The Interactive Impact of Organizational and National Cultures on the Impression Management Strategies of Employees

Örgütsel ve Ulusal Kültürlerin Çalışanların İzlenim Yönetimi Stratejileri Üzerindeki Etkileri

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Abstract

This theoretical article aims to contribute to the literature on the cultural antecedents of employees' impression management (IM) strategies in the workplace. Studies investigating the impact of cultural values on the IM strategies of employees have mainly examined the role of the institutional environment, namely national culture dimensions. However, studies focusing on how the immediate cultural environment of organizations may influence the IM strategies are scarce. Using the person-situation theory and descriptive and injunctive norm approach to the study of culture, this article provides several propositions on how the organizational cultural values in conjunction and interaction with broader national cultural values may cause variance in the IM strategies of employees. I specifically propose that job-focused and supervisor-focused IM strategies should vary by the degree of performance orientation in organizations, and this causal impact should vary across cultures based on their varying degrees of collectivism and power distance.

Keywords: Impression management, national culture, organizational culture, performance orientation, collectivism, power distance

Özet

Bu kuramsal çalışma, işyerlerinde çalışanların kullandıkları izlenim yönetimi (İY) stratejilerinin kültürel öncülleri hakkındaki yazına katkıda bulunmayı amaçla-

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maktadır. Kültürel değerlerin çalışanların başvurdukları İY stratejileri üzerindeki etkisini araştıran çalışmalar, ağırlıklı olarak kurumsal çevrenin, yani ulusal kültür boyutlarının rolünü incelemiştir. Bununla birlikte, örgütlerin yakın kültürel çevrelerinin İY stratejilerini nasıl etkileyebileceğine odaklanan çalışmaların sayısı sınırlıdır. Kültür araştırmalarında kişi-durum teorisini ve tanımlayıcı ve önleyici norm yaklaşımını kullanan makalede, örgütlerin kültürel değerlerinin daha geniş ulusal kültürel değerlerle birlikte ve onlarla etkileşimli olarak çalışanların İY stratejilerinde nasıl farklılıklara neden olabileceğine dair önermeler sunulmaktadır. Özellikle de iş ve yönetici odaklı İY stratejilerinin örgütlerdeki performans oryantasyonunun derecesine göre değişmesi gerektiği ve bu nedensel etkinin değişen toplulukçuluk düzeylerine ve güç mesafelerine göre kültürler arasında değişiklikler göstermesi gerektiği önerilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İzlenim yönetimi, ulusal kültür, örgüt kültürü, performans odaklılık, toplulukçuluk, güç mesafesi

Introduction

Research on impression management (IM) has mainly focused on four main fields including antecedents of IM, general evaluations of IM behaviors, IM in the context of the selection process, and the relationship between IM, performance appraisals, and career success (Bolino et al., 2008). Studies on IM have mainly investigated its antecedents (e.g., Van Iddekinge et al.., 2007; Roulin, & Bourdage, 2017) and outcomes (e.g., Wayne & Liden, 1995; Leary, 2019). In spite of the abundance of empirical research on the antecedents and outcomes in organizational and environmental levels of analysis, research investigating how values and norms within organizations may influence this construct and how the impact of these values and norms may be influenced with national values (i.e., national culture) is missing (Khiliji, 2010).

In investigating the relationship between values and norms of the environment and IM, research has mainly examined the role of national culture dimensions on IM practices. For instance, Reimer and Shavitt (2011) investigated how collectivism-individualism determines the automaticity of using different types of IM strategies. Zaimond and Drory (2001) stated that power distance could be another factor that can determine the type of impression management in a way that upward impression management will be more supervisor focused in contexts with higher degrees of power distance. It is evident that research on the association between culture and IM has mostly been based on a subjectivist approach aiming to differentiate the IM used by various national groups on the basis of their recognized cultural orientation such as individualism-collectivism and power distance,

and has not given sufficient attention to the role of cultural norms of such immediate environments as organizations and individuals' perceptions of these norms on the basis of which they would adopt different IM strategies. This is indicated to be a huge research gap in cross-cultural IM research (Khilji et al., 2010). Harris et al. (2013) also note that "less is known about different workplace cultural norms related to IM usage and how those workplace norms affect employee outcomes". Based on person-organization fit theory and person-situation theory (Mischel, 2004), they argued that not only is it important to explore the usage of IM behaviors and the cultural norms for these behaviors, but it is also necessary to study the interaction of these two variables. They claimed that organizational cultures of IM will intensify or lessen IM behaviors- outcome associations.

To this end, relying on person-situation theory and descriptive and injunctive norm approach to the study of culture (Gelfand et al., 2011), this theoretical paper aims to theorize on how the prevalent cultural norms within an organization can influence the type of IM strategies used by employees. More specifically, I theorize how various levels of performance orientation as a cultural dimension of organizations which have been overlooked in IM research can determine the type of IM strategies used by employees and how other cultural dimensions including power distance and individualism-collectivism moderate this relationship. In doing so this theoretical paper provides a significant contribution to the literature on the antecedents as well as the environmental boundary conditions of impression management.

Investigating the environmental boundary conditions and antecedents of IM is critical since different environments necessitate different IM strategies. Cross-cultural research in the field of IM is compatible with the descriptive norm approach to the study of culture and person-organization fit theory since much of the research is based on the assumption that individuals will be able to be most effective in their IM if they can perceive correctly what the social and cultural norms of their environment are and act accordingly. Much of the IM cross-cultural research has highlighted that IM strategies cannot be appropriate across all contexts, and particular strategies will be applicable and useful when fitting contexts. For instance, according to Kamau (2009), the success of a given IM strategy will depend on the cultural environment because particular strategies are useful in some cultures but not others. In most studies, IM is referred to as a manipulative process in which such nonverbal cues as facial expressions, smiling, eye contact, touching, and physical proximity are manipulated in order to adapt to the cul-

tural norms of the host culture (Spong & Kamau, 2012). These claims indicate that impression management strategies and behaviors are contingent upon the social and cultural contexts and norms which would promote some and restrain others. For instance, in a context where high performance is stressed, using supervisor-focused strategies might not be as effective as self-focused ones that embrace attempts to have high performance as one of the main IM dimensions.

In the following section, I delineate IM and its strategies. This section is followed by a discussion of IM and its links to culture. Moving on, I theorize the impact of performance orientation in the organization-level on IM strategies and how these causal effects are moderated by national culture dimensions. The conclusion and discussion of the propositions close this theoretical paper.

Impression Management

The term impression management (IM) was first coined by the social psychologist, Goffman (1959), in his seminal book, Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Bilbow, 1997) and is defined as attempts of actors to create, maintain, and protect positive images of themselves in the minds of a target audience (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). In another definition, Rosenfeld et al. (1995), define IM as a process by which individuals try to influence the impression others have of them. It is any behavior by individuals attempting to control and manipulate others' impressions of them (Zaidman & Drory, 2001). The basic premise of impression management theory is that an actor consciously constructs a persona in order to maximize personal gain in a given situation; that is, employees use the IM strategies in order to increase their shares of organizational benefits and resources (Chen, 2008). The benefits could be financial such as pay raise or social such as higher degrees of attention and interest from the managers or coworkers. On this basis, members of organizations are expected to engage in behavioral repertoires to present the most positive images of themselves possible when they are seeking an individual interest or seeking power from influential or powerful others (Sussman et al., 2002). The propositions in this paper are based on this main assumption of consciousness of IM behaviors and strategies.

Research in organizational behavior has mainly focused on the employees as agents of IM and managers or organizations as targets of IM practices and processes. In organizational settings, a variety of behaviors such as ingratiation, intimidation, opinion conformity, other enhancement, apologies, and many oth-

ers are attributed to IM that individuals do to manage the impression of others (Bolino et al., 2008). In a more general sense, these behaviors have been grouped into more general strategies. In one categorization, Jones and Pittman (1982) categorized IM into five strategies including self-promotion which emphasizes one's current and previous achievements to indicate that one is adept. The second strategy is ingratiation that involves flattery and deference to others. The third strategy, exemplification, goes beyond the requirements and responsibilities of one's job to appear commendable. Intimidation is the fourth strategy which refers to the use of coercive tactics to indicate that one is dangerous and a threat to others. Finally, supplication strategy refers to how one pretends to appear needy in order to create the perception that one is worth more attention. Mohamed et al. (1999) also presented two main categories of IM behaviors. Assertive strategies refer to one's attempt to establish a particular reputation for oneself given a particular situation. Defensive strategies, on the other hand, are used as a result of poor performance (e.g. apologies, self-deprecation, etc.)

The strategies that have been targeted by IM researchers divide IM into two main types including self-presentation and other-enhancement (Wayne & Liden, 1995). In self-presentation, actors enhance themselves by acting as an example, doing hard work, becoming a model employee, etc. In other-enhancement IM type which is also referred to as supervisor-based IM, however, actors are mainly after enhancing others through flattery, favor doing, deference, etc. In organizational settings, self-presentation tactics and strategies would emerge in the form of attempts for high performance, responsibility, showing high integrity in doing tasks, and all the other actions that are taken to create and manage an image on the basis of one's own capabilities, characteristics, and competencies. Barsness et al. (2005) call this type of IM job-based IM and define it as "behavior focused on self-promotion, such as alerting one's supervisor to one's accomplishments which are intended to highlight job competence and performance". Likewise, other enhancement strategies in organizational settings will appear in the form of giving in to supervisors/managers, harmonizing with them, harmonizing with the dominant values in organizations, flattering for higher levels and peers, and all the other behaviors which aim to create a positive image of self in others through enhancing them. Barsness et al. (2005) name this type of tactics supervisor-based IM. Regarding the main focus of the proposed research on organizational settings, the proposed research will consider job-focused IM and supervisor-focused IM as the main sub-dimensions of IM.

Culture and Impression Management

Cross-cultural research in IM basically focuses on the role of cultural context and how it makes the application of IM strategies effective. The underlying premise of the literature is that different cultural contexts have different verbal and non-verbal cues that demand different behaviors, that is, behaviors will be effective if they are adjusted to the norms and prevalent verbal and nonverbal cues of the extant social and cultural environment (Giacalone, 1998). Different cultures have different modes of verbal and nonverbal cues and norms such as eye contact, body language, interpersonal relationship norms, etc. that need to be emulated and adapted to by agents of other cultures. On these grounds, it is assumed that IM strategies and behaviors will also be effective if they match the cultural norms and requirements of a given context. Snyder (1974) stated that IM should involve "monitoring one's nonverbal behaviors, in line with what is appropriate in a given social environment". Kamau (2009) also notes that IM strategies will be successful on the condition that they match the cultural context in which they are used. This premise is also evident in the context of organizations. Foldes et al. (2006) noted that paying close attention to the various aspects of a cultural environment can promote job performance. He found a significant relationship between IM and job performance with the moderating role of adjustment.

Culture- IM fit also plays a significant role in communication processes. IM mostly occurs during interpersonal interactions, and accurate interpretation of signals that are exchanged during interaction is vitally important for effective communication (Roberts, 2005). Therefore, sending signals that are not in accord with the accepted cultural norms of the collective or the individual receiver will cause miscommunication and confusion (Khilji et al., 2010). This indicates that the appropriate use of IM strategies which match the underlying assumptions and values of the receiver will make them more effective through more effective communication.

The definitions of IM which were provided in the previous section indicate that IM is the process of attempting to create and maintain positive images of self in the minds of others. The cross-cultural definition of IM, however, gives it a strategic and manipulative sense. According to Gangestad and Snyder (2000), cross-cultural IM refers to "adapting the conveyed self-image to suit a different cultural environment". Spong and Kamau (2012) defined cross-cultural IM as the strategic manipulation of one's nonverbal behavior in order to fit the

norms and requirements of the host culture. The cross-cultural definitions of the concept present IM as a conscious phenomenon, that is, individuals doing IM behaviors or using strategies consciously and deliberately manipulate their behaviors to make them as appropriate as possible to the cultural and social norms of a given environment, and construct and manage most positive impressions of themselves in those environments. These definitions are strongly in line with the assumptions of Chen (2008) and Sussman et al. (2008) that the main purpose of adopting IM strategies by employees is maximizing individual gains. As described below, the different cultural norms and values at the organizational and national levels promote distinct IM strategies and behaviors which fit these environments.

Regarding the high significance of cultural context and the necessity of adapting to it, cross-cultural IM research has paid particular attention to the adjustment to cultural environments. Spong and Kamau (2012), focusing on how cultural knowledge management relevant to nonverbal behavior norms, found that people exposed to a new culture are more alert than usual to their own and others' nonverbal behaviors; through more self-monitoring and social interactions, they find out about their cultural deficits with regard to the dominant cultural norms. In another study, Montagliani and Giacalone (1998) found that a tendency to IM can predict adaptation to new cultural environments. Across many of these studies, although considered an antecedent, self-monitoring has gained a lot of attention in cross-cultural IM research. For instance, in both Spong and Kamau's and Montagliani and Giacalone's research, self-monitoring behavior was considered to be the main variables which predict adjustment. In a study of the effectiveness of IM tactics, Turnley and Bolino (2001) also found that high self-monitors can use IM tactics more effectively than low self-monitors. The reason is that high self-monitors who tend to adapt their behavior to the norms and requirements of the social environment are very likely to manipulate their behaviors and words in order to fit their environments (Bolino et al., 2008). Hence, whatever cultural context they are exposed to, they are more likely to be able to adapt to those contexts by delving to know more about that context and exploring their own deficiencies with regard to the requirements of those contexts.

In spite of high consensus on the vital role of culture and context in IM strategies and tactics, cross-cultural research on the use and adoption of IM has been very scarce. There has been some research on the role of national culture on the motivation to get engaged in IM behaviors and choice of IM strategies, but

the number of these research works is not considerable (Khliji et al., 2010). Following the value-based approach to the study of culture and its impact on organizational behavior, research on the impact of culture on IM has mostly embraced Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions including collectivism-individualism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Out of these four dimensions, IM research has given particular attention to the role of collectivism-individualism and power distance dimensions.

Reimer and Shavitt (2011) examined how collectivists and individualists differ in the automatic use of IM. He concluded that impression management is a more effortful process for individualists than collectivists. In a study of IM legitimacy, Zaidman and Drory (2001) showed that IM behaviors are more legitimate for Russian immigrants as collectivists than Israelis, and hence they are more engaged in IM processes than their Israeli counterparts. They also found that Israelis who are characterized by lower power distance are more likely to use self-promotion and less likely to use ingratiation tactics. In a similar study on Pakistani, Indian, and Israeli samples, Khilji et al. (2010) also found that collectivists are more likely to engage in relationship-focused IM behaviors than individualists. They also examined the role of power distance and concluded that Israelis who have lower power distance rates are more likely to use initiative-focused strategies than Pakistanis and Indians with more power distance.

The few studies conducted on the role of cultural dimensions on IM have two important implications. First, the need for more study on a deeper study of the already focused cultural dimensions and more contemplation on the role of other cultural dimensions such as masculinity-femininity or performance orientation is needed. Regarding the few studies on the role of Individualism-collectivism and power distance on the use of IM strategies, more studies in different contexts could add to the strength of arguments regarding the proposed relationships between the cultural dimensions and IM. Second, and more importantly, research on the field has taken a value-based and subjectivist approach. There are three main approaches to the study of how culture affects behavior including the subjectivist approach, structuralist approach, and descriptive/injunctive norm approach. In the subjectivist approach, culture is defined as existing in individuals' mental representations rather than social artifacts and realities external to individuals. That is, it is only the individual values that explain cultural differences (Morris et al., 2000). The main concern is that cultures are aggregates of individual values which vary across large units such as countries.

One of the main criticisms of this approach is that it ignores the role of contextual factors such as social norms in individuals' values and behaviors. Advocates of this criticism are the structuralists who mainly emphasize the role of external influences such as cultural norms and constraints on individual values and behaviors (Gabreyana, 1999; Morris et al., 2000). They argue that culture is a separate latent reality from individuals that influences their values and behaviors through institutions, and the institutions might amplify, restrain, or reverse the effect (Schwartz, 2013).

The role of institutions as mediators of the effect of latent culture on individual values questions the validity of cross-country differences and suggests that due to the role of institutions, within-country cultural differences are also expected. This claim was manifested by Fischer and Schwartz (2010) who showed high universal consensus on the importance of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. According to them, only conformity values showed patterns which could suggest measuring culture as shared meaning systems.

The descriptive norm approach is a complementary approach that considers the role of structural external factors such as social and cultural norms in behaviors and values in a more dynamic way (Gelfald et al., 2011). By dynamism, the main concern is that even social and cultural norms can vary across situations and individuals will not act the same way on the basis of their internal values across situations, but they will behave according to their perceptions of the social and cultural norms of their environments. The prevalent norms might or might not be in accord with one's cultural values. However, one will act on the basis of what one perceives of the prevalent norms of the environment in which one is exposed (Gelfald wt al, 2011) or on the basis of what one perceives others think that ought to be done that is referred to as injunctive norm approach (Kinzig et al., 2013). Regarding the role of institutions and on the basis of the descriptive norm approach, one could question whether there is variance in the use of IM tactics within individualist-collectivist or high-low power distance cultures. Are there any other cultural or institutional factors or organizational norms that could influence an individual's preference for any of the stated IM strategies? These are the questions which have not been answered in the literature on the effect of cultural dimensions on IM. A general answer to these questions from a descriptive/injunctive norm perspective would be that individuals will prefer the IM strategies and behaviors which fit the norms and expectations that they perceive as dominant in their environments.

Although such cultural dimensions as individualism-collectivism and power distance can influence the choice of IM strategies, perceived norms and culture of the immediate environments such as an organization where one works as well as perceptions of what is expected to be done hold high potential in influencing this choice. The proposed study will aim to investigate how perceived norms and culture of the organization influence employee's choice of impression management. Performance orientation of organizations that can vary across organizations and within countries is considered to be the main variable that can influence employees' choice of IM strategies. In the next section, the role of performance orientation will be delineated.

Theory and Propositions

The Role Performance Orientation

Performance orientation was identified by Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) as a cultural dimension and refers to the degree to which a culture rewards its members for high performance, performance improvement, and excellence (Javidan & House, 2001; House et al., 2004). Societies high on performance orientation value performance, training, development, innovativeness, and creativity; however, societies low on this dimension give a high value on harmony, loyalty, belonging, and family (Meteev & Nelson 2004). Performance orientation is also associated with an internal locus of control which is related to social values such as ambition, drive, thirst for learning and improvement, and high performance standards (Onyemah et al., 2010). Some attributes of this dimension are also reflected in Hofstede's Masculinity vs. Femininity dimension such as challenge, job recognition, advancement, the importance of money, stress on equity and, etc. (Cazla et al., 2010).

Although performance orientation was first recognized by Weber in his study entitled "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1904) as a cultural dimension, the concept has not necessarily been attributed solely to countries and societies. That is, although it is rightly perceived as a cultural dimension in the society and country level, it has also been considered a managerial characteristic in many countries (Bass et al., 1979; Cazla, 2010) and an important part of leadership (House & Adyta, 1997). Within particular societies, there could be various organizations with various levels of emphasis on performance standards. For instance, Sarros et al. (2005) found performance orientation as one of the main cul-

tural dimensions of Australian organizations which are determined by enthusiasm for the job, results orientation, highly organized employees, and high performance expectations; they expressed this dimension of organizations very similar to the performance orientation defined by GLOBE in that they both reward high performance. Organizations with a high performance-culture emphasize achievement, results, and action as important values and use systems that reward employees (Nohria et al., 2003). Therefore, performance orientation can be defined at the organizational level as well.

According to the descriptive/injunctive norm approach, individuals will act on the basis of the norms and values that they perceive as dominant in their environment. IM strategies and behaviors could be highly influenced by these norms. In organizations with high performance orientation where characteristics such as excellence, innovativeness, development, feedback, and the like are dominant, expected from employees, and rewarded, employees are more likely to adopt job-focused IM strategies through which individuals focus on self-promotion such as alerting supervisors about their accomplishments and highlight their job competence and performance (Barsness, 2005). And in organizations of rather lower performance orientation that put a higher value on employee's loyalty, harmony with managers or supervisors, and integrity and such characteristics as assertiveness, innovativeness, and the like are not significantly acceptable (Javidan, 2004), employees are expected to adopt IM strategies which fit these norms and work better in the organization; they are more likely to attempt to show their loyalty to managers and organization, present themselves of high integrity, and enhance their supervisors. As mentioned, Barsness (2005) regards these behaviors associated with the supervisor-focused IM strategy. In sum, Employees will prefer IM strategies which fit the perceived prevalent norms and values (based on the descriptive norm approach), and expectations from them (based on the injunctive norm approach) in their organization. On this basis, the following propositions are presented:

Proposition 1A: In organizations where performance orientation is higher, employees are more likely to adopt job-focused IM strategies,

Proposition 1B: In organizations where performance orientation is lower, employees are more likely to adopt supervisor-focused IM strategies.

The Moderating Role of Individualism/Collectivism

Cross-cultural research on IM such as that of Reimer and Shavitt (2011), Khilji et al. (2010), and Zaidman and Drory (2001) have asserted the role of individualism-collectivism dimension on the choice of IM strategies. The main idea is that collectivists and individualists are prone to choose particular IM strategies due to what they value as individualists and collectivists. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Lalwani and Shavitt (2009), collectivists and individualists have different construals of self, others, and the interaction of the two. They emphasized that although individualists (e.g. Americans) stress attending to the self, the appreciation of their difference from other people, and the importance of asserting their self, such as their personal characteristics, abilities, and competencies, collectivists (e.g. Japanese) emphasize "attending to and fitting in with others and the importance of harmonious interdependence with them". On this basis, individualistic societies put a high emphasis on individual identity, individual goals, and individual welfare. Collectivistic societies, on the other hand, put more emphasis on group memberships, give great weight to communal goals, and value group welfare more than individual welfare (Hofstede, 1980).

Regarding the tendency of collectivists to more harmony with the group and emphasis on the importance of group goals, Zaidman and Drory (2001) found that impression management is considered more acceptable and more legitimate in collectivistic societies than individualistic ones. Lalwani et al. (2006) also found that collectivists score higher on various dimensions of impression management in comparison to individualists. Reimer and Shavitt's (2011) finding that IM is a more automatic and less effortful process for collectivists is another example of a strong relationship between collectivism and IM. More interestingly, Erdogan and Liden (2006) found the moderating role of collectivism in the relationship between ingratiation (as the main sub-dimension of supervisor-focused IM strategy) and perceived unfairness, that is, collectivists are more likely to use soft influence tactics, specifically ingratiation, as a response to perceived unfairness. However, research on this relationship has gone one step further attempting to investigate what kinds of IM strategies and tactics are favored more by collectivists in comparison to individualists.

The emphasis of individualism and collectivism on particular values makes particular behaviors (e.g. particular IM behaviors) acceptable in individualistic and collectivistic societies. The high emphasis of collectivism on harmony, obedience, and conformity, emphasis on consent, showing love for work in order to display feelings and relationship-oriented behavior is more acceptable and more

likely to be successful in collectivistic contexts (Drory & Zaimond, 2007). On the other hand, IM strategies relating to individual initiative-taking, demonstration of individual abilities and competencies that are in turn associated with job-focused IM will be more effective in individualistic societies that highly value initiative-taking, demonstration of autonomy, self-reliance, and independence (Khilji et al., 2010; Drory & Zaimond, 2007). These findings that individualists are more prone to adopt job-focused and collectivists are more prone to adopt supervisor-focused IM strategies attest to the strength of this argument. Regarding the significant role of the individualism-collectivism dimension in individuals' choice of IM strategies, it is proposed that:

> *Proposition 2A: Collectivism moderates the effect of performance orientation on individuals' choice of IM strategies. In a way that with higher levels of collectivism, low performance orientation will lead to more tendency to adopt supervisor-focused IM strategies.*

> *Proposition 2B: Collectivism will moderate the effect of performance orientation on individuals' choice of IM strategies. In a way that in lower levels of collectivism, high performance orientation will lead to more tendency to the adoption of job-focused IM strategies.*

The Moderating Role of Power Distance

Hofstede (1980) defined power distance as the extent to which the members of organizations who hold less power accept the unequal distribution of power. As it was shown for the role of collectivism, higher power distance also predicts IM in such a way that in societies with higher power distance, impressing superiors is considered more legitimate than those with less power distance (Bond, 1999). Strongly emphasizing the role of social norms and cultural factors in ingratiation, Pandey (1986) argued that the traditional hierarchical structures are the main facilitators of ingratiation that is one of the main supervisor-focused IM dimensions. This is because high power distance creates norms that call individuals to show obedience and loyalty to the higher levels of hierarchy. Another reason for the legitimacy of supervisor-focused strategies would be the relatively higher levels of dependence on the managers and supervisors in higher power distance contexts that can in turn make employees adopt more IM strategies to please their supervisors and managers (Roberts, 2005). Low power distance cultures prefer consultation, participation, cooperation, and practicality, while high power distance cultures prefer autocratic or majority rule decision-making and are reluctant to trust one another (Meteev

& Nelson, 2004). This distinction can also highlight the role of various levels of power distance in predicting and encouraging different IM strategies. Higher power distance encourages and legitimatizes IM; additionally, it can encourage the adoption of supervisor-based IM strategies by emphasizing more dependence on supervisors, norms calling for obedience and loyalty to managers, supervisors, or organizations. Zaidman and Drory's (2001) and Khilji et al.'s (2010) finding that in lower levels of power distance, individuals will be more reluctant to adopt such supervisor-focused IM tactics as ingratiation in comparison to higher levels of power distance is a good example. On this basis the third proposition is stated as:

> *Proposition 3A: Power distance moderates the effect of performance orientation on individuals' adoption of IM strategies. In a way that with higher degrees of power distance, lower performance orientation will encourage more tendency for the adoption of supervisor-focused IM strategies.*

> *Proposition 3B: Power distance moderates the effect of performance orientation on individuals' adoption of IM strategies. In a way that with lower degrees of power distance, higher performance orientation will encourage more tendency for the adoption of job-focused IM strategies.*

The Proposed Model

On the basis of the propositions presented, the proposed research model is presented in figure 1. The model suggests that performance orientation can influence individuals' choice of IM strategies, and two cultural dimensions including individualism-collectivism and power distance moderate this relationship.
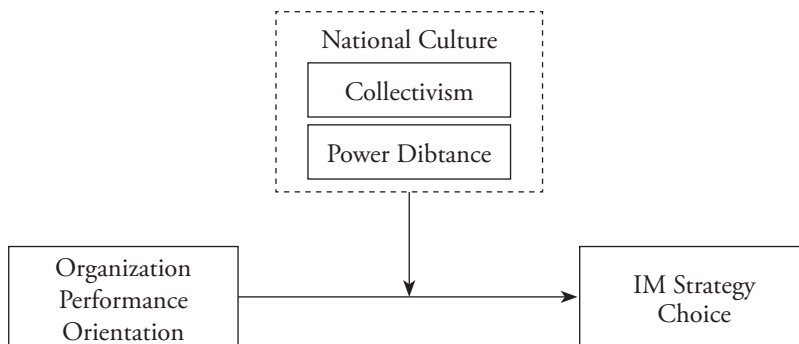

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Conclusion

This theoretical paper aimed to address the research gap on the environmental determinants of IM strategies of employees. In doing so, this theoretical paper specifically focused on the role of the organizational culture (i.e., performance orientation) and its interactions with two dimensions of national culture including individualism/collectivism and power distance. This paper specifically posited that varying degrees of performance orientation in an organization should lead to different types of IM strategies. Although high performance-oriented contexts promote job-focused IM strategies, lower degrees of performance orientation should encourage supervisor-focused ones. Assuming that the impact of organizational culture on employee behaviors is not independent of the overall informal institutional context, that is, the impact of organizational context on employee behaviors is in turn influenced by national culture (Gelfand et al., 2008), it was also theorized that the impact of performance orientation as an organizational culture on IM strategies should also be moderated by individualism/collectivism and power distance as dimensions of national culture.

This study contributes to the literature on the environmental determinants of IM strategies, addressing calls for research on the impact of workplace cultural norms on the IM strategies of employees (Khilji et al., 2010; Harris et al., 2013). Considering the absence of research on the impact of workplace values on IM strategies, the propositions of this paper set the stage for future empirical attempts to examine the propositions of this research with empirical data. This paper specifically calls for cross-cultural research on the impact of performance orientation and other possible workplace values on IM strategies, as well as their boundary conditions. Future studies could examine the impact of values both in organizational and national levels of analysis and their possible interactions. Considering the strong association between national and organizational culture and that organizational culture is strongly influenced by national culture (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004), this paper encourages future research to consider the role of organizational culture in conjunction with that of national culture in predicting employees' IM strategies.

The propositions were developed based on Hofstede's (1980) and Globe's (House et al., 2004) dimensions of national culture. Future studies could theorize cultural determinants of IM strategies both in organizational and national levels of analysis using value dimensions other than those of Hofstede or Globe such

as those of Schwartz (1994). Schwartz's (1994) model of national culture values is strongly similar to those of Hofstede and Globe. For instance, hierarchy versus egalitarianism holds a lot in common with the dimension of power distance which was theorized to moderate the impact of performance orientation on IM strategies. Future research may theorize and examine how similar or different the moderating impact of this specific dimension is to or from that of power distance. Similar analogies would be drawn for his other dimensions including embeddedness versus autonomy and mastery versus harmony. Such efforts focusing on different national culture dimensions could also contribute to the literature on the construct validity of these national culture dimensions (Venaik & Brewer, 2010; Venaik et al., 2013). This literature has strongly questioned the similarity of corresponding national culture dimensions with the same or similar labels. For instance, Venaik and Brewer (2010) showed that uncertainty avoidance presented by Hofstede (1980) is significantly different from Globe's uncertainty avoidance society practices since the former emphasizes a society's degree of stress and anxiety concerning ambiguity and uncertainty, and the latter mainly concerns with a society's rule orientation.

It should be noted that data collection on IM strategies of employees of organizations across countries is not easy, and this process becomes even more arduous when the relevant data concerns the cultural values of individuals within these entities, which, in turn, accounts for the main limitation of this theoretical paper. This paper remains at the theoretical level with testable propositions for future research since the time and resource limitations did not allow empirical data collection and analysis. Even though such a universal data collection and analysis may be beyond the abilities of many researchers, qualitative and indigenous studies in single or multiple countries could still add valuable contributions. For instance, future research can qualitatively scrutinize how the impact of performance orientation and other dimensions of organizational culture influence the IM strategies of employees within specific national cultural contexts. Such a study in Turkey, for instance, which is categorized under the collectivistic and uncertainty avoidance cultures with strong degrees of power distance and honor, could be valuable. Considering the nature of different IM strategies, while some strategies are promoted by these national culture dimensions, the emerging organization-level cultures that increasingly emphasize performance due to increasing competition at the national and global levels may attenuate or intensify the impact of these national culture values on IM strategies. Exploration of such mechanisms within a specific culture or a limited number of

cultures would play a significant role in addressing the research gap identified in this research. Methodologically, for instance, future studies could use content analyses in order to find how specific cultural values emanating from the national and/or organizational sources lead to distinct IM strategies and behaviors.

This research provides some practical and managerial implications as well. First, the arguments would be specifically applicable to expatriates who work in organizational or national cultures that are significantly distant from their own. These arguments increase the managerial awareness that the IM strategies that they apply in their home country context, may not be applicable in other culturally distant contexts. For instance, expatriates from organizations with a strong emphasis on performance orientation who value job-based IM strategies may revise these strategies in favor of more supervisor-based ones if they are sent to organizations that are not as performance-oriented. They need to consider the contingencies both at the national and organizational levels.

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