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## ADULT MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS IN INDONESIA, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, AND GERMANY

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This study investigated the question of cultural differences and similarities in factors that may be relevant for the adult mother-daughter relationship. In the introduction, we will discuss some ideas concerning cultural influences on intergenerational relationships. We will then present comparisons of Indonesian, Korean, and German women from a study conducted in preparation for the "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations Study" (Nauck & Trommsdorff, 1997) to answer the research question.

In all industrialized nations, the average life expectancy has increased. In Germany, a woman born today has an average life expectancy of 81 years and a man one of 75 years. A very similar pattern can be observed in Korea where the average life expectancy is 79 years for women and 72 years for men. Even in less industrialized countries, the trend is the same although less extreme. In Indonesia, for example, the life expectancy of children born today is 69 years for girls and 65 years for boys, which is an increase of 30 years compared to those born 50 years ago (United Nations Population Division, 2002). These demographic changes affect the families because the amount of life time parents and their children share has never been so great. They have thus brought the adult parent-child relationship into the focus of recent research.

Bengtson and colleagues' theoretical approach to the phenomenon of intergenerational solidarity is very prominent in Western social sciences (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). The authors set out to explain why the frequency and quality of contact between children and their parents (their "association") remains high when the children are adults themselves, are highly involved in their jobs, and have families of their own. They proposed a model consisting of a pattern of positive relationships among five aspects of "solidarity" which together influence the intergenerational association. "Opportunity structure" of family interaction (e.g., geographic prox-

imity of parents and children, secure financial situation), "consensus of values" between the generations, and "norms of familism" are basic prerequisites for the intergenerational "exchange of help" (instrumental and emotional support and the extent of "reciprocity," which means the balance between help given and help received) and the maintenance of "affection" between parents and children. Rossi and Rossi (1990) demonstrated that socialization experiences in childhood and adolescence also influence the adult parent-child relationship, thus introducing a developmental perspective into the model. In the present study, we focus on selected aspects of the model, especially the relation between past socialization experiences, reciprocity of helping, family-oriented values, norms of familism (here: filial obligation) and the affectional ties between family members of different generations.

Due to a lack of cross-cultural studies in this field, whether or not this approach is applicable to other cultures remains open (see Bengtson, 2001; Trommsdorff, 2001; Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003). From an ecological perspective, it is necessary that the societal and cultural backgrounds of intergenerational relationships are taken into account. For instance, job mobility as well as drift from rural areas may result in greater geographical distance between the generations which may affect the relationship. Whether or not there is a reliable support system for the aged will determine how dependent the older generation is on the younger one. The number of children and the interval between generations influence the number of people who need help and who provide support.

From a psychological perspective, values and beliefs that characterize a culture may prove even more relevant for the cross-cultural comparison of intergenerational relationships. Hofstede (1980) derived the now classic differentiation of cultures along the dimension of individualism/collectivism. Collectivistic cultures (unlike individualistic cultures) are characterized by their emphasis on group unity and harmony (instead of individual autonomy), subordination to the group's goals (instead of pursuing personal goals), conformity and interdependence (instead of uniqueness and independence), favoring equality and cooperation (over equity and competition), and living in extended families (instead of keeping to the nuclear family). Although this concept is still seen as being a useful differentiation, some modifications have been suggested. For example, it has been noted that individualism/collectivism is not a unidimensional but a bidimensional

construct, and that the two dimensions are characterized by several attributes (Triandis, 1994). In order to explain psychological processes, the level of analysis should be at the individual rather than the cultural level (Triandis, 1994). Triandis has labeled the respective dimensions "allocentric" and "idiocentric." On the individual level, the differentiation between relatedness and separateness in interpersonal relationships parallels that between collectivism and individualism on the cultural level (Kâğıtçibaşı, 1994).

Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested a similar approach according to which people from different cultures differ in their *interdependent* and *independent orientations* (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In short, independently oriented people emphasize their uniqueness and self-reliance. An interdependent orientation comprises the feeling of connectedness with and obligations for relevant others.

Another concept, that of "filial piety," may help us to understand intergenerational relations. Developed in Confucianism, this concept has played an eminent role in East-Asian cultures for centuries: Parents and children stay in a lifelong mutual dependence. Children, especially sons, are expected to take care of their elderly parents, to be loyal, to keep harmony, to show respect and obedience (Hsu, 1971).

In cultures in which interdependent orientation and/or filial piety prevail, we expect the intergenerational relationship to be characterized by harmony and a more balanced exchange of support. Furthermore, the relationship quality should be influenced more by norms of familism (e.g., filial obligations) than by emotional factors. In the present study, we compare samples from Indonesia, Korea, and Germany because these cultures differ considerably in the degree of modernization and in various cultural aspects.

The degree of urbanization is a commonly used indicator of modernization. From 1960 to 1990, the proportion of rural population decreased by 48% in Korea, by 16% in Indonesia, and by 18% in Germany. However, in 1960, Germany was already at a comparatively low level of rural population (22%, U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base, 2000), so the increase of urbanization in the 30 year span was low there as compared to that in Korea. Household size is also often used as an indicator of modernization. It is influenced by the average number of children per couple, the proportion of households in which more than two generations live, and the number of single households. There is an average of 4.6

people per household in Indonesia, 3.5 in Korea, and only 2.2 in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1999).

The three cultures also differ remarkably with respect to their norms, beliefs, and values. One aspect is the different religious orientations. The dominant religion in Indonesia is Islam. The Korean culture has been strongly influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Protestantism. The German culture is mainly based on Christian values. Nevertheless, against the background of the following value studies, we presume that similarities among value orientations in Indonesia and Korea exist.

Modernization can also be described by value change from group-oriented to individualistic attitudes, and from materialistic to postmaterialistic values (Inglehart, 1997). According to Hofstede (1980), Indonesia and Korea were low in individualism while Germany was moderately high. A comparison of Western cultures with Korea revealed the expected differences in independent and interdependent orientations (Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, & Nishida, 1996). In another recent study by Inglehart, Basanez, and Moreno (1998), independence as a child-rearing goal was more important in Germany than in Korea, and respect for parents (as one major characteristic of filial piety) was more important in Korea than in Germany (94% very important in Korea, 76% in Eastern Germany, and 63% in Western Germany). Indonesia was not part of this study, but according to many anthropological studies, e.g., Mulder (1996), harmony in social groups and subordination to the goals of the community are major principles of the Javanese culture in Indonesia. In the original "Value of Children" study, it was shown that in Indonesia the goal of teaching children "to mind the[ir] parents" was highly valued, and that old-age security was an important reason for having children (Hoffman, 1988; Kâğitçibaşı, 1984). Both aspects are characteristic for interdependently oriented persons in collectivistic cultures.

Despite these similarities, we have to consider that the Korean society underwent rapid social change and even though the value of filial piety is still present, the way in which children express it or fulfill their obligations has changed (Sung, 1998). A very recent study showed that, in particular, young, well-educated, female Koreans are less likely to agree with traditional values (Hyun, 2001). Furthermore, a look at other East-Asian cultures, e.g., Japan, supports the view that social change is accompanied by changes in parent-child relationships and values (Trommsdorff, 1995;

Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003). In a comparison of Hong Kong Chinese and Australian adults, the Chinese expressed more negative stereotypes about elderly people, they described the intergenerational communication as being more difficult than did the Australian adults (Noels, Giles, Gallois, & Ng, 2001).

Even if, as mentioned above, Germans are more independently oriented than the Koreans or Indonesians and favor family values to a lesser extent, this does not mean that parent-child relationships in Germany are characterized by alienation. Even in Western (e.g., German) cultures, among adults, there is a strong parent-child bond, a good deal of exchange of support, and strong feelings of being obliged to help one's parents (Lauterbach & Pillemer, 2001; Lye, 1996; Stein et al., 1998). Thus, we expect to find similarities as well as differences among the cultures, the similarities mainly being between Korea and Germany.

In sum, the present comparison of intergenerational relationships in Indonesia, Korea, and Germany aims to study patterns of correlations in the three cultures between socialization experienced, the reciprocity of help, the family values, filial obligations, and the quality of the adult mother-daughter relationship. We expect to find a more traditional pattern in Indonesia, with a stronger link between norms/values and relationship quality, and we expect that psychological/emotional aspects are more important for the relationship quality in Korea and Germany.

## Method

### *Participants*

The following analyses are based on data from a pilot study conducted within the framework of the "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations Study" (Nauck & Trommsdorff, 1997; VOC study), a replication and extension of the "Value of Children Study" conducted in the late 70s (Arnold et al., 1975). The data were collected in 1999 and 2000 in Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and Germany (with separate samples from East Germany, formerly socialist, and West Germany). Standardized face-to-face interviews with women were conducted by trained interviewers in the homes of the participants.

All samples were selected in urban areas. The 30 Korean participants were recruited from the Seoul area, the 40 Indonesian participants from the greater Bandung area, the 55 German participants were from two

middle-size cities, one in East Germany (Chemnitz), one in West Germany (Konstanz). The Korean women were significantly older ( $M = 33.13$ ,  $SD = 2.71$ ) than their German ( $M = 30.19$ ,  $SD = 4.77$ ) and Indonesian counterparts ( $M = 28.05$ ,  $SD = 3.20$ ) and the German older than the Indonesian women. Both samples of Asian women were biased toward higher education (98% of the Korean, 88% of the Indonesian women had a college education) and were significantly better educated than the German women (46% had a college education). There was no significant difference with respect to the percentage of working women (Korea: 53%, Indonesia: 60%, Germany: 52%). All women were mothers of at least one kindergarten child.

### Measures

The instruments chosen for this study had proved useful in several other studies, although most of them had never been used in the cultures that participated in the VOC-study. The entire questionnaire was developed in English. It was then translated into the Indonesian, Korean, and German languages, and subsequently back translated.

**Childhood socialization experiences.** Being an aspect of psychological/emotional influences on the relationship, the socialization experiences were assessed. By filling out a shortened version of the Relation with Father/Mother Questionnaire (RFMQ) (Mayseless & Hai, 1998; Mayseless, Wiseman, & Hai, 1998) the adult daughters reported retrospectively on the maternal parenting they had experienced during adolescence. In the following analyses, only the scale *Open Confrontation* is used (sample item: "My mother became angry over little things that I did."). The three items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; the internal consistencies are low to satisfying (Indonesia  $\alpha = .58$ , Korea  $\alpha = .66$ , Germany  $\alpha = .61$ ).

Two indicators were used to measure the adult daughters' values and feelings of obligation: one concerning interdependence with respect to the family, the other concerning expectations of an adult daughter.

**Interdependence with respect to family.** Three items from the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994) measuring interdependent orientations were reworded, thereby referring only to the family, not to other social groups. The women rated the items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = reject totally to 5 = agree totally (sample item: "It is important for me to maintain harmony within my family."). The reliabilities were satisfying (Indonesia  $\alpha = .68$ , Korea  $\alpha = .82$ , Germany  $\alpha = .72$ ).

**Expectations of an adult daughter.** The interviewees indicated whether or not they expected each of eight different filial obligations from an adult daughter. The number of positive responses was summed up. Sample items were "...that she continues living close to me" or "...that she gives me financial assistance when I am old." We assumed that the women's expectations with regard to their own children are also guiding principles for their own behavior.

**Reciprocity between received and given help.** A second indicator of the psychological/emotional factors was the reciprocity in the exchange of support. Based on a list, the daughters reported which of four different practical or financial kinds of help they had received from their parents and which of these kinds of help they had given to their parents in the last year. Examples of the five kinds of help are "continuous financial support" or "helping out at home." The positive answers were summed up, list by list, and a difference score was computed. Positive values indicate that the daughter gave more help than she received; negative values mean that the daughter received more help than she gave.

**Quality of relationship.** In order to assess the affectional ties between daughter and mother, the women rated the extent of harmony (very conflicting to very harmonious), closeness (very distant to very close), and warmth (very cold to very warm) in the relationship with their mothers as well as their satisfaction (very unsatisfying to very satisfying) with the relationship on 5-point Likert-type scales. A mean score of the four items was computed. The internal consistencies were high (Indonesia  $\alpha = .90$ , Korea  $\alpha = .93$ , Germany  $\alpha = .90$ ).

## Results

The aim of this study was to demonstrate differences and similarities among the three cultures in the correlations between a variety of socio-psychological indicators and the adult mother-daughter relationship. In statistical terms, culture functions as a moderator for the correlations. Following Aiken and West (1996), multiple regressions with interaction terms were conducted. Therefore, two dummy variables of culture comparisons were computed (the comparison groups being Korea and Indonesia, the reference group Germany; Cohen & Cohen, 1983). All continuous variables were centered and the interaction terms computed as a multiplication of a dummy and a centered predictor, respectively (Aiken & West,

1996). These analyses not only allow us to test the moderator effect of culture but also to test cultural differences in the relationship quality and correlations between socialization experiences, reciprocity in help, values, filial obligations, and relationship quality independent of culture.

The results of the multiple regressions are documented in Table 1. As can be seen, the similarities across the cultures prevailed over the differences. There were no culture effects on the relationship quality and only one significant interaction. An interaction effect of interdependence with respect to family in the Korea-Germany comparison emerged. Multiple regressions conducted separately for the three cultures revealed a significant association between interdependence and relationship quality only for the Korean sample ( $b = .66, p < .001$  compared to the Indonesian sample  $b = .08, ns$  and the German sample  $b = .14, ns$ ). The higher the interdependent orientations, the better the adult mother-daughter relationship.

Table 1

*Summary of Multiple Regressions to Predict Quality of Relationship between Mother and Adult Daughter, as Reported by Indonesian ( $n = 40$ ), Korean ( $n = 30$ ), and German Daughters ( $n = 55$ )*

	<b>B</b>	<b>SE B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>
(1) Korea <sup>a</sup>	-.10	.16	-.06
(2) Indonesia <sup>a</sup>	-.09	.19	-.06
(3) Open confrontation in childhood <sup>b</sup>	-.31	.10	-.36**
(4) Interdependence with respect to family <sup>b</sup>	.14	.12	.16
(5) Expectations of an adult daughter <sup>b</sup>	.14	.06	.44*
1 x 3-.04	.17	-.03	
2 x 3-.01	.16	-.00	
1 x 4 .52	.21	.24*	
2 x 4-.06	.21	-.04	
1 x 5-.11	.09	-.16	
2 x 5-.10	.16	-.06	

Note. <sup>a</sup> Dummy variable, reference group was Germany; <sup>b</sup> centered indicators.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Moreover, only correlations independent of culture were found. Reported past experiences of parenting were strongly correlated with the present quality of relationship independent of culture. The more the daughters remembered open confrontations, the lower was the current quality of relationship with the mother. With respect to filial obligations, higher expectations of an adult daughter correlated with a better relationship quality across the whole sample without any interaction with culture.

According to the model of intergenerational solidarity, a balance between help given and help received should improve the relationship quality. Since, in Germany, social support questions were only assessed in the East German sample, multiple regressions comprising the reciprocity indicator were restricted to the smaller subsample from East Germany ( $n = 30$ ). Again a multiple regression with the two culture dummies (now with East Germany as reference group), centered indicators including reciprocity in help exchange, and the respective interaction terms was conducted. Beyond the results described in the above-mentioned analysis, an interaction of the Indonesia-Germany comparison and the reciprocity indicator was almost significant ( $b = .23$ ,  $SEb = .13$ ,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $p < .08$ ). Multiple regressions were conducted separately for the three cultures. The reciprocity between help given and received was negatively, but non-significantly correlated with relationship quality in the East German sample ( $\beta = -.20$ ,  $p > .10$ ). However, the direction of the correlations for Indonesian women was exactly the opposite. Those who thought that they give more help than they receive reported having a better relationship with their mother ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .09$ ). Among the Korean women, the correlation was again negative and merely significant: Daughters who gave more help than they received reported a lower quality of the relationship with the mother ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p < .08$ ). The greatest difference in the correlational pattern occurred between Korea and Indonesia, and in fact an analysis with a comparison of the Korean and Indonesian correlation revealed a significant interaction effect ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The illustration of this interaction in Figure 1 followed the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991).

## Discussion

In sum, the analyses of the current quality of the adult mother-daughter relationship showed that socialization experiences, particularly open

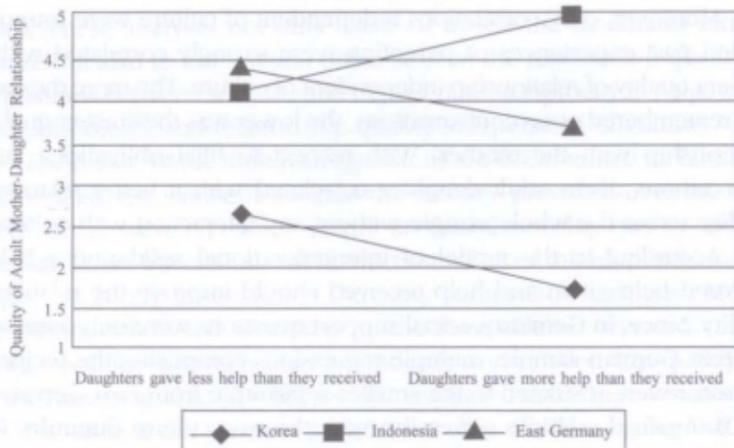


Figure 1. Quality of adult mother-daughter relationship as a function of reciprocity of help and culture (slopes of the simple regression lines).

confrontations in adolescence, were relevant for the evaluation of the relationship quality in all three samples as well as for the expectations of an adult daughter. High interdependent orientations with respect to the family correlated with a better relationship quality only in the Korean sample. If help given and help received were unbalanced, the daughters giving more than they received, the mother-daughter relationship was of poorer quality in the Korean sample and of better quality in the Indonesian sample (according to the daughters' reports). Thus, our expectation that emotional aspects are more relevant for the mother-daughter relationship in Korea and Germany, while norms and values are more relevant in Indonesia, was not confirmed.

One striking result is that emotional factors as well as filial obligations played a similar role in all three cultures. In all three cultures, the memories of parenting experienced during adolescence are strongly connected to the current quality of relationship as shown by cross-cultural similarities in factors that coincide with relationship aspects.

However, we also found some differences. If more help flows from the adult daughter to the parents than vice versa, the Korean daughters report having a worse relationship with the mother, while the Indonesian

women perceived a better relationship. The data from the Indonesian participants may reflect a more traditional view of the mother-daughter relationship in that more support from the daughter corresponds with a high level of expectation that filial obligations be met. The Korean pattern seems to be more typical for independently oriented individuals. In fact, the Korean women were less interdependently oriented towards their family than the Indonesian women (Schwarz, Chakkarath, & Trommsdorff, 2002) (we did not measure independence). As mentioned above, among Korean women, unbalanced support is connected with poorer relationship quality. With respect to this correlation between reciprocity in help and relationship quality, we did find similarities between the Korean and the East German sample, maybe because the two samples were comparable in terms of interdependence with respect to the family (Schwarz et al., 2002) as well as the experience of rapid social change (after German unification).

What can explain the Korean responses? From our point of view, the high educations of the Korean interviewees together with the rapid social change in Korea are crucial factors. The Korean mothers in our sample had an above-average level of education and thus form an elite group within their culture. As Hyung (2001) has shown, well-educated women in Korea do not hold traditional values very strongly. Our analyses showed that in this respect they differ from the Indonesian women, although the Indonesian women were also highly educated. Thus, these Korean women seem to represent vanguards of social change. Simultaneously, traditional values and norms still prevail in the larger Korean society (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Inglehart et al., 1998; Sung, 1998). Taken together, the Korean women in our study are torn between their independent orientations and the more traditional expectations of the society with respect to intergenerational relations. This constellation can undermine intergenerational relations as was suggested by a study on Hong Kong Chinese in comparison to Australians (Noels et al., 2001).

A word of caution is appropriate. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, statements on causal links cannot be made. Furthermore, the validity of any substantial generalization of the results is reduced by the small sample sizes and the bias toward higher education of the Asian women. The data from the main study of the Value of Children project, which is still in progress, will overcome at least the latter difficulties. Nevertheless, the present study provides insight into the interrelationships

of social change towards modernization and the family relationships in adulthood.

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