equal in the two reduced models.

Table 11 that follows provides a summary of the tests of between-subject effects for the two-factor model on distracted listening. There is a main effect of position on perceptions of distracted listening behavior, with F (2, 392) = 10.997, p= .001. Culture, with a somewhat small effect size (n^2= .027) accounts for 2.7% of the variance in the dependent variable: distracted listener. There is a significant interaction effect on perceptions of listening, with F (2, 392) = 11.485, p= .000. The medium effect size (n^2= .055) for organizational position and culture together accounts for 5.5% of the variance in the dependent variable: distracted listener. The reduced model also means that position and culture account for an Adjusted R Squared = 0.074, or 7.4 % of the variance in distracted listening.

Table 11
ANOVA FOR TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECT EFFECTS DISTRACTED LISTENER WITH TWO-WAY INTERACTION TEST (N = 398)

Dependent Variable: Distracted Listener

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	24.294[a]	5	4.859	7.323	.000	.085
Intercept	.633	1	.633	.954	.329	.002
Org. Pos.	7.297	1	7.297	10.997	**.001	.027
Culture	1.808	2	.904	1.363	.257	.007
Org. Pos. * Culture	15.240	2	7.620	11.485	***.000	.055
Error	260.084	392	.663			
Total	284.520	398				
Corrected Total	284.378	397				

a. R Squared = .085 (Adjusted R Squared = .074) NOTE: ***p< .001; **p< .01

Table 12 illustrates the tests of between-subject effects for the two-factor model on attentive listening. The reduced two-way model also means that organizational position and culture account for an Adjusted R Squared = 0.135, or 13.5% of the variance in attentive listening. Recall that gender, organizational position and national culture accounted for 13.6% of the variance in attentive listening from the earlier three-way model. This means that gender for attentive listen contributes nearly nothing to explaining the variance in attentive listening. There is a main effect of organizational position on perceptions of attentive listening behavior, with F (2, 392) = 5.519, p= .019, with a small effect size (n2= .014) that accounts for 1.4% of the variance in attentive listener. There is a main effect of national culture on perceptions of attentive listening behavior, with F (2, 392) = 23.496, p= .000, with a large effect size (n2= .107) that accounts for 10.7% of the variance in attentive listener. There is a significant interaction effect between organizational position and culture, with the small effect size (n2= .027) accounting for only 2.7% of the variance in distracted listener.

Table 12
ANOVA FOR TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECT EFFECTS ATTENTIVE LISTENER WITH TWO-WAY INTERACTION TEST (N = 398)

Dependent Variable: Attentive Listener

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	39.168[a]	5	7.834	13.405	.000	.146
Intercept	.567	1	.567	.970	.325	.002
Org. Pos.	3.225	1	3.225	5.519	*.019	.014
Culture	27.460	2	13.730	23.496	***.000	.107
Org. Pos. *	6.311	2	3.156	5.400	**.005	.027
Error	229.07	39	.584			
Total	268.33	39				
Corrected Total	268.23	39				

a. R Squared = .146 (Adjusted R Squared = .135) NOTE: ***p< .001; **p< .01; *p< .05

The Figure 5 plot clearly indicates managers in the USA are more prone to perceive they are distracted listeners than non-managers in the USA. The significant two-way interaction effect (p= .000), shown in Figure 5 illustrate the plot, range is from -1.0 to +1.0, based on the regression scores generated and saved while running the Principle Axis Factor Analysis, of the estimated marginal means of distracted listener with organizational position on the separate lines and national culture on the horizontal line. It is clear to see that managers and non-managers are furthest apart on Malaysia. On the other hand, non-managers in India perceive they are more prone to be distracted listeners than managers in India. And, non-managers in Malaysia perceive they are more prone to be distracted listeners than managers in Malaysia.

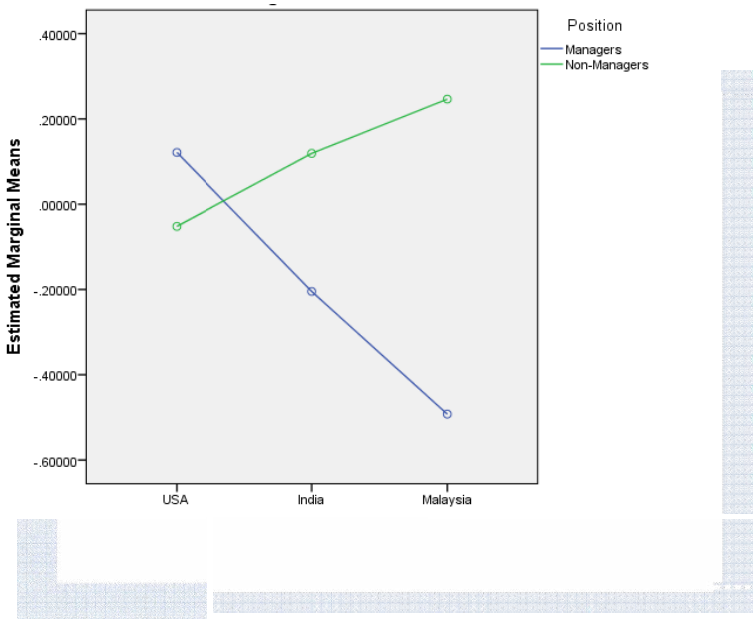

Figure 5: Distracted Listener as a Function of Position on National Culture

The Figure 6 plot clearly indicates managers in India are more prone to perceive they are attentive listeners than non-managers in India.The significant two-way interaction effect (p= .005), shown in Figure 6 illustrates the plot, range is from -1.0 to +1.0, based on the regression scores generated and saved while running the Principle Axis Factor Analysis, of the estimated marginal means of attentive listener with organizational position on the separate lines and national culture on the horizontal line. It is clear to see that managers and non-managers are furthest apart in Malaysia. On the other hand, non-managers in the USA perceive they are more prone to be attentive listeners than managers in the USA. And, non-managers in the Malaysia perceive they are more prone to be attentive listeners than managers in Malaysia.

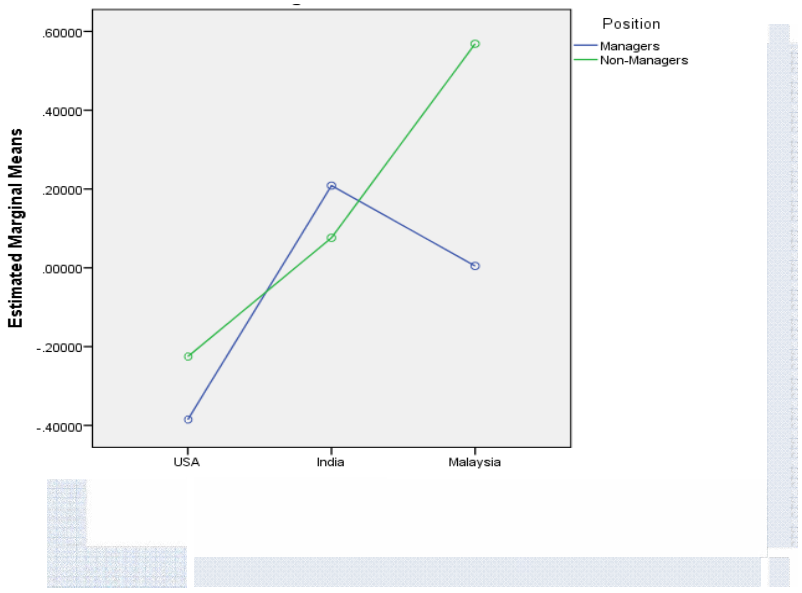

Figure 6: Attentive Listener as a Function of Position on National Culture

DISCUSSION

The most important variables to explain attentive listening are organizational position and national culture. This is contrary to the findings of Watson and Barker (1984)who found that gender had a meaningful influence on listening skills.Our study did reveal that overall menare significantly more prone to engage in distracted listening and not be as attentive as females. However, USA females and males were not as attentive as their Indian and Malaysian counterparts, which may show a cultural difference rather than a gender difference. Nevertheless, when looking at gender overall, regardless of country, men are not as attentive as women are. Our finding seems to support Welch and Mickelson (2013) who found that women pay more attention and are more attentive.

Regarding organizational position, managers are less likely to be distracted than non-managers are regardless of country of origin. This also seems to support the findings of Welch and Mickelson (2013) who found an increased listening competency was associated with more managerial responsibility as well as Sypher, Bostrom, and Seibert (1989) who concluded better listeners in the organizations held higher-level jobs. Some differences did occur across the three countries regarding organizational position. Managers were less distracted and more attentive in India than non-managers were, while USA and Malaysian managers were more distracted than non-managers were. This was an interesting finding, given that from a national culture standpoint, Malaysia and India are both shown to be higher context cultures. Listening in a high-context culture typically requires an active, attentive listener who "does not passively absorb the words which are spoken, but [who] actively tries to grasp the facts and feelings in what he hears, to help the speaker work out his own problems" (Roger &Farson, 1986, p. 149).The results for Malaysia are somewhat a revelation and contrary to what Chaney and Martin's (2011) observed regarding people from high context culture. These researchers stated that high-context cultures are more respectful towards their elders and people in positions of authority.

Based upon Brownell's (2006) guideline to evaluate respondents' perceptions about their listening competence, analysis of USA, Malaysian and Indian working professionals did show that national culture influenced the perceptions of the working professionals regarding their listening competence and revealed that the working professionals have different listening behaviors, which potentially reflect their cultural socialization. USA working professionals were more distracted and less attentive than the working professionals from India and Malaysian were.

In high context cultures, such as India and Malaysia "the closeness of human relationships, a structured social hierarchy, and strong behavioral norms influence communication style" (Kim, Pan,& Park, 1998, p. 512). The internal meaning of a message is usually embedded deep in the information, therefore, not everything is explicitly stated in writing or when spoken. In this cultural setting, a listener is expected to be able to read 'between the lines', to understand the unsaid, thanks to his or her background knowledge. People tend to speak one after another in a linear way, so a listener would not interrupt the speaker or become distracted. Communication is, according to Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988), indirect, ambiguous, harmonious, reserved and understated. Hall (1976) stated that members of high-context cultures consider the listener responsible for the effective outcomes of communication due to their sensitivity to nonverbal cues in the communication environment, whereas members of low-context cultures hold the communicator accountable for effective outcomes due to their

dependence on verbal cues. Listening in a high-context culture requires an active, attentive listener who "does not passively absorb the words which are spoken, but [who] actively tries to grasp the facts and feelings in what he hears, to help the speaker work out his own problems" (Roger&Farson, 1986, p. 149).

While in a low context culture such as the USA, meanings are explicitly stated through language. When something is unclear, people will want further explanations to understand. A low context culture is characterized by direct and linear communication and by the constant and sometimes never-ending use of words and requires much listening, which may cause individuals to become distracted. Communication is direct, precise, dramatic, open, and based on feelings or true intentions (Gudykunst& Ting-Toomey, 1988).

In light of high-context and low-context cultural orientations, USA working professionals are members of alow-context culture and place a higher value on verbal and written communication than on nonverbaland contextual communication. Indians and Malaysians are membersof a high-context culture and are more likely to be sensitive to the contextual elements andimplicit meanings of communication and therefore be less distracted. Our study seems to further substantiate the findings of other studies (Mujtaba&Pohlman, 2010; Adler, 1986; Kumbruck&Derboven, 2005) that people within the same operating environment share important characteristics of culture. The findings of the present study also supports the observations made by Kiewitz, Weaver, Brosius, andWeimann (1997) that the USA working professionals display less patience and get distracted when listening to people. These researchers found that the USA participants listened to be entertained, persuaded, and only listened for approximately 30 minutes.

The more attentive listening behaviors of the Indian and Malaysian working professionals may also beinfluenced by the fact that collectivism, humane orientation, and power distance are higher for these two countries when compared to the USA (Gupta, 2010). The family is patriarchal and so are their management or leadership styles. Within the family setting, elders are revered, listened to, and taken care of by their children (Chaney & Martin, 2011). The USA is an individualistic culture that listens to all individuals and does not necessarily place a premium on listening to elders. India and Malaysia have a higher power distance dimension. Thus in India and Malaysia, a listener who is considered less powerful will respect the speaker who is more powerful by listening attentively.

While the USA scored lower on Power Distance, hierarchy is established for convenience and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise, therefore they listen to individuals at all levels. Within USA organizations, both managers and employees expect to be listened to and consulted (House, Brodbeck,&Chhokav, 2007).

Working professionals may find themselves listening to a person from another culture who does not speak with the same semiotic code. Thus, individuals may need to learn to adapt their listening styles to accommodate different national cultures (Kumbruck&Derboven, 2005).

We must also be mindful that although the relevance of gender on listening skills has been determined important in a handful of studies, in our reduced models,where gender was excluded as a variable,organizational position had a much greater degree of impact on the dependent variables of attentive listening and distracted listening. The R Square for both models indicates the robustness of the two-factor model over a three-factor model. It also appears that

non-managers perceive they are more prone to be significantly higher on both distracted and attentive listening, which is an indication that the two dimensions of listening are in fact mutually independent of one another. The non-manager respondents to the survey in this study perceive they can be both prone to distractions while on the other hand be attentive listenersas well.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

For effective cross-cultural communication, all working professionals need to be attentive listeners. The ability to understand differences in semiotic codes and communicate with people from other cultures is becoming critical. Understanding how and if national culture influences listening is important to an increasingly intercultural world of work. Becoming aware of the listening behaviors of managers and non-managers in different countries could further help in identifying effective listening behaviors for doing global business. Knowing how managers and non-managers perceive their listening behaviors could provide important insight into their use of listening skills.

Since limited research is available that explores listening behaviors in thethree countries of the USA, India, and Malaysia, this study provides important insights regarding the effects of organizational position, gender, and national culture on distracted and attentive listening skills of working professionals.An implication of the results should be to look for the effect of national culture when conducting comparative studies of listening across cultures. From a practical standpoint, managers and non-managers need to be aware of the complexity and multidimensionality of listening and national cultures. When interacting with business colleagues who have different national culture backgrounds, individuals should be mindful that different cultures listen differently.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it is based on a self-perception measurement and only measured the respondents' perceptions of their listening competence. To understandthe influence of national culture on listening and to what extent the respondents are actually effective listeners, additional measures should be included to cross validate these self-reports by taking in the perspectives of others through a 360 assessment.

In addition, the study engaged in a selective population from three countries. The study could further be broadened to include more countries. Given the small sample size, researchers should be careful to not make generalizations based upon the results of this study.

Finally, the sample may be indicative but cannot be said that it is the representative of each country as a whole. Therefore, more regions from these specific countries could be tested to authenticate the results of the present study.

Concluding Thought

This study is the first to explore listening as it relates to organizational position, gender, and national culture in the three countries of the USA, India and Malaysia. It contributes to the cross-cultural listening research regarding the contrast in Eastern and Western cultures. Listening is an area of research that deserves more exploration to advance effective cross-cultural communication and to facilitate an understanding of the impact of national culture.

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IDENTIFYING SYNERGY IN SMALL GROUP COMPETITIONS: AN APPLIED SETTING APPROACH

Cheryl Clark, Georgia Gwinnett College

Beach Clark, Mercer University

ABSTRACT

When forming small groups, ideally the performance of the group would exceed that of any individual in the group. This increased performance is often described as synergy. Yet identifying and quantifying the presence of synergy in small groups, specifically dyads, has been difficult. Even more challenging has been the ability to demonstrate synergistic relationships in "real world" or applied settings. The purpose of this study was to determine if synergy could be measured in a competitive sport. In other words, can we compare the performance of small groups (dyads) to that of individual performance to determine the existence of synergy? The individual performance metrics of skill and tour money earnings were assigned to each participating golfer and ranked before comparing to the dyad performance. Then, using the dyad performance data from 2004 through 2013 from the Ryder Cup and President's Cup golf tournaments the performance outcomes of dyads were compared to the individual metrics and analyzed. Using Larson's definition of synergy, the results showed that when comparing individual performance to dyad performance, synergy was evident in more than 48% of the dyads and in particular, 27% of the dyads demonstrated strong synergy.

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INTRODUCTION

Synergy is an elusive term that is often associated with groups of individuals and performance. Ideally, if the 'right' group of individuals is assembled they will outperform those same individuals working alone. While leaders in various organizations form groups with the expectation that the combination of skill and interaction will improve performance it can be difficult or impossible to measure. This study sought to determine if synergy was measurable in the performance of small groups specifically dyads. The study analyzed data of various dyads who participated in an annual sporting competition over a ten year period.

Research Question:

Is synergistic performance measurable in dyads competing in a sporting event?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While research on group performance (Hackman & Morris, 1975, Kerr & Tindale, 2004, Kerr, 2010, Steiner, 1972, Volmer, et.al. 2011) and synergy (Hertel, 2011, Larson, 2010) has been conducted in various contextual settings, few studies have linked the two outside laboratory and classroom settings. In fact, even if linked, previous research has produced mixed results in group performance gain (Kerr and Tindale, 2004). This paper analyzes the competitive golf environment to better understand, if, by measuring both skill and synergy, dyad synergy is measurable in this applied setting.

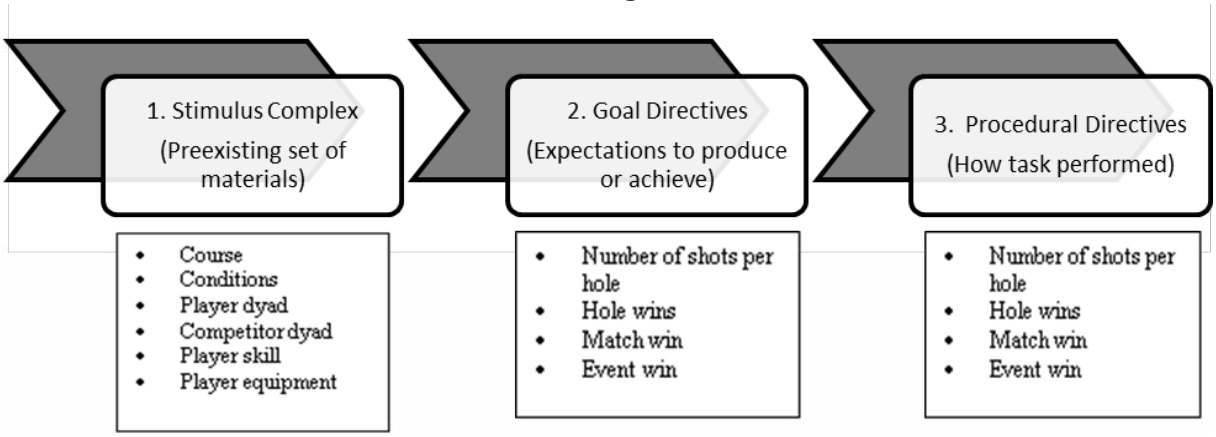
Small Groups/Dyads

Since small groups are comprised of individuals both engaging and influencing each other in a manner that improves performance, a competitive sporting venue provides an opportunity to explore this improvement. Most sports are played with groups or teams of athletes (baseball, basketball, football, hockey) with the goal of the captain to create the group of players who will perform as a group better than they would as individuals. Yet certain literature has focused on the weaknesses of measuring group performance but as suggested by Wang and Thompson (2006), this study focuses on the strengths and benefits of small groups.

Group Task

When analyzing group performance a clear definition of group task must remain constant. Using the construct identified by Larson (2010) and Hackman, (1969) to validate the presence of group task in this setting, Figure 1, demonstrates that each of the elements are clearly developed and defined. The event venue, equipment and player skill all create a 'stimulus complex', while the score, the dyad wins and tournament wins provide 'goal direction', finally the rules of the game, etiquette and scoring process all ensure a 'procedural directive'.

Figure 1



Group Effectiveness

Group effectiveness is a result of inputs, processes and outputs and goes beyond task performance to include the attitudes and behavioral outcomes of the team members (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Performance effectiveness is directly related to the outcome and determined by the quality or score for a particular event and evaluated by an externally defined standard (Larson, 2010). The standard governing these tasks are the rules and scoring methodology of the United States Golf Association and the Royal & Ancient Golf Club (Cullity, 2011).

Synergy

Whether in business or the business of sports, synergy is described as the increase in performance by the collective group beyond what could be achieved by individuals (Larson, 2010, Hertel, 2011). Larson's definition of synergy is readily linked to this sports competition in that it:

Table 1
LINKING SYNERGY TO GOLF

Criteria for Synergy	Sports Competition
Demonstrates group performance gain and not experiential state	The number of shots per hole is recorded for each golfer or dyad.
Ensures performance gain exceeds baseline measure	Individual performance baseline measures are captured in each regular season tour event
Creates observable group interaction	Dyads confer on course conditions, weather and the various aspects of the putting green.
Adjustments in behavior follow interactions with others	Examples of player adjustments include but are not limited to club selection, fullness of swing and direction of shot.

Synergy is measured by the performance increase of the dyad when compared to a performance baseline measure for the individual contributor. The level (weak or strong) can be calculated by comparing the individual performance to that of the dyad. Weak synergy occurs when the group performance exceeds that of the typical group member working alone; strong synergy occurs when the group performance exceeds the performance of the best group member (Larson, 2010). Synergy is not equally evident in groups of all sizes. In fact, dyads often do not demonstrate synergy to the degree found in larger groups (Laughlin et al. 2006).

The Study

The PGA TOUR is the organizing body of the world's largest group of professional golfers and oversees the United States' participation in the Ryder Cup and President's Cup golf

tournaments. The collection and analysis of player data and outcome measures was conducted over a 10 year period from 2004 to 2013. These tournaments provided a setting that was consistent with evaluating group performance. First, the tournament structure was a defined group task and that provided the opportunity to measure synergy as it related to performance outcomes. Second, measures of skill were available for each player by determining an individual performance metric. Third, a performance metric was calculated for each dyad based on the performance ranking for each player in the dyad. Fourth, using the individual player skill metric for each dyad, a test for synergy in each annual competition over ten year period was conducted. Finally, the results of this analysis were used to answer the skill or synergy research question: Is synergistic performance measurable in dyads competing in a sporting event?

With the availability of the PGA TOUR's performance data (ShotLink™), academic research is gaining momentum to better understand specific player performance and the contributing factors that may be predictors of tournament wins. These include strokes gained (Broadie, 2012), peer effects (Guryan, Kroft & Notowidigdo, 2009), luck (Conolly & Rendleman, 2008), determinants of performance (Peters, 2008) and statistics for performance on greens, mix of tournaments and consistency (Sen, 2012).

Players have numerous opportunities to demonstrate their individual performance. During the span of this research the PGA Tour averaged 47 individual tour events per year (http://espn.go.com/golf/schedule/). These events are most often four 18-hole rounds of golf played in the USA. Participation in a PGA Tour event is open to the top money winners and a few sponsors' exemptions. After the first two rounds of golf are played, a "cut line" is used to include the top 70 players and ties (http://sports.espn.go.com/golf/news/story?id=3265898). Those making the "cut" then go on to compete the final two days with the guarantee to win prize money and the opportunity to ultimately win the tournament by having the lowest score over the four rounds.

The money won in these events or 'tour earnings', is used to determine rankings. With few exceptions these rankings are used to create the population of players invited to play in future tournaments. Exceptions include previous winners of a particular tournament who are invited and exempted from the "money rankings" criteria.

While most of the PGA events are individual, once a year certain members of the PGA Tour are identified and invited to compete in an international event. Each year either the Ryder Cup (against a European Team) one of the most prestigious golf events in the world (Hurley, 2007) or the President's Cup (against an International Team comprised of players outside the US excluding Europe) is played. The PGA of America selects a captain for each USA team with one key role being that of identifying pairings or dyads (Ho, 2102). The role of leadership is the strategy execution that may be of key importance to the success of the dyad (Montgomery, 2008, Bigler 2013).

Players may compete in as many as three different types of "matches". Four of the five actual matches are played by dyads. The match formats are:

1. Alternate shot - both players in the dyad take turns hitting the ball from the tee until it is holed.
2. Better ball - each member hits only his own ball and strive to have one of their scores lower than the lowest score of the competing dyad for each hole.
3. Individual match play –players compete solely as individuals for a round of golf

Match play awards a point to the dyad having the lowest score on each hole. The give and take of points throughout the 18 holes of play concludes with the match winner being the dyad with the most points. The tournament winner is the team that has won the most points in the match play. The points awarded are 1 point for a win, half point for a tie and no points for a loss. The goal is to be the team with a majority of the points to win the Cup (Maher, 2013). The performance data of dyads competing in both alternate shot and better ball are used in this study to determine if there is a presence of synergistic performance.

Measures of Individual Skill

To determine the presence of synergy a baseline of individual skill must be created to ensure that the "gain ….is attributable to group interaction. The clearest baseline is the performance achieved by the same individuals working independently (i.e., with no interaction)" (Larson, 2010, p.5). Since golf is a complex game comprised of dozens of skill components, such as putting, chipping, driving and iron play there has been significant research into finding a single measure of individual golf skill (Connolly, 2008, Broadie, 2010, Peters 2008, Sen 2012). The two measures of skill used in this study are the key criterion of success (KCS) and tour money earnings. The PGA TOUR money rankings provide a clear measure of a player's skill. The events played in this calculation are all individually based. Individual player skills are also measured using KCS algorithm comprised of various player strengths and weaknesses to create a single statistic that predicts player performance (Sen, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The overall approach of the study was to:

1. Identify all United States 2004 - 2013 Ryder Cup and President's Cup players.
2. Utilize measures of individual player skill and PGA TOUR money earnings to determine an individual performance ranking for each player.
3. Create performance rankings for the combined skill and earnings of each dyad
4. Determine dyad actual performance using Win, Loss and Tie (WLT) records of each dyad during the event.

5. Assess whether the performance of the dyad exceeded the skill level of the individual players to determine if synergy was evident. Table 2 provides the individual player rank by both KCS and event money.

Table 2.
Individual baseline metrics for Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup players 2004-2013

Player	KCS Rank	Money Rank	Player	KCS Rank	Money Rank
Woods, T	1	1	Howell III, C.	22	15
Mickelson, P.	2	2	Weekley, B.	23	28
Stricker, S.	3	4	Taylor, V.	24	33
Furyk, J.	4	3	Campbell, C.	25	20
Simpson, W.	5	24	Cink, S.	26	9
Watney, N.	6	10	Overton, J.	27	34
Kuchar, M.	7	7	Glover, L.	28	22
Bradley, K.	8	27	Kim, A.	29	25
Toms, D.	9	8	Love III, D.	30	19
Perry, K.	10	14	Henry, J.	31	35
Spieth, J.	11	40	Leonard, J.	32	18
Johnson, Z.	12	5	O'Hair, S.	33	16
Watson, B.	13	13	Riley, C.	34	39
Haas, B.	14	17	Couples, F.	35	37
Mahan, H.	15	6	Holmes, J.	36	31
Dufner, J.	16	23	Wetterich, B.	37	38
Verplank, S.	17	21	DiMarco, C.	38	26
Austin, W.	18	30	Haas, J.	39	41
Johnson, D.	19	12	Funk, F.	40	36
Fowler, R.	20	32	Curtis, B.	41	29
Snedeker, B.	21	11			

Measures of Combined Skill

The combined skill of the dyads was determined by averaging the KCS of the two players in each dyad for the year in which the 'Cup' matches were played and then ranked within each year. This process creates a skill level for each dyad giving equal weight to each individual player's skill. The combined money ranking of the tour money earnings was calculated for the players in each dyad for the year in which the 'Cup' matches were played. This is the average of the sum of the individual player ranking (Table 3a, Table 3b). All ties in rankings are represented as "T-_".

Table 3a COMBINED SKILL OF DYAD 2004 – 2007					
Dyad	**Dyad KCS Rank**	**Dyad Money Rank**	**Dyad**	**Dyad KCS Rank**	**Dyad Money Rank**
2004			**2006**		
Campbell, C./Furyk, J.	14	13	Campbell, C./Taylor, V.	8	10
DiMarco, C. /Haas, J.	T-6	T-10	Campbell, C./Johnson, Z.	10	7
Riley, C./Cink, S.	10	7	Toms. D./Wetterich, B.	4	4
Love III, D./Campbell, C.	13	8	Toms. D./Mickelson, P.	2	2
Love III, D./Cink, S.	5	4	Toms. D./Cink, S.	5	5
Love III, D./Woods, T.	3	2	Furyk, J. /Woods, T.	1	1
Toms. D./Furyk, J.	9	12	Mickelson, P./DiMarco, C.	3	3
Toms. D./Mickelson, P.	2	3	Cink, S. /Henry, J.	7	8
Funk, F./Love III, D.	11	9	Cink, S. /Johnson, Z.	9	6
Funk, F./Furyk, J.	12	14	Verplank, S./Johnson, Z.	6	9
Haas, J./DiMarco, C.	T-6	T-10	**2007**		
Perry, K. /Cink, S.	4	6	Toms. D./Furyk, J.	6	12
Mickelson, P./Woods, T.	1	1	Toms. D./Woods, T.	2	3
Woods, T./ Riley, C.	14	5	Toms. D/Austin, W.	12	13
2005			Toms. D./Johnson, Z.	15	11
Love III, D./Couples, F.	8	12	Mahan, H. /Mickelson, P.	11	5
Love III, D./Perry, K.	4	6	Mahan, H. /Stricker, S.	8	7
Love III, D./Cink, S.	10	13	Furyk, J. /Cink, S.	4	10
Toms. D./Couples, F.	7	7	Furyk, J. /Woods, T.	1	1
Toms. D./Funk, F.	12	5	Glover, L. /Howell III, C.	14	15
Toms. D./Cink, S.	9	9	Glover, L. /Cink, S.	7	16
Couples, F./Woods, T.	2	2	Glover, L. /Verplank, S.	10	14
Funk, F./Furyk, J.	5	4	Mickelson, P./ Austin, W.	5	4
Funk, F./Cink, S.	13	10	Cink, S. /Johnson, Z.	13	9
Furyk, J. /Woods, T.	1	1	Stricker, S. /Verplank, S.	9	6
Leonard, J. /Verplank, S.	11	11	Woods, T./Howell III, C.	3	2
Perry, K. /Cink, S.	6	8	Johnson, Z. /Howell III, C.	16	8
Mickelson, P./DiMarco, C.	3	3			

Table 3b COMBINED SKILL OF DYAD 2008 – 2013					
Dyad	**Dyad KCS Rank**	**Dyad Money Rank**	**Dyad**	**Dyad KCS Rank**	**Dyad Money Rank**
2008			Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	6	8
Kim, A. /Mickelson, P.	1	1	**2011**		
Curtis, B. /Stricker, S.	7	6	Haas, B/Mahan, H.	7	6
Weekley, B. /Holmes, J.	6	7	Haas, B/Kuchar, M.	6	2
Campbell, C./Cink, S.	5	5	Haas, B/ Watney, N.	5	5
Mahan, H. /Leonard, J.	4	4	Watson, B. /Simpson, W.	2	1
Mahan, H. /Mickelson, P.	2	3	Johnson, D. /Kuchar, M.	8	3
Furyk, J. /Perry, K.	3	2	Johnson, D. /Woods, T.	11	9
2009			Toms. D./Mahan, H.	3	7
Kim, A. /Furyk, J.	8	7	Furyk, J. /Watney, N.	9	8
Kim, A. /Leonard, J.	9	14	Furyk, J. /Mickelson, P.	10	11
Kim, A. /Mickelson, P.	12	5	Kuchar, M. /Stricker, S.	1	4
Mahan, H. /Cink, S.	13	13	Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	4	10
Mahan, H. /S. O'Hair	6	9	**2012**		
Mahan, H. /Johnson, Z.	3	8	Kim, A. /Snedeker, B.	6	6
Furyk, J. /Leonard, J.	7	11	Watson, B./Simpson, W.	3	4
Leonard, J. /Mickelson, P.	10	6	Johnson, D. /Kuchar, M.	5	5
Leonard, J. /Johnson, Z.	4	12	Dufner, J./Johnson, Z.	2	1
Perry, K. /S. O'Hair	5	4	K. Bradley/Mickelson, P.	4	3
Perry, K. /Johnson, Z.	2	3	Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	1	2
Glover, L. /Cink, S.	14	10	**2013**		
Mickelson, P./ O'Hair, S.	11	2	Haas, B/Mahan, H.	7	9
Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	1	1	Haas, B/Stricker, S.	2	6
2010			Haas, B/Simpson, W.	8	8
Watson, B. /Overton, J.	7	5	B. Snedeker/Mahan, H.	5	5
Johnson, D. /Furyk, J.	5	1	Dufner, J./Johnson, Z.	9	7
Johnson, D. /Mickelson, P.	4	2	K. Bradley/Mickelson, P.	4	2
Mahan, H. /Johnson, Z.	8	6	Stricker, S. /Spieth, J.	1	3
Furyk, J. /Fowler, R.	3	3	Woods, T./Kuchar, M.	3	1
Kuchar, M. /Cink, S.	1	7	Simpson, W./Snedeker, B.	6	4
Mickelson, P./Fowler, R.	2	4			

Performance Record for each Dyad

Dyad performance was calculated using the match results point of 1 point for the match win, half point for a tie and no points for a loss. Since some dyads played together in multiple

'Cups' either over time or in a given year while other dyads played together only once, the results of those dyads playing together multiple times in a single year were averaged for that year (Table 4a, Table 4b).

Table 4a
WLT FOR EACH DYAD 2004-2008

Dyad	WLT Dyad Rank	Dyad	WLT Dyad Rank
2004		Toms. D./Mickelson, P.	T-7
Campbell, C./Furyk, J.	T-1	Toms. D./Cink, S.	T-2
DiMarco, C. /Haas, J.	T-1	Furyk, J. /Woods, T.	T-2
Riley, C./Cink, S.	T-7	Mickelson, P./DiMarco, C.	T-8
Love III, D./Campbell, C.	T-9	Cink, S. /Henry, J.	T-2
Love III, D./Cink, S.	T-1	Cink, S. /Johnson, Z.	T-2
Love III, D./Woods, T.	T-9	Verplank, S./Johnson, Z.	1
Toms. D./Furyk, J.	T-1	**2007**	
Toms. D./Mickelson, P.	T-1	Toms. D./Furyk, J.	T-1
Funk, F./Love III, D.	T-9	Toms. D./Woods, T.	T-1
Funk, F./Furyk, J.	T-9	Toms. D/Austin, W.	T-11
Haas, J./DiMarco, C.	T-8	Toms. D./Johnson, Z.	T-1
Perry, K. /Cink, S.	T-9	Mahan, H. /Mickelson, P.	T-13
Mickelson, P./Woods, T.	T-9	Mahan, H. /Stricker, S.	T-9
Woods, T./ Riley, C.	T-1	Furyk, J. /Cink, S.	T-1
2005		Furyk, J. /Woods, T.	T-11
Love III, D./Couples, F.	T-5	Glover, L. /Howell III, C.	T-13
Love III, D./Perry, K.	T-8	Glover, L. /Cink, S.	T-13
Love III, D./Cink, S.	1	Glover, L. /Verplank, S.	T-1
Toms. D./Couples, F.	T-8	Mickelson, P./ Austin, W.	T-9
Toms. D./Funk, F.	T-8	Cink, S. /Johnson, Z.	T-1
Toms. D./Cink, S.	T-8	Stricker, S. /Verplank, S.	T-1
Couples, F./Woods, T.	T-8	Woods, T./Howell III, C.	T-1
Funk, F./Furyk, J.	T-5	Johnson, Z. /Howell III, C.	T-13
Funk, F./Cink, S.	T-5	**2008**	
Furyk, J. /Woods, T.	3	Kim, A. /Mickelson, P.	T-3
Leonard, J. /Verplank, S.	4	Curtis, B. /Stricker, S.	7
Perry, K. /Cink, S.	T-8	Weekley, B. /Holmes, J.	2
Mickelson, P./DiMarco, C.	2	Campbell, C./Cink, S.	T-3
2006		Mahan, H. /Leonard, J.	1
Campbell, C./Taylor, V.	T-2	Mahan, H. /Mickelson, P.	T-3
Campbell, C./Johnson, Z.	T-2	Furyk, J. /Perry, K.	T-3
Toms. D./Wetterich, B.	T-9		

Table 4b WLT FOR EACH DYAD 2009-2013			
Dyad	**WLT Dyad Rank**	**Dyad**	**WLT Dyad Rank**
2009		Haas, B/ Watney, N.	9
Kim, A. /Furyk, J.	T-7	Watson, B. /Simpson, W.	4
Kim, A. /Leonard, J.	T-7	Johnson, D. /Kuchar, M.	T-6
Kim, A. /Mickelson, P.	T-1	Johnson, D. /Woods, T.	8
Mahan, H. /Cink, S.	T-7	Toms. D./Mahan, H.	5
Mahan, H. /S. O'Hair	T-11	Furyk, J. /Watney, N.	T-1
Mahan, H. /Johnson, Z.	T-1	Furyk, J. /Mickelson, P.	T-1
Furyk, J. /Leonard, J.	T-1	Kuchar, M. /Stricker, S.	T-6
Leonard, J. /Mickelson, P.	T-1	Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	T-10
Leonard, J. /Johnson, Z.	T-11	**2012**	
Perry, K. /S. O'Hair	T-11	Kim, A. /Snedeker, B.	5
Perry, K. /Johnson, Z.	T-7	Watson, B./Simpson, W.	T-3
Glover, L. /Cink, S.	T-11	Johnson, D. /Kuchar, M.	T-1
Mickelson, P./ O'Hair, S.	6	Dufner, J./Johnson, Z.	T-3
Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	T-1	K. Bradley/Mickelson, P.	T-1
2010		Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	6
Watson, B. /Overton, J.	5	**2013**	
Johnson, D. /Furyk, J.	T-6	Haas, B/Mahan, H.	9
Johnson, D. /Mickelson, P.	T-6	Haas, B/Stricker, S.	1
Mahan, H. /Johnson, Z.	T-3	Haas, B/Simpson, W.	2
Furyk, J. /Fowler, R.	T-3	B. Snedeker/Mahan, H.	T-6
Kuchar, M. /Cink, S.	T-1	Dufner, J./Johnson, Z.	T-6
Mickelson, P./Fowler, R.	T-6	K. Bradley/Mickelson, P.	5
Stricker, S. /Woods, T.	T-1	Stricker, S. /Spieth, J.	T-3
2011		Woods, T./Kuchar, M.	T-3
Haas, B/Mahan, H.	T-1	Simpson, W./Snedeker, B.	T-6
Haas, B/Kuchar, M.	T-1		

Test for Synergy

To test for synergy, dyads that performed better than the measures of individual player skill we identified. By comparing the WLT rank for each dyad to the KCS rank of each of the individual players in the dyad and again with tour money earnings, synergy was calculated using the following formulas:

> Weak Synergy - If dyad WLT > Avg KCS of the Players in the dyad we found there was weak synergy

Strong synergy - If dyad WLT > KCS of Player 1 and KCS of Player 2 we found there was strong synergy

We also tested for synergy using the WLT rank for each dyad compared to the Money List rank of each of the individual players in the dyad using the same formulas as above but substituting Tour Money List rank for KCS rank.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data demonstrated that synergy was demonstrated in dyad performance. In fact, there is evidence of both strong and weak synergy. When using KCS rank as a basis of comparison, synergy was found in 48.1% of the dyads, strong synergy was present in 27.8% of the dyads and weak synergy was present in 20.3% of the dyads. When using tour earnings as a basis of comparison our study showed that 46.3% of the dyads showed overall synergy, strong synergy in 26.9% of the dyads and weak synergy was present in 19.4% of the dyads (Table 5).

Table 5
SUMMARY OF SYNERGY

Measure of Skill	Overall Synergy	Strong Synergy	Weak Synergy
KCS	48.1%	27.8%	20.3%
Tour Earnings	46.3%	26.9%	19.4%

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concluded that synergistic performance is demonstrated in certain player dyads. Of most interest is that strong synergy was evident. The significance of this finding may allow organizations and leaders to create small groups that will outperform individuals on a consistent basis. Of future interest is the interaction between the players as they compete in dyads with and without synergy to help inform leaders forming small groups on ways to focus interaction that would enhance performance. Conducting a similar study to determine if the team "with the most synergy" will win the 'Cup' would also help to validate continued use of the data and methodology in the current study. Finally, as leaders continue to form small groups, defining the relationships between the individuals such as experience working together (in this case, do dyad plays together frequently demonstrate more synergy, over time?) or does friendship increase the potential for synergistic performance?

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