

Preference for Relationship Help and Emotional Help from Third Parties Across Cultures:  
The Mediating Effects of Idiocentric and Allocentric Orientations

**Abstract**

In this paper, we used a questionnaire and examined employees' preferences for relationship help and emotional help from third parties in two cross-cultural comparisons. Study 1 is a within-country comparison including 83 Dutch employees and 106 Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. Study 2 is a between-country comparison including 123 German employees and 101 Pakistani employees. The results show that employees' allocentric orientation, but not idiocentric orientation, explains the differences in preference for relationship help in the within-country comparison (Study 1: individualistic Dutch culture versus collectivistic Turkish culture) and the between-country comparison (Study 2: individualistic German culture versus collectivistic Pakistani culture). However, the findings in the between-country comparison (Study 2) reveal that the difference in preference for emotional help between individualistic German culture and collectivistic Pakistani culture is mediated by idiocentric orientation and not by allocentric orientation. Explanations and implications of these findings are further discussed.

Keywords: Idiocentric Orientation, Allocentric Orientation, Individualism-Collectivism, Preference for Relationship Help, Preference for Emotional Help.

## Introduction

Cultural diversity in the workplace has become a reality (e.g., Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2009). A culturally diverse workforce is a double-edged sword: on one hand, it stimulates employee work performance (Ely, 2004), innovation, and creativity (Rodriguez, 1998); on the other, it causes conflicts (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999), sets up obstacles to effective communication (Stahl et al., 2009), and reduces social integration (Webber & Donahue, 2001). How to manage a culturally diverse workforce to maximise the positive effects of cultural diversity in the workplace has been an important concern for both practitioners and researchers. In this paper, we approach the topic of cultural diversity in the workplace from the perspective of conflict handling. We attempt to understand the effect of culture at the national or ethnic group<sup>1</sup> level in terms of individualism-collectivism and at the individual level in terms of **individuals' values and beliefs with regard to idiocentric and allocentric orientations** on employees' preferences for relationship help and emotional help from third parties.

Third-party help refers to arrangements proposed and activities performed by peer colleagues who are external to a dispute in an attempt to help participants reach an agreement in the workplace (Giebels & Yang, 2009). Such arrangements not only focus on conflict issues (e.g., conflict topics or procedures for resolution) but also disputants (e.g., emotions or feelings experienced by disputants and relationships between them). In this paper, we highlight relationship help and emotional help that are more related to disputants than to conflict issues. We explore these two types of help from the perspective of disputants in terms of their preferences rather than from the perspective of how the two types of help are actually offered by third parties. Moreover, we address disputants' preferences from a cross-

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<sup>1</sup> The two terms "national culture" and "ethnic culture" are interchangeable in this paper. We prefer the term "ethnic culture" in Study 1 when the comparison concerns a cross-cultural sample consisting of Dutch host and Turkish immigrant members in the Netherlands. We use the term "national culture" in Study 2 when the comparison concerns a cross-cultural sample consisting of participants from Germany and from Pakistan.

cultural perspective because national culture and individuals' cultural values and beliefs play an essential role in influencing their preference for third-party help (Carnevale, Cha, Wan, & Fraidin, 2004; Giebles & Yang, 2009; Schuller & Hastings, 1996; Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010). In sum, the primary goal of this study is to explore and explain the differences in disputants' preferences for relationship help and emotional help across national/ethnic cultures **through individuals' values and beliefs**.

This study makes several contributions to the literature on third-party intervention and cross-cultural conflict handling. **First, this study adds knowledge that is relevant to the aspect of disputants to conflict invention. Studies have noticed for a long time that third-parties' strategic choice for an effective intervention should consider both conflict issues and disputants (e.g., Pruitt & Kim, 2004). The field, however, has accumulated more knowledge on the issues related to conflicts (e.g., Carnevale, 1986; Conlon & Meyer, 2004; Elangovan, 1995) than on the factors related to disputants (Goldman et al., 2008; Eaton & Sanders, 2012; Bollen & Euwema, 2015). By focusing on relationship help and emotional help, this study enriches our understanding of the aspect related to disputants in third-party intervention.**

**Second, this study contributes to our understanding on how national cultural contexts and individuals' values and beliefs play a role in third-party conflict intervention. Since Hofstede's (1980) seminal work, analysing national cultural contexts via a dimensional view (e.g., individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance) has become popular in the field of cross-cultural research. In parallel, studying individuals' values and beliefs (e.g., idiocentric orientation, allocentric orientation, independent self, and interdependent self) and their effects across cultures has also prevailed in the field of cross-cultural psychology (Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011; Triandis, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, there is a scarcity in aligning the dimensions across the two levels to explain employee workplace behaviours in empirical studies, especially across different cultural contexts (Matsumoto, 2003). To address this research gap, in this paper, we**

view culture at the national level (either nationality or ethnicity) in terms of the dimension of individualism-collectivism and regard the cultural contexts (Dutch versus Turkish, German versus Pakistani) as a proxy of the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism. We also take account of individuals' values and beliefs in terms of idiocentric and allocentric orientations (Triandis, 1995). With this design, we are able to picture the extent to which individuals' values and beliefs can explain the national-cultural variations on the two theoretical concepts of disputants' preferences for relationship help and emotional help.

Third, our study contributes to the research design on studying cross-cultural conflict handling. Conducting cross-cultural studies involving two countries and collecting data at the individual level for the weak research validity have been heavily criticised (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2003). However, researchers acknowledge that collecting representative individual-level data from multiple countries is a challenging task (e.g., more than 10 countries for a proper multilevel analysis). In this study, we experiment a research design by combining within-country and between-country data collections to improve research validity. A within-country comparison (two cultural groups within a country) rules out the societal differences (e.g., national wealth and political system) other than culture. It demonstrates the internal validity of research. A between-country comparison (cultural groups from different countries) creates an opportunity to consolidate the research findings with a different context, which improves the external validity of research. This combination suggests an alternative way of designing cross-cultural studies.

In the following section, we first introduce disputants' preferences for relational and emotional help and provide some background information on the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism and individuals' values and beliefs of idiocentric and allocentric orientations. Building on these theoretical frameworks, we then develop four hypotheses. Next, we test the hypotheses by using data from two cross-cultural samples: Study 1 concerns a within-country comparison (Dutch versus Turkish employees within the Netherlands) and

Study 2 concerns a between-country comparison (Germany-based German employees versus Pakistan-based Pakistani employees in Pakistan). The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for conflict-handling research and cross-culture research.

### **Theoretical Background**

#### *Disputants' Preferences for Relationship Help and Emotional Help*

Third parties are needed when disputants cannot reach an agreement themselves. However, an effective and successful third-party intervention concerns providing a solution not only to the issue at stake but also to the aspect related to disputants. In particular, the factors related to disputants' relationships and emotions attract considerable attention in the literature of third-party intervention (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001; Bollen & Euwema, 2015; Conlon & Meyer, 2004; Giebels & Yang, 2009; Goldman et al., 2008; Elangovan, 1995; Ohbuchi et al., 1999; Schuller & Hastings, 1996).

Relationship help refers to disputants' expectation from third parties to assist them on maintaining a harmonious relationship with each other, especially if the conflict is between friends and acquaintances. The aspect of 'relationships' between disputants has been well-addressed in the third-party intervention literature. For example, Conlon and Meyer (2004) consider the relationships between disputants as one of the three criteria (justice, transaction costs, and relationships) to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention procedure. Pinkey et al. (1995) suggested that relationship between disputants is one of the crucial factors that determine managerial intervention done by third parties. The relationship concern becomes even more pronounced in third-party intervention in the non-Western cultural context. For instance, a survey from 392 employees in 59 organisations in Turkey, Kozan, Ergin, and Varoglu (2007) reported that the concern of maintaining harmonious relationship between disputants was significantly related to all third-party intervention strategies (i.e., mediational, educational, restructuring, and inquisitorial strategies) except for the motivational strategy. Although these studies were undertaken from the perspective of mediators, they suggest that

the relationship between disputants is one of the paramount concerns for third-party intervention. From the perspective of disputants, Giebels and Yang (2009) show that both Dutch and Chinese disputants, irrelevant to their cultural contexts, reported a preference for relationship help from third parties, suggesting that the preference for relationship help appears to be universal. Relationship help creates a comfortable space for disputants to negotiate with one another without worrying about the rapport being destroyed.

To be in conflict is to be emotionally charged. Jones and Bodtger (2001) argue that emotion is the foundation of all conflicts and the centre in all mediation contexts. A long-standing myth or assumption on emotional help is that by listening for feelings, third parties create opportunities for disputants to openly express their emotions so that they can purge themselves, return to rationality, and enable the conflict issues to settle (Kennedy–Moore & Watson, 1999; Giebels & Janssen, 2005; Giebels & Yang, 2009). An updated view on the emotional concern in mediation suggests that the dynamics underlying emotional help is much more sophisticated (Bodtger & Jameson, 2001; Jones, 2000; Jones & Bodtger, 2001). For instance, emotional expression (i.e., when we should behave emotionally) is heavily influenced by cultural contexts. Disputants thus need third parties to help them decode emotional expression correctly (Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002). Conflict is often stressful, which causes emotional flooding—disputants are swamped by emotions to the extent that one cannot function and think effectively. With emotional help, third parties can help disputants calm down and reduce emotions so that they can function and think well (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). The reasoning mentioned previously suggests that disputants need help from third parties on the emotional issues.

#### *Cultural Dimension of Individualism-Collectivism*

Since Hofstede's publication of *Culture's Consequences* (1980), a dimensional view to study cultural differences has gained popularity in the cross-cultural research. In addition to Hofstede's five well-known dimensions (individualism-collectivism, power distance,

uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and long- versus short-term orientation, 1980/1990/2001), several other frameworks/dimensions have been proposed to depict the cultural differences across nations. For example, Schwartz (1992) proposed a seven-dimensional framework to explain cultural value differences across nations (harmony, embeddedness, hierarchy, mastery, affective autonomy, intellectual autonomy, and egalitarianism). Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner (1997) presented a theoretical model consisting of seven dimensions to explain cultural differences in terms of communication (universalism/particularism, individualism/communitarianism, neutral/emotional, specific/diffuse, achievement/ascription, sequential/synchronic, and internal/external control). Political scientists Inglehart and Welzel (2005) mapped the world values across the two dimensions of self-expression/survival and traditional/secular-rational values. Despite the different labels, a considerable convergence has been reported across those frameworks. For instance, Smith, Bond, and Kagitcibasi (2006, p. 46) reported that dimension of individualism-collectivism in Hofstede's framework was highly related to the dimension of autonomy-embeddedness in Schwartz's framework ( $r = .64$ ) and the dimension of self-expression/survival in Inglehart and Welzel's framework ( $r = .74$ ).

The dimensional view transcends the borders set by geographic countries and/or political nations and enables to compare cultures via meaningful and psychological constructs (e.g., individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance) (Schwartz, 1999). With a dimensional view on cultural comparisons, nation is considered a proxy of cultural dimensions. For example, with a dimensional view on the cross-cultural comparison between Dutch and Chinese employees, the Dutch culture is considered a proxy of individualist culture, and the Chinese culture is a proxy of collectivist culture. The implications drawn from this two-cultural comparison reflect the differences between individualist and collectivist cultures rather than simply the differences between the

Netherlands and China. In this paper, we adopt a dimensional view to compare cultures and treat nation as a proxy of the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism.

We highlight the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism because it is one of the most established and accepted cultural dimensions in explaining why people from different cultures think, feel, and behave in different ways (e.g., Hofstede, 1980/1990/2001; Taras et al., 2010). It is also significantly relevant to disputants' preferences for relationship or emotional help (more details will be elaborated in the section of hypothesis development). This bipolar dimension describes 'the relationship between the individual and the collectivity which prevails in a given society' (Hofstede, 1990, p. 6). In individualist cultures, members see themselves as having relatively separate identity, focus on rights above duties, concern for themselves and their immediate family, and loose social ties between individuals.

In collectivist cultures, members tend to identify themselves strongly with long-lasting group memberships. They are integrated into strong and cohesive in-groups. Mutual obligations and loyalty to in-groups are key characteristics. The findings from a considerable amount of empirical studies and several meta-analyses (e.g., Taras et al., 2010; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007) provide evidence for a strong reliability and robustness of the dimension of individualism-collectivism. Nardon and Steers (2009), for example, collapsed cultural dimensions (at the national level) from six theoretical frameworks and found five core cultural dimensions. One of those five dimensions is individualism-collectivism.

### *Individuals' Values and Beliefs of Idiocentric and Allocentric Orientations*

Culture manifests itself at the collective level (society, nation, and ethnicity) via shared values, beliefs, and behaviours. In addition, culture directly shapes and influences individuals' values, beliefs, cognition, emotions, and behaviours. Through the processes of socialisation, individuals identify with the cultural contexts around them, internalise those cultural characteristics manifested at the societal level, and integrate them into their characteristics, which then become part of individuals' values and beliefs (Smith et al., 2006;



Triandis, 1995; Chen et al., 2007). These sets of values and beliefs are referred to as individuals' cultural orientations (Smith et al., 2006; Triandis, 1995). They are influenced and shaped by cultural contexts but reflect individuals' personal values, how they prefer to act, and how they like to treat others and be treated. They are the results of numerous aspects of life, such as individuals' upbringing, religious background, professions, ethnicities, and personal genetics (Smith et al., 2006). Individuals' cultural orientations thus can be independent of and different from the dominant culture of the society where they reside. For example, being in an individualist culture does not mean that all members in that society (e.g., Dutch society) share or have a strong idiocentric orientation. In sum, individuals' cultural orientations describe individual-level values and beliefs that are shaped and influenced by cultural contexts.

Cross-cultural researchers (e.g., Ang, Van Dyne, & Begley, 2003; Dorfman & Howell, 1988; Triandis, 1995; Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2012) also adopt the dimensional view to understand and measure individuals' values and beliefs in terms of their cultural orientations. In line with the purpose of this paper, to align the dimensions at both the national level and the individual level to explain the differences regarding disputants' preferences for relationship help and emotional help, we focus on the two sets of individuals' cultural orientations: idiocentric orientation and allocentric orientation.

Allocentric orientation describes 'an individual' who is collectivistically oriented, and idiocentric orientation describes 'an individual' who is individualistically oriented (Triandis, 1989, 1995). Unlike the dimension of individualism-collectivism at the national level, allocentric orientation and idiocentric orientation are considered two separate dimensions and manifest themselves at individual level (Clugston et al., 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Individuals with an idiocentric orientation tend to construe their self-concept as an independent and autonomous entity and are concerned with personal achievement and to pursue self-goals (Triandis, 1989, 1995). In relation to emotions, they are sensitive in the

expression and experience of those self-relevant feelings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Allocentric orientation focuses on relatedness and connectedness between self and others, describing the differences between individuals in dealing with social relationships with in-group and out-group members (Triandis, 1989, 1995). Interpersonal harmony is considered as one of the most significant concerns among individuals with allocentric orientation in their decision making (Chen et al., 2007).

### **Hypothesis Development**

#### *Individualism-Collectivism on Preferences for Relationship and for Emotional Help*

In individualist cultures, social relationships tend to be maintained through the norm of cost-benefit balance. They are considered impermanent and non-intensive (Oyserman et al., 2002). Collectivism, by contrast, is characterised by in-group harmony and tight group bonds (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Conflict in individualist cultures tends to be viewed in terms of different interests: either differences on individuals' preferences on how to accomplish an objective or different preferences that impede each side's ability to get what they want (Rahim, 2001). In collectivist cultures, conflict is not only about a disagreement on interests, but it is also considered a threat that puts harmonious relationships in danger (Giebels & Yang, 2009; Kozan et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2007; Ohbuchi et al., 1999; Kirkbride et al., 1991). For example, Ohbuchi and Atsumi (2010) explained that a strong motivation for the employees in Japan (a collectivist culture) to avoid conflict is the fact that they want to maintain harmonious relationships. Tjosvold and Sun (2002) also reported that in China (a collectivist culture), the concerns for social relationships led managers and employees to use non-confronting strategies (e.g., avoidance) in conflict handling. Evidence so far has suggested that disputants in collectivist cultures have a stronger concern on maintaining harmonious relationship with the other side than disputants in individualist cultures. We thus propose the following:

**Hypothesis 1:** Disputants' preference for relationship help is stronger in a collectivist culture than in an individualist culture.

Cross-cultural research suggests that emotional expression is largely determined by societal cultures and norms (Matsumoto et al., 2008; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mesquita, 2001; Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002). For example, Mesquita and Karasawa (2002) found that students in Japan (a collectivist culture) reported fewer emotions in their daily life than their counterparts in the United States (an individualist culture). One of the explanations for this difference is emotional inhibition. In collectivist cultures, explicitly expressing one's emotional state is often viewed as immature and considered to disrupt the harmony of a social group. Thus, it is expected to be constrained (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Members of collectivist cultures are thus unlikely to explicitly communicate and express their own emotional states than members of individualist cultures. As a result, they are also less likely to discuss and seek emotional help from third parties than the members from individualist cultures. In reviewing seeking emotional support as a coping strategy across cultures, Burleson (2003) revealed that members of individualist cultures on average place more emphasis on searching for emotional help than members of collectivist cultures. In line with this, we thus expect the following:

**Hypothesis 2:** Disputants' preference for emotional help is stronger in an individualist culture than in a collectivist culture.

*The Mediating Effects of Allocentric and Idiocentric Orientations at the Individual Level*

Mediation model/analysis has become one of the influential research paradigms in refining and unpacking the impact of national culture on individual behaviour (Smith et al., 2006, p. 104). In a conventional mediation model, nationality or country in the format of dummy variables is often treated as predictors; employee attitudes and behaviours are considered outcome variables; and cultural dimensions are regarded as the mediators that explain or give meanings to national differences. In this study, we push the boundary of the

mediation analysis further. We consider the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism as the national level predictors. Preferences for relationship help and emotional help are considered outcome variables. Individuals' allocentric and idiocentric orientations are treated as mediator to refine the impact of cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism at the national level.

Individuals with an allocentric orientation tend to have an interdependent self-construal, which are characterised by being sensitive to relationships and high in affiliation (Hui & Villareal, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In conflict, they have a strong need for relationship help: they are concerned about the relationships with their opponent, especially if the opponent is in-groups. Yang et al. (2007) showed that participants' collectivistic orientation at the individual level (as allocentric orientation in this paper) was positively correlated with their motivation to maintain harmonious relationships with in-groups. By contrast, individuals with an idiocentric orientation tend to have an independent self-construal (Hui & Villareal, 1989), which makes them focus more on personal goals and achievement. They are more motivated to take actions to achieve personal goals rather than being worried about the social relationships. As such, we expect the following:

**Hypothesis 3:** Individuals' allocentric orientation (rather than idiocentric) mediates the relationship between individualism-collectivism and preference for relationship help.

In conflict, disputants often feel anger and frustration, which are classified as ego-focused negative emotions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Emotion expression for individuals with an idiocentric orientation tends to be ego- or self-focused and centres on communicating internal attributes, such as anger, frustration, and pride. By contrast, emotion expression for individuals with an allocentric orientation tends to be other-focused and centres on interpersonal communion, such as sympathy and shame (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mesquita, 2001; Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002). Individuals with an idiocentric orientation may thus actively look for third parties who will let them vent their inner feelings and listen

to their stories. On the other hand, individuals with allocentric orientation tend to inhibit those ego-focused emotions, particularly ego-focused negative emotions, which may make emotional help occur less likely. In combination with Hypothesis 2, we propose the following:

**Hypothesis 4:** Individuals' idiocentric orientation mediates the relationship between individualism-collectivism and preference for emotional help.

### **Study 1:**

#### **Testing Hypotheses Using a Cross-Cultural Sample within the Netherlands**

##### **Method**

###### *Procedure*

For Study 1, data were collected from a Dutch host group and a Turkish immigrant group in the Netherlands. A cross-cultural sample within a country rules out societal differences other than culture, such as a nation's economic wealth and political system, which might have an effect on outcome variables. According to Hofstede's cultural value survey (Hofstede, 1980/2001), Dutch host culture is characterised by high individualism and low collectivism (index score 80). Turkish culture is characterised by low individualism and high collectivism (index score 37). In this comparison, the Dutch group is used as a proxy for individualist culture, and the Turkish group is used as a proxy for collectivist culture.

Two research assistants helped to contact respondents and distribute questionnaires. In the Netherlands, 250 questionnaires were sent out to employees in five organisations, and 102 questionnaires were returned (response rate 40.8%). Participants in the Turkish immigrant group were approached through one of the research assistants' networks. Around 300 questionnaires were distributed, and 112 were returned (response rate 37.3%). All respondents answered a paper-and-pencil version of the questionnaire. A reminder was sent out two weeks after the initial distribution. Participation was voluntary. We assured

respondents complete anonymity and that their answers were to be used only for scientific purposes.

The original questionnaire was developed in English and then translated by bilinguals into Dutch and Turkish. The translated versions were then checked by professionals. This procedure guaranteed that the two versions of the questionnaires were linguistically equivalent. In the Dutch group, all participants answered the Dutch version of the questionnaire. In the Turkish group, participants were asked to choose the version that they were linguistically more capable and confident. In total, 32 Turkish respondents answered the Turkish version of the questionnaire.

### *Participants*

Of the 102 questionnaires returned in the Dutch group, 19 were removed because they were either answered by people from other cultural backgrounds or were incomplete. Of the 112 returned questionnaires in the Turkish group, six incomplete questionnaires were removed from data analysis. A total of 189 responses (83 from the Dutch group and 106 from the Turkish group) were left for further analysis.

The Dutch group included 50 women and 33 men. Their average age was 32.5 years with a range from 18 to 60 years. All of them had work experience averaging 9.59 years; 49 respondents (59%) had undertaken higher education. Regarding job position, 23 (27.7%) reported that they currently held a managerial position. All participants were born and raised in the Netherlands. The Turkish group consisted of 62 women and 39 men. Their average age was 31.2 years ranging from 18 to 55 years. All of them had working experience averaging 9.25 years. Regarding education level, 32 respondents (30.1%) reported that they had undertaken higher education. Regarding job position, 17 respondents (16.0%) had a managerial function. Of all the Turkish respondents, 18 (21.7%) were first-generation immigrants (all chose the Turkish version of the questionnaire) and 88 were second- or third-generation immigrants (14 chose the Turkish version of the questionnaire).

T-tests were conducted to compare percentages or means between two groups on main demographic characteristics. Results showed that, except for highest education ( $t = 6.44, p < .01$ ), other demographic characteristics (age:  $t = .73, ns$ ; work experience:  $t = .20, ns$ ; gender:  $t = 1.78, ns$ ) were comparable across two groups.

### *Measures*

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The scales relevant to this study are listed in appendix.

The first part measured participants' cultural orientations (i.e., allocentric and idiocentric orientations) on a seven-point Likert scale ( $1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree$ ). Allocentric orientation was measured with a 14-item scale, which was constructed on the basis of published instruments and reviews (e.g., Brewer & Chen, 2007; Oyserman et al., 2002; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Two sample items are 'I am willing to maintain a good relationship with others at the cost of sacrificing my own interests' and 'If the group is slowing me down, it is better to leave it and work alone' (reversed item) ( $\alpha = .71$  for the Dutch group;  $\alpha = .73$  for the Turkish group).

Idiocentric orientation was measured with a 12-item scale developed based on previously published instruments and reviews (e.g., Brewer & Chen, 2007; Oyserman et al., 2002; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Two examples of these items are 'I enjoy being unique' and 'The most important thing in my life is to make myself happy' ( $\alpha = .76$  for the Dutch group;  $\alpha = .80$  for the Turkish group).

In the second part of the questionnaire, we used eight items measuring two types of third-party help on a seven-point Likert scale ( $1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree$ ) (Giebels & Yang, 2009). All eight items started with 'In a conflict, when I ask for an intervention, I feel the need for . . .' Four items were used to measure relationship help (e.g., 'a third party who makes sure that the other party and I treat each other respectfully';  $\alpha = .79$  for the Dutch group;  $\alpha = .89$  for the Turkish group), and four items measured emotional help

(e.g., ‘a third party who sympathises with my situation’;  $\alpha = .65$  for the Dutch group;  $\alpha = .75$  for the Turkish group).

In the third part of the questionnaire, demographic information such as ethnicity, age, gender, highest education, and professional level were collected.

### *Data Analysis*

We applied Preacher and Hayes’s bootstrapping approach (2008) to test the mediating effects of idiocentric and allocentric orientations. Given that the two mediator variables—allocentric and allocentric orientations—were correlated with each other in both groups ( $r = .31$  and  $.50$ ,  $ps < .05$ ), we used the multiple mediator model and entered the three mediator variables simultaneously.

## **Results**

### *Descriptive Analysis*

Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the measured variables. Overall, the Turkish group showed a stronger allocentric orientation ( $M_T = 4.75$ ,  $SD_T = .91$ ;  $M_D = 4.26$ ,  $SD_D = .70$ ;  $t = 4.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a relatively weaker idiocentric orientation ( $M_T = 4.31$ ,  $SD_T = .81$ ;  $M_D = 4.57$ ,  $SD_D = 1.14$ ;  $t = 1.83$ ,  $p = .06$ ) than the Dutch group. These results are in line with Hofstede’s reports (1980/2001), suggesting that the two groups are suitable to form the cultural comparison as proposed.

The results showed that preference for relationship help and preference of emotional help were intermediately correlated in the Dutch group ( $r_D = .46$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and in the Turkish Group ( $r_D = .56$ ;  $p < .01$ ). In the Dutch group, allocentric orientation was related to preference for relationship help ( $r_D = .30$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and emotional help ( $r_D = .34$ ;  $p < .05$ ). In the Turkish group, a similar pattern of correlations was also observed. The correlation between allocentric orientation and preference for relationship help was  $r_T = .33$ ;  $p < .05$ . The correlation between allocentric orientation and preference for emotional help was  $r_T = .22$ ;  $p < .05$ .



In the Dutch group, idiocentric orientation was negatively related to preference for relationship help ( $r_D = -.22; p < .05$ ) but not to preference for emotional help ( $r_D = -.11; ns$ ). In the Turkish group, however, idiocentric orientation was neither related to preference for relationship help ( $r_T = -.12; ns$ ) nor preference for emotional help ( $r_T = .14; ns$ ). In addition, gender was correlated with preference for relationship help ( $r_D = .20; p < .05$ ) and emotional help ( $r_D = .29; p < .05$ ) in the Dutch group, suggesting Dutch females had a stronger preference for both relationship help and emotional help. However, in the Turkish group, gender was not related to either preference for relationship help ( $r_T = -.02; ns$ ) or emotional help ( $r_T = .07; ns$ ). Work experience was negatively related to relationship help ( $r_T = -.23; p < .05$ ) and emotional help ( $r_T = -.28; p < .05$ ) in the Turkish group. None of them was statistically significant in the Dutch group (preference for relationship help:  $r_D = -.04; ns$ ; preference for emotional help:  $r_D = -.16; ns$ ). We controlled demographic variables in further regression analysis.

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Insert Tables 1, 2 and 3 about here  
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### *Testing Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1 suggested that the Turkish group as a proxy of collectivist culture would have a stronger preference for relationship help than the Dutch group as a proxy of individualist culture. Hypothesis 3 assumed that this difference would be mediated by employees' allocentric orientation rather than idiocentric orientation. The results of regression analysis are shown under the 'relationship help' column in Table 2. When preference for relationship help was regressed on ethnic group and control variables only, ethnic group showed a significant effect on relationship help (Equation 1:  $b = .45, p < .01$ ), suggesting that the Turkish group favours relationship help more than the Dutch group and thus supporting Hypothesis 1. In Equation 3, where preference for relationship help was regressed on both ethnic group and the two cultural orientations, we found a significant effect

of allocentric orientation ( $b = .46, p < .01$ ) but not of idiocentric orientation ( $b = -.11, ns$ ). Moreover, the effect of ethnic group became insignificant ( $b = .18, ns$ ). These results indicate a full mediating effect of allocentric orientation. The bootstrapping results for indirect effect in Table 3 (under the 'relationship help' column) showed that the mediating effect of allocentric orientation was significant ( $f_{al} = .18, p < .05$ ), which again confirms Hypothesis 3, suggesting that allocentric orientation can explain the difference in preference for relationship help between the Turkish group and the Dutch group.

Hypothesis 2 suggested that the Dutch group as a proxy of individualist culture would have a stronger preference for emotional help than the Turkish group as a proxy of collectivist culture. Hypothesis 4 assumed that idiocentric orientation would explain the difference in preference for emotional help between the two cultures. The results from regression analysis (under the 'emotional help' column in Table 2) showed the effect of ethnic group on the preference for emotional help was insignificant ( $b = -.07, ns$ ), suggesting that no difference exists between the Dutch group and the Turkish group in preference for emotional help. This finding is not in line with Hypothesis 2. The insignificant total effect suggests that no space is left for the mediating variable to function in the relationship between ethnic group and preference for emotional help. Thus, the analysis testing the mediating effect stopped here.

## **Discussion**

The findings of Study 1 demonstrate a difference in preference for relationship help from third parties across the individualist Dutch group and the collectivist Turkish group in the Netherlands. This difference is further mediated by allocentric orientation but not by idiocentric orientation. These findings support hypotheses 1 and 3. However, the results failed in detecting the difference in preference for emotional help across the two cultural groups. Thus, Hypotheses 2 and 4 cannot be confirmed.

Despite the promising results, several shortcomings in Study 1 make the hypotheses testing inadequate. First, using Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands as a representative of Turkish collectivist culture may have biased cultural comparison. Immigrants inevitably face the issue of acculturation (Berry, 1989). This triggers a question as to how much the effects found in the current study truly reflect cultural differences rather than immigrants' acculturation strategies.

Second, in the Turkish group, some participants answered the questionnaire's Dutch version. Although their choice was made based on their linguistic capability, those participants might have been subject to the effects of Cultural Frame Switching (CFS; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Ramires-Esparza, 2000).

Third, the convenience sampling, especially recruiting Turkish participants through a personal network, may reduce the comparability between the two groups. To avoid these methodological shortcomings, we recruited another cross-cultural sample between countries consisting of Germany-based German employees and Pakistan-based Pakistani employees to re-examine our hypotheses.

## **Study 2:**

### **Testing Hypotheses Using a Cross-Cultural Sample between Countries**

#### **Method**

##### *Procedure*

We collected data from 123 German employees from three German organisations and 101 Pakistani employees from two Pakistani organisations. According to Hofstede's cultural value indices (1980/2001), Germany had an index score of 67, and Pakistan had a score of 14 on the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism. So in this comparison, Germany represents an individualist culture while Pakistan represents a collectivist culture.

The three German organisations were located in the northern part of Germany. Two of them are for-profit organisations and one is non-profit. An invitation e-mail was sent through their HR departments. After respondents confirmed they were willing to participate in this study, they received a second e-mail that included a web link, login name, and password for an online questionnaire. In total, we received 140 confirmations and 123 completed questionnaires (87.8% response rate). The two Pakistani organisations consisted of one for-profit and one non-profit organisation. The same procedure of data collection was followed. In total, 101 completed questionnaires were received (67.3% response rate).

German participants answered the German version of the questionnaire. The procedure of translation (from English to German) and back-translation (from German to English) was adopted to ensure linguistic equivalence. Pakistani participants answered the English version of the questionnaire, as English was used as an official language for communication in both Pakistani organisations.

#### *Participants*

The German participants' mean age was 35.4, ranging from 20 to 61, and 42.3% were female. Of the respondents, 54.1% had higher education. All German participants were born and raised in Germany, and German was their first language. Of the 101 Pakistani participants, their mean age was 30.6, ranging from 18 to 60, and 36.4% were female. Regarding their educational level, 72.4% had higher education. All Pakistani participants were born and raised in Pakistan.

#### *Measures and Data Analyses*

The same scales in Study 1 were used to measure the idiocentric and allocentric orientations and the preference for relationship and for emotional help (see appendix). Internal consistency coefficients of the scales are reported along the diagonal in Table 4. They were all above .70.

As in Study 1, we applied the bootstrapping approach to examine the mediating effects of cultural orientations.

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Insert Table 4 about Here  
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## Results

### *Descriptive Analysis*

Means, SDs, and correlations of the measured variables are reported in Table 4. Overall, the German group scored lower on allocentric orientation ( $M_G = 4.02$ ,  $SD_G = .65$ ;  $M_P = 4.56$ ,  $SD_P = .91$ ;  $t = 5.16$ ,  $p < .01$ ) but higher on idiocentric orientation ( $M_G = 4.45$ ,  $SD_G = .75$ ;  $M_P = 4.17$ ,  $SD_P = 1.07$ ;  $t = 2.30$ ,  $p < .05$ ) than the Pakistani group. The two groups can thus form a cultural comparison as intended.

Preference for relationship help and emotional help was correlated in the German group ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and in the Pakistani group ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The correlations between the two cultural orientations and the two types of preference for third-party help were somewhat in line with our assumptions. For example, allocentric orientation was positively correlated with preference for relationship help both in the German group ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and in the Pakistani group ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Idiocentric orientation was positively correlated with preference for emotional help both in the German group ( $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and in the Pakistani group ( $r = .24$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

In the Pakistani group, gender was negatively correlated with preference for emotional help ( $r = -.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ), suggesting that Pakistani female employees have a stronger preference for emotional help than the male counterparts. Age was positively correlated with preference for relationship help ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ ), suggesting that the older Pakistani employees have a stronger preference for relationship help than the younger employees. However, gender and age were not significantly related to either preference for

relationship help (gender:  $r = .12$ , *ns*; age:  $r = .13$ , *ns*) or preference for emotional help (gender:  $r = .06$ , *ns*; age:  $r = -.10$ , *ns*).

### *Testing Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1 suggested a stronger preference for relationship help in the collectivist Pakistani group than in the individualist German group. Hypothesis 3 stated that this difference would be mediated by allocentric orientation. As shown in Table 2 (values in the brackets under the ‘relationship help’ column), the effect of nationality on preference for relationship help was significant ( $b = .36$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (Equation 1), suggesting that the Pakistani group favours relationship help more than the German group. This is in line with Hypothesis 1. When the two cultural orientations as the mediating variables were included (Equation 3), we found a positive effect of allocentric orientation ( $b = .36$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a negative effect of idiocentric orientation ( $b = -.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). With the mediating variables entering the equation, the effect of nationality became statistically insignificant ( $b = .11$ , *ns*). These results indicate a full mediation of allocentric and idiocentric orientations. The bootstrap results in Table 3 (under the ‘relationship help’ column) showed that only the mediating effect of allocentric orientation was significant ( $f_{al} = .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The mediating effect of idiocentric orientation was not ( $f_{id} = .07$ , *ns*), which confirms Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 2 predicted a stronger preference for emotional help in the individualist German group than in the collectivist Pakistani group. Hypothesis 4 further stated that this difference can be explained by idiocentric orientation. The results (see Table 2, values in the brackets under the ‘emotional help’ column) showed the effect of nationality on the preference for emotional help was significant ( $b = -.52$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that the German group showed a stronger preference for emotional help than the Pakistani group. This finding is in line with Hypothesis 2. When the two cultural orientations were included (Equation 3), we found a significant effect of idiocentric orientation ( $b = .24$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but not of allocentric orientation ( $b = .08$ , *ns*). The effect of nationality decreased but was still significant ( $b = -.46$ ,

$p < .05$ ). These results suggest a partial mediation of idiocentric orientation. The bootstrapping results for indirect effects in Table 3 (under the ‘emotional help’ column) showed that the mediating effect of idiocentric orientation was statistically significant ( $f_{id} = .10, p < .05$ ) and the mediating effect of allocentric orientation was not ( $f_{al} = .03, ns$ ), which supports Hypothesis 4.

## Discussion

The findings of Study 2 showed that the collectivist Pakistani group had a stronger preference for relationship help than the individualist German group. This difference was mediated by individuals’ allocentric orientation but not by idiocentric orientation. By contrast, the individualist German group showed a stronger preference for emotional help than the collectivist Pakistani group. This difference was mediated by individuals’ idiocentric orientation but not by allocentric orientation. Overall, our hypotheses are fully supported by this cross-cultural comparison across two nations.

Regarding preference for relationship help, the findings of the between-country comparison in Study 2 validates those of the within-nation comparison in Study 1, confirming that the collectivist groups (i.e., Turkey and Pakistan) have a stronger need for relationship help than the individualist groups (i.e., Netherlands or Germany). This validation boosts our confidence to claim that preference for relationship help is stronger in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. Both studies demonstrate a full mediating effect of individuals’ allocentric orientation. This pattern suggests that it is the interdependent self or ‘self in relation to others’ (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) that explains why disputants from collectivist cultures tend to concern their relationship with the other side in a conflict.

In terms of preference for emotional help, the findings of Study 2 not only confirm the hypotheses 2 and 4 but also provide some meaningful insights on why Study 1 failed in supporting this hypothesis. If we compare the four means on preference for emotional help across the four groups, the Dutch group ( $M_D = 5.68; SD = .69$ ) and the Turkish group ( $M_T =$

5.64; SD = 1.08) in Study 1 scored higher than the German group ( $M_G = 5.25$ ; SD = .71) and the Pakistani group ( $M_P = 4.73$ ; SD = 1.29) in Study 2. It suggests that the insignificant difference on preference for emotional help detected in Study 1 is mainly caused by the relatively high score of the Turkish group. Considering the fact that immigrants have to acculturate themselves to the host culture (Barry, 1989), we suspect that Turkish immigrants may adapt more on the behavioural aspect of expressing emotions than the fundamental aspect of connectedness of human beings to the host culture. Thus, we observe insignificant difference on preference for emotional help but a significant difference on preference for relationship help across Dutch and Turkish groups in Study 1.

Another interesting side finding from Study 2 is that gender again showed a significant effect on preference for emotional help, which is consistent with the findings in Study 1: females tend to have a stronger preference for emotional help than males. It seems that the effect of gender on preference for emotional help is universal across cultures. It might be interesting for future research to dig into the relationship between gender and emotional help from third parties.

### **General Discussion**

When disputants cannot reach agreement and see themselves in a deadlock, they are likely to seek third-party help (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). The help that they expect focuses on not only the content aspect (e.g., clarifying conflict topics and finding solutions) but also the social and personal aspect. In this paper, we highlight the latter and examine the role of national culture in terms of individualism-collectivism and individuals' values and beliefs in terms of idiocentric and allocentric orientations in explaining differences in preferences for relationship help and emotional help.

The findings from a cross-cultural sample within a country (Study 1) and between countries (Study 2) are consistent regarding preference for relationship help: disputants show



a stronger preference for relationship help in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. Individuals' allocentric orientation meaningfully explains this difference. However, the findings regarding preference for emotional help are inconsistent across the two studies: In Study 1 (within-country comparison), there is no difference in preference for emotional help between the individualist Dutch group and the collectivist Turkish group. In Study 2, however, the findings demonstrate a stronger preference for emotional help in the individualist German group than in the collectivist Pakistani group. Moreover, individuals' idiocentric orientation partially explains this difference. In the following section, we discuss the implications of these findings on third-party intervention and on cross-cultural studies. We then point out some limitations of this study, and the paper concludes with some suggestions for practitioners.

### *Theoretical Implications*

First, this study goes beyond and extends the original work of Giebels and Yang (2009) on preference for third-party help. In their framework, they proposed two types of non-substantive help—relationship help and emotional help that disputants expect from third parties. They noticed that these two types of help were sensitive to cultural values and further empirically tested their theoretical model among Dutch and Chinese participants. However, their focus was preliminarily on generalising their theoretical framework across different cultures. They did not integrate either cultural dimensions at the national level or individuals' values and beliefs into their research design. In fact, in their study, independent and interdependent self-construals were used as 'manipulation checks' to justify the representativeness of their samples. As an extension of their work, in this paper, we view nationality as a proxy of the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism and explicitly examine how individuals' values and beliefs in terms of idiocentric and allocentric orientations may explain differences in preferences for relational and emotional help across individualist and collectivist cultures. Our focus is thus more on cross-cultural comparison

than cultural generalisation. Our findings confirm that the extent to which disputants' preference for third-party help regarding social and personal aspects does differ across national cultures. In other words, the need for relationship help and emotional help may be universal among human beings; however, culture plays an important role in determining the extent to which disputants favour a specific type of help.

Second, our findings once again support the argument that social relationship is one of the paramount concerns in conflict handling in collectivist cultures. More importantly, our findings point out that the core of the relationship concern is built on the fundamental view of 'connectedness' of human beings to one another. Previous studies have extensively elaborated the issue of social relationships among disputants and between disputants and third parties in collectivist cultures (Giebels & Yang, 2009; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kozan & Ergin, 1998; Ohbuchi et al., 1999; Yang et al., 2007). In those studies, the relationship concern is addressed in connection with the characteristics of collectivism. We go beyond this direction and argue that the fundamental view of interdependence or 'self in relation to others' is the cornerstone of the relationship concern. The view on self is rooted in one's value and belief system, and it passes on from one generation to another and is thus difficult to change or acculturate. This is evidenced by the consistent pattern of the results across two studies and across different cultural group comparisons.

Third, the inconsistent findings on preference for emotional help across two studies are also informative. To make sense of the inconsistent findings, we further explored the results regarding preference for emotional help among Turkish participants in Study 1. We compared the scores on preference for emotional help reported by the first generation of Turkish immigrants with those reported by the second and third generations. The results showed that the first-generation immigrants reported a lower score on preference for emotional help ( $M = 5.28$ ;  $SD = 1.18$ ) than the second- and third-generation immigrants ( $M = 5.71$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ). Due to the small sample size of the first-generation immigrants ( $n = 18$ ), this

difference only approached to the statistical significance ( $t = 1.57$ ;  $p = .06$ ). However, this tendency did suggest an acculturation process on expressing emotions across different generations in the Turkish group. We suspect that it is this acculturation process that causes insignificant differences between the Dutch group and the Turkish group regarding preference for emotional help. Also, in Study 2, individuals' idiocentric orientation only partially mediated the difference in preference for emotional help across the German group and the Pakistani group. This finding suggests that disputants' preference for emotional help must have multiple triggers or underlying mechanisms.

Bodtker and Jameson (2001) have suggested that emotional intervention in conflict management should not be narrowed down to allow disputants to express their emotions. Instead, they propose that third parties need to take a much broader approach to view emotional help: help disputants correctly interpret and experience emotions and address the issues related to emotional contagion. These emotional-related issues might become even more relevant in cross-cultural settings. We strongly encourage future research to take a broader view to examine preference for emotional help, which may unfold the full mediation of cultural dimensions on preference for emotional help.

In addition, our findings have some implications for cross-cultural studies in general. In terms of research design, our study signals an alternative way of conducting two-culture comparisons. Cross-cultural studies based on the two-cultural group comparison have been criticised for its weak external validity for long time (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). The findings from different cultural-group comparisons are often inconsistent with each other as shown in this paper regarding the findings of preference for emotional help between Study 1 and Study 2. However, because we include two comparisons, Study 2 in this point not only serves as a reference to validate the findings of Study 1 but also provides explanations and justifications for the failure of hypothesis testing. The research findings therefore become

robust and convincing. This might be a direction for future cross-cultural studies concerning two-country comparisons.

In relation to the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism, in Hofstede's view, they are the two opposite ends in one dimension (Hofstede, 1980/1990/2001; Taras et al., 2010). By contrast, other researchers (e.g., Schwartz, 1999; Triandis, 1995) tend to treat them as two separate dimensions. The mediating effect of allocentric and idiocentric orientation suggests that the domain of individualism and collectivism may not be directed opposite to each other. It is the case especially for a multicultural society: acculturation process between immigrants and hosts may bring a new type of culture or subculture in which high individualism and high collectivism may coexist, or individualism and collectivism may become salient depending on the specific work/life domain. Future cross-cultural research might consider individualism and collectivism as two separate dimensions and use alternative frameworks, such as Schwartz's (1999) framework, to depict the influence of culture at the national level.

### *Limitations*

We are aware of four limitations when interpreting our research findings. **First, we rely on the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism and individuals' allocentric orientation to understand the differences regarding preference for emotional help between Dutch and Turkish participants and between German and Pakistani participants. Our empirical findings, however, only partially confirm our theoretical assumptions. Although individualism-collectivism is one of the most powerful dimensions to explain cultural differences across nations, it might have not captured the full range of emotion expression in collectivist cultures. For example, in some collectivist cultures (e.g., Brazilian and Mexican cultures), it is accepted and even preferred for members to explicitly express their emotions. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) proposed a cultural dimension of neutral versus emotional to capture the differences in emotion expression. In the future research, it is**

worthwhile to integrate the measures of the cultural dimension of neutral versus emotional into the research design, which may offer an alternative explanation to the inconsistent findings regarding preference for emotional help.

Second, we acknowledge that disputants' preference for third-party help is influenced by many factors, such as conflict contexts, the expected consequences, the strength of one's own position, and the other party's cooperativeness (e.g., Schuller & Hastings, 1996). It is likely that national culture and individuals' values and beliefs co-vary with other factors in influencing disputants' preference. Future research needs to combine the 'culture-related' and 'non-culture-related' factors in the research design.

Third, the four items measuring preference for emotional help heavily focus on venting or expressing negative emotions. As we elaborated, emotional help actually covers a broader domain (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). Future studies need to include items tapping on emotional recognition, emotional interpretation, and even emotional contagion. Fourth, data in both studies were collected by using a cross-sectional survey. This type of research design has inevitably incurred common method bias (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003). To examine the extent to which our findings are vulnerable to common method bias, we conducted the Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In all four subsamples, the first factor explained less than 10% of the total variance, which means that no general factor could account for most of the variance in each subsample. Although this statistics technique cannot get rid of the noise of common method bias, it suggests, at least, that the common method bias would not overthrow the findings of this study.

### *Practical Implications*

Our findings also have practical implications both for third-party intervention and for managing cultural diversity in the workplace. First, our studies show that relationship is one of the paramount concerns when disputants ask for help from third parties in collectivist cultures. The relationship concern is indeed deeply rooted in one's value and belief system.

When intervening a conflict between two disputants who are both from collectivist cultures or have a strong allocentric orientation, third parties will need to include the relationship recipe into the intervention plan. By building rapport between disputants, third parties may help to convert a win-lose conflict into a win-win negotiation. With a rapport established, both sides are willing to exert extra effort towards problem solving. In managing cultural diversity in the workplace, situations sometimes can be much more complicated and challenging. Imagine, in a conflict, if one party is from a collectivist culture with an allocentric orientation and the other is from an individualist culture with an idiocentric orientation, third parties or managers alike may face a dilemma in this situation. Although our findings cannot provide a concrete solution for this dilemma, they suggest that such a conflict often touches the deep-level value discrepancy. By addressing the value differences, third parties may pave a path for dialogue between disputants.

Second, in relation to emotional help, third parties need to be extra careful especially in a culturally diverse setting. It seems that both disputants' idiocentric orientation and cultural contexts in which the conflict takes place may influence disputants' preference for emotional help. Due to the complexity of emotions, one should not assume that disputants from collectivist cultures are more likely to restrain their emotions in a conflict than their counterparts from individualist cultures. Through the acculturating process, collectivists may effectively learn to express their emotions (behaviourally). On the other hand, we do believe that some emotional aspects are connected with one's values and beliefs (although they are not addressed in this paper). A challenging task for third parties might be helping disputants correctly and accurately recognise and interpret such aspects. All in all, our findings may not provide concrete suggestions on emotional help, but they trigger an interesting and challenging task for third parties on managing emotional intervention in a culturally diverse setting.

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Table 1

Means, SDs, and Inter-correlations, Broken down for Dutch Group and Turkish Group in Study 1

	$M_D$	$SD_D$	$M_T$	$SD_T$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender (female%)	60.2%		62.9%		--	.31*	.06	-.28*	.14	.03	-.02	.07
2. Age	32.5	10.3	31.2	13.5	.02	--	.58**	-.39*	.19 <sup>†</sup>	-.28*	-.12	-.14
3. Working Experience	9.59	11.3	9.25	12.1	-.09	.84**	--	-.02	-.04	-.25*	-.23*	-.28*
4. Higher Education	59.0%		30.1%		-.20 <sup>†</sup>	.10	.06	--	-.18 <sup>†</sup>	.08	-.15	-.03
5. Allocentric	4.26	.70	4.75	.91	.20 <sup>†</sup>	-.03	.07	-.24*	--	-.11	.33**	.22*
6. Idiocentric	4.57	1.14	4.31	.81	-.20 <sup>†</sup>	-.14	-.06	.07	-.03	--	-.12	.14
7. Relational help	5.17	1.17	5.71	1.30	.20*	-.04	-.04	-.11	.30*	-.21*	--	.56**
8. Emotional help	5.68	.69	5.64	1.08	.29*	-.16	-.16	.15	.34*	-.11	.46**	--

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

$M_D$  and  $SD_D$  refer to means and standard deviations in Dutch group ( $n = 83$ ) and correlations are below diagonal.

$M_T$  and  $SD_T$  refer to means and standard deviations in Turkish group ( $n = 106$ ) and correlations are above diagonal.

Table 2

*Summary Results of Ethnic Group (Nationality) and Cultural Orientations on Preference for Relationship and for Emotional Help from Third Parties*

Equation	Relational Help			Emotional Help		
	1 <i>b</i> ( <i>YX</i> )	2 <i>b</i> ( <i>MX</i> )	3 <i>b</i> ( <i>YX.M</i> )	1 <i>b</i> ( <i>YX</i> )	2 <i>b</i> ( <i>MX</i> )	3 <i>b</i> ( <i>YX.M</i> )
Gender	-.04 (.10)		.02 (.13)	.23* (.15*)		NA (.15*)
Age	.12 (.14)		.03 (.14)	.14 (-.02)		NA (-.02)
Education	-.03 (NA)		-.12 (NA)	-.01 (NA)		
Position	.02 (NA)		.02 (NA)	.06 (NA)		
Ethnic group <sup>1</sup> (Nationality <sup>2</sup> )	.45** (.36**)		.18 .11	-.07 (-.52**)		NA (-.46**)
Allocentric		.45** (.54**)	.46** (.36**)		NA (.54**)	NA (.08)
Idiocentric		-.34** (-.29**)	-.11 (-.19*)		NA (-.29**)	NA (.24*)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.17 (.06)		.22 (.11)	.22 (.08)		NA (.13)
<i>F</i> -statistics	2.98* (2.56*)		6.31** (3.77*)	2.68* (4.84*)		NA (4.58*)

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ . NA = Not Applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Dutch group = 0, Turkish group = 1; <sup>2</sup> Germany = 0, Pakistan = 1.

Values on the top refer to Study 1; Values in the brackets at the bottom refer to Study 2

Table 3

*Bootstrapping Results for Indirect Effects of Cultural Orientations on Relationship between Ethnic Group (or Nationality) and Preference for Relationship and for Emotional Help from Third Parties.*

Mediators	Relational Help			Emotional Help		
	Mediation Effect (SE)	Lower 95% CI	Higher 95% CI	Mediation Effect (SE)	Lower 95% CI	Higher 95% CI
<b>Study 1:</b>						
Total Mediated effect	.26* (.09)	.07	.50			
Allocentric	.18* (.07)	.04	.36			
Idiocentric	-.04 (.03)	-.11	.01	Not Applicable		
<b>Study 2:</b>						
Total Mediated effect	.25** (.09)	.07	.41	-.06* (.04)	-.15	-.01
Allocentric	.19** (.07)	.06	.35	.03 (.04)	-.06	.17
Idiocentric	.07 (.04)	-.02	.16	-.10* (.03)	-.17	-.03

*Note.* CI presents Confidence Interval. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ .



Table 4

*Means, SDs, and Inter-Correlations, Broken down for German Subsample and Pakistani Subsample in Study 2*

	$M_G$	$SD_G$	$M_P$	$SD_P$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender (female%)	42.3%		36.4%		--	-.31**	.18	.17	-.10	.04	-.23*
2. Age	35.4	10.89	30.6	5.78	-.14	--	-.09	.06	-.07	.20*	-.04
3. Higher Edu.	54.1%		72.4%		.08	-.22*	--	-.01	.05	-.05	.06
4. Allocentric	4.02	.65	4.56	.91	.01	-.03	.06	<b>.73 (.73)</b>	-.10	.34**	-.09
5. Idiocentric	4.45	.75	4.17	1.07	.10	-.05	.07	-.30**	<b>.76 (.79)</b>	-.15	.24*
6. Relational help	5.42	1.27	5.78	1.12	.12	.06	.06	.18*	-.22*	<b>.85 (.86)</b>	.40**
7. Emotional help	5.25	.71	4.73	1.29	.13	-.10	.10	.09	.17*	.23*	<b>.72 (.75)</b>

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

$M_G$  and  $SD_G$  refer to means and standard deviations in German subsample ( $n = 123$ ) and correlations are below diagonal.

$M_P$  and  $SD_P$  refer to means and standard deviations in Pakistani subsample ( $n = 101$ ) and correlations are above diagonal.

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients of the relevant scales are shown among diagonal using bold type. Values without brackets refer to the German subsample and those with the brackets refer to the Pakistani subsample.

Appendix

**Allocentric orientation (14 items):**

1. Belonging to social groups is a key to what kind of a person I am.
2. The close relationships that I have with others are part of who I am.
3. I cannot think of myself without relating myself to close friends and family.
4. What is good for my group is also good for me.
5. I tend to give up personal opinions in order to follow the decisions made by my group.
6. I am willing to maintain a good relationship with others at the cost of sacrificing my own interests.
7. If the group is slowing me down, it is better to leave it and work alone.
8. At workplace, disagreement should be avoided because it damages harmonious relationships with colleagues.
9. I am willing to maintain good relationships with colleagues at the cost of sacrificing my own interests.
10. If I have done an excellent job, I attribute my success to collective effort.
11. The happiness of those who are closely related to me is more important than my own happiness.
12. Having harmonious relationships with colleagues is my path to success.
13. Having a good relationship with friends and colleagues is the most important thing in my life.
14. It is my duty to defend the reputation of my group.

**Idiocentric orientation (12 items):**

1. I enjoy being unique.
2. I prefer to do my own things.
3. I perceive myself as an independent individual rather than being a part of interpersonal relationships.
4. I describe myself in terms of my own unique characteristics.
5. In the long run, the only person I can count on is myself.
6. The most important thing in my life is to make myself happy.
7. What happens to me is my own doing.
8. Individual autonomy determines one's success.
9. I achieve my career goal through myself rather than through my organization.
10. One should live one's life independent of others as much as possible.
11. I should be judged on my own merits, not on the accompany that I have.
12. Employees should give priority to their own interests over their organization interests.

**Preference for relationship help from third parties (4 items)**

*“In a conflict, when I ask for an intervention, I feel the need for...”:*

1. a third party which makes sure that my colleague and I treat each other respectfully.
2. a third party which brings about a harmonious relationship between my colleague and me.

3. a third party which maintains a peaceful interaction between my colleague and me.
4. a third party which contributes to a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

**Preference for emotional help from third parties (4 items)**

*“In a conflict, when I ask for an intervention, I feel the need for...”:*

1. a third party which is a good listener.
2. a third party which sympathizes with my situation.
3. a third party which shows understanding for my situation.
4. a third party which allows me to let off steam.