Gender-specific Effects at Work: An Empirical Study of Four Countries

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Using a questionnaire based upon the work of Geert Hofstede, we examined the effects of gender on the following three work-related dimensions: the importance of work-related goals, the preference for performance rewards and the preference for management styles. The study was conducted for a multinational corporation headquartered in Germany with branches in China, Japan and the USA. Even though some inter-country differences in the importance of work-related matters are identified and intra-country gender differences exist in work goal evaluation, overall we find that men and women exhibit similar preferences concerning performance rewards and managerial styles. Finally, for the three dimensions studied, our data do not confirm the stereotypical work-related gender differences often reported in the literature and popular press.

Keywords: motivation, performance rewards, work goals

Introduction

Our globalized world presents many challenges and opportunities. One of them, faced by international corporations, is to ascertain the best way of leveraging particular advantages resulting from globalization so as at least to keep pace with their global competition. For many organizations, this has resulted in the decision to develop extensions of the corporation, whether by ventures, partnering or expansion into foreign countries, in order to ameliorate their channels of distribution, improve the immediacy of their logistical systems, or enhance their cost competitiveness by establishing production linkages in the low salary/high productivity zones (Maghrabi, 2006). The movement to globalization requires that the human resource managers of these multinational corporations (MNC) design incentive systems for their globally extended organizations that meet the usual standards of
effectiveness and efficiency. According to Lazear (1998), developing such incentives and the attendant allocation of resources are the prime economic organizational directives. Globalization thus introduces an international component in incentive systems development as an important design variable, in conjunction with all the other usual behavioural and institutional considerations. One temptation may be to try to use the current incentive system as it has been functioning in the headquarters for the foreign subsidiaries. In general, this has had disastrous consequences, as noted, for example, by Richter (2001) who discusses the DaimlerChrysler corporation case — a primer in what not to do. Another tempting possibility is to modify the headquarters’ incentive system for the foreign subsidiaries based upon prevailing foreign stereotypes in hopes of developing reasonable incentive systems. This is the point of departure for our study. We want to investigate the relevance of using prevailing gender stereotypes as one finds them reported in the literature concerned with employee motivation. Consider now the basic nature of the design process from the perspective of a human resource manager.

Incentives can range from financial rewards, such as salary and bonus, to non-financial rewards, such as positive feedback. All of these play a key role in shaping and reinforcing employees’ work behaviour and therefore are important, as Lazear (1998) suggests, in the economic deployment of the firm’s resources. Consistent with the idea of the institutional framework (Williamson, 1996) and as previous research has shown (Rehu et al., 2005a, 2005b and 2006), companies in different countries often find that cultural and legal differences need to be considered in determining country-specific rewards in designing their incentive systems. In addition to national differences in compensation plans, one needs to consider diversity broadly; not only country differences but also gender differences within countries.

To investigate the gender-specific aspects of motivation in the work environment, concentrating, in particular, on rewards in the globalizing business environment, we will examine gender differences concerning the importance of work-related goals; which rewards are motivating and management style preferences in China, Germany, Japan and the USA. Our study may help to identify the important and motivating aspects of performance rewards as well as to minimize employees’ exposure to non-motivating rewards. Additionally, the results may provide country-specific profiles that may give insights as to how national characteristics, motivation and gender may be connected. This information may then be used to ascertain if the usual gender stereotypes are relevant in selecting performance rewards.

Gender stereotypes, profiles and hypotheses

Much of the research on the nature of work and motivation has focused on differences between women’s and men’s work value orientation. Hofstede
(2001) examined questionnaire responses from employees at the IBM Corporation and found that men valued advancement, earnings, training and up-to-datedness more than did women; whereas women valued a friendly atmosphere, position security, physical conditions, a positive relationship with their supervisor, and co-operation with colleagues more highly than did men. Konrad et al. (2000), after conducting a meta-analysis of 31 gender-related studies found that men were more concerned about earnings and responsibility, whereas women were more concerned about prestige, challenge, task significance, variety, growth, job security, co-workers, supervisors and the physical work environment. Bigoness (1988) investigated job attribute preferences between female and male Master of Business Administration candidates. He found that men placed greater emphasis on salary while women placed a greater emphasis on professional growth. Major and Konar (1984) analysed the causes of gender differences in pay expectation and argued that the differences can be ascribed to women placing less importance on salary than do men. Reif et al. (1976) studied the attitudes of men and women concerning 33 particular rewards. They found that gender was the discriminating variable with respect to compensation and direct as well as indirect economic benefits.

Many of these studies that have identified gender differences may be thought of in the context of male hegemony, in particular the idea of a ‘patriarchal dividend’ which is at the core of Connell’s (1997) work. Simply put: the world was fashioned by men and one should not be surprised that they have organized it to make things easy on themselves. Further, attempts to distribute or dissipate their patriarchal dividend are likely to be met with reactions ranging from overt transparent resistance to the more subtle form of sabotage — backlash.

However, other studies challenge the findings of gender differences in the workplace. Pearson and Chatterjee (2002) studied 205 Chinese managers regarding the importance they place on managerial work goals. Their results demonstrate that gender homogeneity was the dominant theme, although both convergence and divergence were found in certain work goals. Dubinsky et al. (1993) examined gender-based distinctions in salespersons’ work motivation. Their findings reveal minimal differences in motivation between men and women. Further, Cromie (1987) examined the entrepreneurial motives that underlie the decision to start a business and shows that both genders are motivated principally by autonomy, achievement and a desire for job satisfaction.

Morris et al. (2005) suggest that such conflicting evidence on possible gender effects is consistent with the fact that all psychological models of intention and behaviour are conditioned by instrumental variables that predict different results given different parameters. For example, they tested the theory of planned behaviour of Ajzen (1985, 1991) and found:
From a theoretical perspective, our results provide evidence that the relationships posited by the theory of planned behaviour can benefit from the inclusion of moderators that are relevant for the behaviour in question. (Morris et al., 2005, p. 82)

The fact that one expects moderation respecting gender-specific findings regarding work goal importance, preference and motivation is the basis of our study. A further possibility for such conflicting evidence may be the very nature of these studies. One may expect to find differences between students’ opinions about future work expectations compared to surveyed employees. Within this latter group, one would expect variations in assessment of work goal importance, preferences for particular incentives and motivational differences between full-time and part-time employees (Hakim, 1995). For our study, we have accrued information only from full-time employees. We examine whether the stereotypical gender profiles which may be gleaned from the literature are useful in designing incentive systems. This is essentially the same testing design used by Hayes et al. (2004) in examining the intuitive stereotype of women managers compared to their male counterparts. We therefore will construct such testing profiles and examine them to see if our data follow the gender stereotype. Rejecting said stereotypical profiles would then lend weight to the view that one must consider gender in its various contexts to capture its effects in the incentive design process. Consider now, the gender-stereotypical profiles in question.

Gender stereotypes are a set of shared beliefs and majority agreements which prescribe differences between men and women in their attitudes, values, interests, psychological traits, social relations and occupations (Golombok and Fivush, 1994). A great deal of research has been conducted to answer the questions, ‘what are the characteristics of the “typical” man and woman?’ and ‘what are their different needs?’

Best and Williams (2001) found that there was substantial agreement across 27 countries concerning the psychological characteristics differentially associated with men and women. In a study of Norwegian business students, Gooderham et al. (2004) found men to be more materialistic than women. Hofstede (2001), as discussed above, also found gender value differences for the IBM employees that he studied. In a follow-up study, Stedham and Yamamura (2004) found, using Hofstede’s instrument, that gender differences exist in the power distance dimension for Japan and that for the USA as well as for Japan there were differences in the individualism/collectivism dimension. According to Cross and Markus (1993), Simon and Nath (2004) and Pomeroy (2005), in many societies the process of individual emotion learning regarding gender behaviour starts from childhood through observation and imitation of gender-related social roles. This develops different interests for boys and girls and so ‘prepares’ them, consistent with the theory of planned behaviour, for the expected gender roles in their adult...
lives. Later, such gender images are reinforced in schools, by the family and in the workplace. In particular, childbearing and breastfeeding require that women stay at home longer, which emphasizes their role as homemakers while highlighting their male counterparts’ role of being the income source for the family. Sayer (2005) documents these tendencies over a 23-year period in the USA. Finally, according to Konrad et al. (2000), the confluence and internalization of the inherent traits and learned behaviour causes men and women to exhibit small but statistically significant differences in needs, values and attitudes.

**Suggested profiles**

In general, this literature suggests the following stereotypical characterizations:

**Stereotype 1:** men are perceived to be strong, active, assertive, competitive and tough, and are characterized by focusing on dominance, autonomy, aggression and economic achievements.

**Stereotype 2:** women are best suited for the tender roles, that is, to tend to the care of the home, to children and to people in general. Thus, women are more concerned with nurturance, affiliation, deference and the quality of family life.

Supposing that such gender stereotypes are reasonable in characterizing employees’ preferences for job attributes and therefore do actually provide useful information for designing compensation plans, then one would assume that men would value earnings, challenge, advancement, freedom, recognition, training and use of skills more highly than do women, because these factors satisfy the masculine stereotypical needs of economic success, autonomy and achievement. In comparison, women should value positive interpersonal relationships, the physical environment, security, fringe benefits and family-related factors more highly than do men, because they fulfil the stereotypically feminine needs of family, social affiliation and quality of family life. Specifically, the above characterizations suggest the following groupings that we will offer as gender profiles.

**Gender profile 1a, men’s goals:** men consider challenge, earnings, advancement, recognition, training, work autonomy and the use of their skills to be more important work goals than do women.

**Gender profile 1b, women’s goals:** women consider co-operation, relationship with immediate managers, a desirable living area, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, job security and personal time to be more important work goals than do men.
In what follows we examine the extent to which these profiles are consistent with our study data by looking at the importance of work-related goals, which rewards are motivating, and managerial style preferences. As noted above, literature exists that is at variance with the belief that gender difference is the prevalent characterization. We will present this alternative literature as part of our results, to enrich the discussion of where we do not see gender differences and where such differences seem to exist.

Furthermore, if one assumes that performance rewards also follow gender-stereotypical features, then one would expect that monetary rewards and rewards for recognition and personal professional growth will be more motivating for men, whereas, fringe benefits and rewards related to family and work environment would be more motivating for women. This leads to the following profiles relative to incentives:

**Gender profile 2a, men’s incentives:** performance rewards such as cash, merit raises, stock options, greater responsibilities, promotion, additional training, employee of the month reward and a corporate car are more motivating for men than for women.

**Gender profile 2b, women’s incentives:** performance rewards such as days off, healthcare plan payments, retirement plan payments and improvements in working conditions are more motivating for women than for men.

In addition, based upon gender stereotypes, women are believed to be more deferential and dependent than are men. Therefore, in the workplace women may rely on managers to make decisions for them, or to give them detailed instructions for executing the task. By comparison, men are perceived to be more assertive and independent and so may prefer managers who consider their opinions before making decisions and give them sufficient decision freedom in their work. Given this, we propose the following two hypotheses about the preferred managerial styles:

**Hypothesis 1a, men’s manager preferences:** male employees prefer collaborative managers, that is, managers who meet with their subordinates when there is an important decision to be made so the subordinates will have a collegial voice in the decision.

**Hypothesis 1b, women’s manager preferences:** female employees prefer authoritarian managers, that is, managers who make decisions promptly and communicate in detail the ways that the task is to be executed.

We offer these six characterizations as the null belief, against which we will contrast the results of our study. In this way, variance from these characterizations will allow us to reject such stereotypical profiles as providing useful design information regarding the design of organizational incentive systems.
The study

Our study was a collaborative effort with a German multinational corporation traded on the DAX with subsidiaries in China, Japan, and the USA. We used a questionnaire designed by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 2001), to which we added questions detailing various demographics. Hofstede’s original questionnaire was translated into Chinese, German and Japanese and pilot tested for the purposes of our study.

Data collection

The questionnaires were distributed under the auspices of the local chief executive officer of the MNC, and were administered and controlled by the authors. Of the total questionnaires distributed, 640 valid responses were received as follows: 64 from China, 312 from Germany, 64 from Japan and 200 from the USA for a weighted-averaged response rate of 91.1%. Table 1 presents selected demographic information for the respondents. The sampling frame was restricted to full-time members of the organization that could be classified as: administrative, management (other than senior managers — e.g., department heads), production or technical employees. Individuals from these four categories were accrued from each of the countries. The German headquarters has been established for more than a century; subsidiaries in China and Japan were established less than ten years ago and the US subsidiaries were essentially acquired through buy-outs and mergers over the last five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total nos. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 16 respondents had incomplete information about nationality or gender. Further demographic breakdowns are available on request from the author for correspondence.
Data credibility check

Initially, we tested to see if our data reflect the general economic profile. According to previous studies (Dingell and Maloney, 2002; the European Industrial Relations Observatory, 2004; Gabriel, 2005; Robinson, 1998; Shannon and Kidd, 2003) concerning gender salary profiles. Excepting certain narrowly defined occupations, overall there is a general gap between the average pay of men and women in broad occupational or multi-occupational groupings, with women earning on average less than do men. Therefore, if our dataset conforms to the population profile, which will be important in generalizing our sampling results, we expect to find such a wage difference in our sample. To examine the gender salary effect, we scaled salaries as follows. We divided the monthly take-home salary by the average Big Mac value (The Economist, 2003) of the four study countries measured at the approximate mid-point of the data collection period. This generated the purchasing power of the take-home salaries in terms of the Big Mac for each individual country. To give a clearer picture of relative salaries, we calculated the median Big Mac salary for the US production workers and divided all the salaries by this median. This gives relative salary ratios indexed by the cost of living in terms of Big Macs. For example, the average salary of Chinese women is 0.5, which means that the purchasing power of the monthly take-home salary of Chinese women is one half of the mid-level US production worker. Table 2 presents the results of a one way-ANOVA analysis of salary comparison between genders, also controlling for nationality.

The overall sample gender comparison reveals that, on average, female salaries are lower than male salaries. The associated p-value of 0.0007, indicates, assuming that female salaries are the same as male salaries, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>p-value**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.0007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.3505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.0450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All data are monthly take-home salaries scaled by the Big Mac index and reported relative to the US production worker’s median Big Mac equivalent.
** We show in bold face the results for which the p-value is less than 0.2. This is to assist in processing the voluminous information presented in the tables.
probability of obtaining, by sampling chance, that the mean difference as reported in Table 2 would happen less than seven times out of 10,000. Thus, we reject this null in favour of the belief that women on average earn less than do men. Furthermore, this result, where women earn less than men, is also found after controlling for nationality. These results suggest that our data are a representative sampling of the typical work environment in that Table 2 is consistent with the preponderance of information which finds that, in the general population a gender salary bias exists in favour of men (Shannon and Kidd, 2003; Warren, 2003). Therefore our data, which speak to the above-noted profiles and hypotheses, may be considered a reasonable reflection of the population to which we shall generalize our results.

Analysis and results

The cross-country questionnaire data that we collected provide the opportunity to address the following questions: do women and men assess the importance of various work-attributes differently? Are there are gender differences regarding preferences for various performance rewards and managerial styles? Does national culture plays a critical role in shaping these differences? and, finally, does this information follows the usual gender-specific stereotypes?

To provide information on these questions, we examined the entire sample as well as intra-country comparisons on the value orientations of men and women as reflected in the degree of importance they attach to the 14 work-related goals studied as noted in Table 3. Furthermore, we compared men and women across countries concerning their preferences for, or indifference to, specific performance rewards that are commonly used by organizations in their incentive plans. Finally, we studied men’s and women’s predilection for managers’ decision-making styles over the study countries.

Work goal importance

In the questionnaire, the respondents were given 14 work goals and asked to indicate how important each is to them on a five-point Likert scale where 1 represents ‘of utmost importance’ and at the other polar value 5 represents ‘of very little importance’. For example, one question asks: how important is it to you to have an opportunity for high earnings? If respondents score this question with a ‘1’, then it means that a high earnings opportunity is of utmost importance to them.

For each specific work goal, we calculated the mean score for men and women over the entire sample as well as the intra-country mean importance scores by gender. Table 3 presents the results of comparing the importance
### Table 3: Comparison of the importance of work related goals by country and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work goals</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging work</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living area</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for high earnings</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training opportunities</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe benefits</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical working conditions</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work autonomy</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for advancement</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with manager</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of skills and abilities</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for personal life</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: p-value < 0.2 are noted in bold face to facilitate reading the information in the table. The respective standard deviations are available on request from the corresponding author. M, men; W, women.
score of each work goal between genders. The p-values provide the inference information regarding differences in the country comparisons between men and women regarding the importance they place on the associated work goals. In our study, we use the questionnaire scores, which give unscaled values and thus provide useful information for direct comparisons to other studies.

**Overall gender comparisons.** Here we selected a particular variable, for example co-operation, and then examined the importance scores given for that variable categorized by gender. We did this for all 14 work-related variables. In this way, we produced gender profiles both overall and by country. Thus one can examine the way that these five profile groupings fit with the stereotypes presented above. For the information presented in Table 3, overall gender comparisons for the sample, find both convergence and divergence between men and women on the variables tested. On the one hand, women place more importance on nine out of the 14 work goals compared to the male respondents. These nine work goals range from the hypothesized feminine factors such as co-operation, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, job security, relationships with managers and personal time, to the masculine profiled factors such as training opportunities, recognition and use of skills and abilities. On the other hand, women and men are alike in the relative importance they attribute to the following factors: challenging work, desirable living area, high earnings, work autonomy and advancement. Moreover, none of the 14 work goals are found to be more preferred by men. Therefore, regarding gender profiles 1a and 1b, we see no evidence that these profiles provide useful gender characterizations. It seems overall, for the earnings aspect, that men and women place similar emphases on the earnings dimension; while for professional growth and the work environment the gender-specific stereotypical preferences are mixed. These findings are consistent with the results of previous surveys. Konrad *et al.* (2000) report that women consider job security, good co-workers, good supervisors and the physical work environment to be more important than do men. Further, Cromie (1987) found that both genders are motivated by autonomy and achievement.

**Intra-country gender comparisons.** In addition to these overall gender comparisons, we were interested to examine the various stereotypical profiles on a country-by-country basis. We will continue this partitioning by examining the profiles within each country by job position. This will give us three different perspectives on the tests of the gender profiles.

The comparison of male versus female workers in China reveals a high degree of consensus between genders. As indicated by the relatively high p-values, Chinese men and women score 11 of the 14 assessed work goals similarly. A possible reason for this could be that Chinese men and women
have similar career pathways. Unlike women in many western countries, who normally take off a few years for raising children, it is common for Chinese women to take rather short maternity leaves (normally not longer than several months) and to place their infants in the care of trusted others such as grandparents, babysitters or kindergartens. Moreover, reinforcing this result is the relative salary equality in China, as reported in the gender salary comparison presented in Table 1. Therefore, as Ng (2004) suggests, equal economic status and relative wage parity could be a reason that underlies the observed congruity in work goal evaluation between Chinese men and women.

The three factors for which the Chinese men and women do not share similar attitudes are challenging work and training opportunities, where men attach higher importance, and personal time, where women attach higher importance. Although Chinese women participate equally at the organizational level with their male counterparts, as suggested above, like women in other countries, they are still responsible for managing the family household (Leung, 2003; Sin et al., 2001). Thus, it is not surprising to find that they value their personal time away from what must be a harried and demanding schedule more highly than do their male counterparts.

In contrast, Germany shows considerable gender differentiation in seven of the evaluated work goals. Specifically, German men consider a desirable living area significantly more important than do their female counterparts, while German women consider co-operation, fringe benefits, recognition, job security, a positive relationship with their manager and the use of their skills and abilities more important than do German men. However, these gender differences do not follow the gender-stereotypes as presented in gender profiles 1a and 1b. Finally, regarding the following seven aspects; challenging work, high earnings, training opportunities, physical working conditions, work autonomy, advancement and personal time, significant differences are not found between German men and women.

The data from Japan show that men and women have significant differences on five work related goals that also do not follow the usual gender stereotypes. Debroux (2003) gives a post-1997 view of the Japanese society as it rapidly moves away from the traditional lifetime employment paradigm, a view that is helpful in understanding the context for the results of our study. In this we find that Japanese women find challenging work and physical working conditions more important than do men; whereas men consider fringe benefits, advancement and personal time to be more important than do women. Hofstede (2001) suggests that Japan is an extremely masculine country, implying that Japanese men are expected to exhibit typical masculine tendencies while Japanese women are assumed to express typically feminine tendencies. However, contrary to these stereotypical expectations, we find that Japanese men value more highly not only the masculine work attribute of advancement but also the following feminine factors; fringe
benefits and personal time. In contrast, Japanese women value more highly not only physical working conditions but also the challenging work that is supposed to be valued more highly by men. These gender differences do not follow the usual stereotypes. In summary, as we found for the Chinese data, gender similarity is more the case for the Japanese workers than is gender difference. Japanese men and women share the same attitudes on the following factors: a desirable living area, high earnings, co-operation, training opportunities, recognition, work autonomy, job security, relationship with managers and the use of their skills.

Among the four countries studied, the US respondents seem to be the closest to the gender stereotypes presented in gender profiles 1a and 1b. The US men and women are different on ten work goals. Consistent with profiles 1a and 1b, we find women attach higher importance to co-operation, training opportunities, fringe benefits, recognition, physical working conditions, job security, relationships with their managers and personal time. In contrast, although they do not completely follow the gender profile 1b, the US men value highly the two typical stereotyped masculine factors, namely, high earnings and advancement. These results are not surprising, given that most of the publications and literatures concerning gender roles and gender stereotypes are based on research conducted in the USA.

To summarize the intra-country results of the work goal importance comparison between men and women, we find that gender distinctions in work value orientation do exist. However, neither the overall gender profile nor the inter-country gender profiles follows the gender-stereotyped images presented in gender profiles 1a and 1b in any meaningful way.

Job-position gender comparisons. In order to refine our understanding of these country-specific gender profiles and to suggest further fields of investigation, we used the two large samples of Germany and the USA to examine the way that job position affects the importance of work-related goals. This follows on from the Donohue and Heywood (2004) study that found that job satisfaction varied both over position and gender for a sample of younger US workers. We are thus interested to see, when one controls for job-position, if there is a change from the overall country inferences that were reported in Table 3. We will concentrate on those work goals where we saw no differences for the particular country from Table 3 but where we do see a difference when controlling for job. These instances are set in bold face in Table 4. Further, we present only the job-position groupings for which there were sufficient observations to do reasonably precise statistical testing, considering the diminishing power over the partitions. In this regard, for Germany, we will be considering the administrative, production and technical workers. For the USA, we have two job groupings with sufficient numbers to conduct an analysis: production and technical workers. Finally, the two-tailed p-value is noted in parentheses.
Table 4: Comparison of the importance of work related goals by country, gender, and job position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work-related goals</th>
<th>Germany Administration</th>
<th>Germany Production</th>
<th>Germany Technical</th>
<th>USA Production</th>
<th>USA Technical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging work</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living area</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>M &gt; W (0.17)</td>
<td>M &gt; W (0.07)</td>
<td>M &gt; W (0.15)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for high earnings</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>M &gt; W (0.09)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.07)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.01)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training opportunities</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.14)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe benefits</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.14)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.02)</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical working conditions</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work autonomy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.11)</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.13)</td>
<td>M &gt; W (0.05)</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for advancement</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>M &gt; W (0.05)</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working relationship with manager</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.19)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.09)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of skills and abilities</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.08)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.16)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for personal life</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>M &gt; W (&lt;0.01)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>W &gt; M (0.06)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bolding indicates where there is a departure from the overall country analysis. M, men; W, women. Numbers in parentheses indicate 2-tailed p-values.
As Table 4 shows, for most of the work-related goals, no job-position related differences between the genders were identified at a p-value < 0.2. However, for some variables, job-position differences can be found. For the most part these differences follow the information presented in Table 3. For example, we found in Table 3 that the German male employees scored living area as more important than did the German female employees. This result, then, is what we see in Table 4 for the German production and technical workers. Where we can infer that the job-position makes a difference for the German sample is for training opportunities and time for personal life, which for the overall country analyses were not identified as work-related goals where there were gender differences. Controlling for job-position, we see that for the German technical workers there is a gender difference, with women rating training opportunities more important than did their male technical counterparts; whereas the reverse obtains for time for personal life.

For the USA, controlling for position, we now see for the following three work-related goals differences in gender that were not evident in the overall US country analysis: living area, opportunity for advancement and the use of skills and abilities. For living area, consistent with the German results, male US production workers find living area to be more important than did their female counterparts. Regarding opportunity for advancement there is a reversal effect. The US male production workers found opportunity for advancement to be more important than did the US female production workers, as we inferred from the overall country results; however, the opposite result was found for the technical employees. This illustrates the benefit of examining the job-position effect since from the overall US result we inferred that the men valued opportunity for advancement more than did the female workers, which was not the characterization for the US technical workers. In this sense, then, it is a refinement of the inference that we made from the overall country analysis. Finally, for the use of skills and abilities, the US female production workers scored this as more important than it was for their male counterparts. These refinements then give more insight into gender profiling. We see from Table 4 that again there is no consistent pattern that supports the gender stereotypes. We also see the value of examining particular positions which, in some cases, seem to condition specific gender aspects. A good case in point is the result for the US workers respecting opportunity for advancement where the reverse was detected. Therefore, one’s role or functional needs also to be considered in understanding gender profiles relative to the importance of work-related goals.

Motivators and non-motivators

Gender profile 2a and 2b are tested by examining employees’ perception of specific performance rewards, that is, whether rewards are seen as
motivators or non-motivators across genders and countries. We define ‘motivators’ as the rewards scored as having positive motivational effects on the performance of employees, and ‘non-motivators’ as rewards scored as not encouraging employees to put forth more effort to improve their performance.

In the questionnaire we listed 15 specific performance rewards that are commonly used by organizations and asked the respondents to rank the ten most motivating, based on the extent of their motivational effects and also to identify rewards that were judged to be non-motivating. The 15 performance rewards to be considered for ranking, listed in alphabetical order, are: (1) cash rewards, (2) a corporate car, (3) additional days off, (4) electronic equipment, (5) employee of the month reward, (6) family-related rewards, (7) greater responsibility, (8) healthcare payments, (9) improvements in working conditions, (10) a merit raise, (11) positive feedback, (12) promotion, (13) retirement plan payments, (14) stock options and (15) training.

We calculated the number of men and women who noted a reward as a motivator or as a non-motivator for each reward individually by country. The $\chi^2$ contribution per cell was used to detect significant departures from the expectation given the marginal distributions. We used a conservative value of a $\chi^2$ cell contribution of greater than two as the indicator of a statistically significant difference between the actual and the expected value (Tamhane and Dunlop, 2000). Consistent with the assumptions of this modeling analysis, we excluded variables for which the count expectation is less than five. Due to this, two rewards, namely, corporate car and electronic equipment, were excluded from the analysis of motivators, as were numerous variables from the non-motivator analysis. For the latter, the $\chi^2$ analysis focuses on the following five variables: a corporate car, electronic equipment, employee of the month reward, family-related reward and stock options.

To present this incentive information, we will consider it in five logical groupings of the above rewards. We offer this information as study findings and we will not cite particular studies that support or fail to support these specific results for two reasons. Firstly, there are numerous studies on either side of these incentive issues which address either directly or indirectly these specific findings and so a meta-analysis is needed to examine these results in a statistically valid way. Such a meta-analysis is beyond the scope of this article. Secondly, we are more comfortable with placing our results in context by referring to related results in our study.

When looking at the monetary rewards, we find that cash rewards and merit raises are seen as motivating to all employees independent of country. Stock options are found to be significantly more motivating for the US men, while both Japanese men and women consider it as a non-motivator. This shows that both gender and cultural differences play roles in shaping employees’ reward preferences. Additionally, this result conforms to our
findings in the work goal importance analysis where significant gender difference for higher earnings was found only for the USA.

Regarding the recognition and growth incentive group, the employee of the month is a reward where men and women from the different cultures express diversity. Chinese and Japanese men and the US women consider it to be motivating while Germans, both men and women, consider it non-motivating. This is a result which deals with the concept of ‘face’ and possibly the negative aspect of over-achievement or self-aggrandizement. On the other side of this issue is the fact that the person who deserves this reward probably has contributed in a significant way to the ‘bottom line’ of the organization and therefore this reward may be read as a positive sign respecting career advancement potential. Given these complicated and diverse dimensions, this particular result seems a subject for a detailed cultural analysis. When looking at positive feedback as a reward, we find that it is non-motivating for the Japanese men. Furthermore, the Chinese men find training opportunities more motivating while the US men find the same reward non-motivating.

In the fringe benefits incentive group, retirement plan payments are found to be significantly motivating for German women but non-motivating for Chinese men. For the German women, the publicly debated social reforms in Germany and the uncertainty that these issues may have created seems to have had more of an impact on them than on the German male respondents. Regarding the Chinese man’s lack of interest in retirement plan payments, possibility the reason that they do not consider retirement plans motivational is that they do not believe that the organization will be able to provide real retirement assistance because these plans are relatively new and not well understood. As Rehu et al. (2006) note, in China traditionally families have taken care of their elderly members. The Chinese employees surveyed are most likely to be the first generation of employees to face the new situation of private- and company-organized retirement systems, and are not yet completely informed about the necessary retirement plans needed to secure their pensions. In addition, the surveyed MNC is quite new in the Chinese market and might not yet have earned the trust of the employees, trust that forms the basis for corporate pension plans. Further, there is evidence, according to Adamchak (2001), that the one-child family policy will create funding problems in the future for the soon-to-be-retired. Therefore, rather than hoping for retirement support from the firm or the government, the Chinese men seem to be rejecting such retirement-funded programmes in favour of the security that cash in hand can provide. Concerning the reward of additional days off, German men find it non-motivating, while US women find it motivating. Given the institutional frameworks in Germany and the USA, a comparatively large number of vacation days are granted to employees by German labour law compared to the USA, and so the German employees are relatively saturated with their current amount of vacation time, suggesting that
they may not motivated by additional vacation days. The US employees may have scored ‘days off’ as a motivating reward due to the small number of vacation days offered by US firms. Rehu, et al. (2005b, p. 11) note:

It can be expected that in a country like Germany, where a comparatively large number of vacation days is granted to employees by the law or collective work contracts, the employees are relatively high on their utility curve for vacation days and would not be significantly motivated by additional vacation days as performance rewards, whereas a U.S. or a Japanese employee would find days off a motivating reward due to the small number of vacation days granted by the labour law and collectively negotiated wage contracts in their respective countries.

For example, respecting the annual work commitment as reported by the OECD (2004), in the USA there were 1792 work hours while in Germany for a comparable work environment there were 1446 work hours. A final result is that only women scored additional days off as motivating. This may be explained by the fact that to have sufficient time for personal life is more important to women than that to men in the USA, as we noted in the previous section.

The analysis of corporate car

Both Japanese men and women find a corporate car as a performance reward to be non-motivating. This can be explained by the fact that in Japan most of the major metropolitan areas are so crowded and the additional expense of driving to work is so high, not to mention the difficulty of finding a parking space, that it not surprising to find that the Japanese expressed a lack of interest in a corporate car as a motivator. Our sample from Japan was taken from Tokyo.

Concerning the reward of improvements in working conditions, Japanese men find it significantly non-motivating whereas the US men and women find it significantly motivating. And finally, family-related rewards, such as company-organized family events, are found to not have significant motivational or non-motivational gender effects in general or by country.

In summary, we find that there are more similarities than differences between men and women in their preferences of rewards and their attitudes towards non-motivators. Thus, the gender-stereotyped performance rewards profiles (gender profile 2a and 2b) are not supported by our data.

Management style

Another dimension that we studied for understanding employees’ work-related attitudes and for testing hypotheses 1a and 1b is the employees’
preference for particular managerial styles. In the questionnaire, four different managerial styles were presented: (a) authoritarian, (b) mentor, (c) consultative and (d) collaborative.

Overall, regarding the decision-making styles of managers, we find that men and women independent of nationality exhibit rather similar penchants for managerial style. This result does not follow the gender-stereotyped hypothesis 1a and 1b. Further, if we rank the four styles based on the percentage of employees who prefer them (see Figure 1), authoritarian managers are the least preferred. Aggregating over all the groups, this result is statistically significant against the other three managerial types using the Bonferroni multiple comparison test correction at a p-value of 0.05. However, principally due to the relatively low power for this particular multi-category analysis, this is the only statistically significant inter-category result. In what follows, we will discuss the relationships as tendencies, rather than statistically significant results. However, these results, as was the case for the

Figure 1: Preferences of managers’ decision-making style comparisons
Note: M, men, W, women.
job-position analysis, may be useful in future meta-analysis studies and therefore are presented here for that purpose.

For Chinese women, consultative managers are the most preferred; the mentor is second, followed by collaborative managers. For Chinese men, the mentors are the most preferred, followed by collaborative and consultative managers. The German and the US profiles exhibit similar patterns in the preferences. This shows that both men and women favour consultative managers, followed by collaborative and mentor styles. We also find that German men particularly prefer the consultative style, but not the mentor style, while both Japanese men and women have the reverse preferences.

Summary and conclusions

In this article, using an augmented version of Geert Hofstede’s questionnaire, we addressed the following three aspects of work: the importance of work-related goals, motivational aspects regarding incentives, and preference for managerial style. The study reports the following results from China, Germany, Japan and the USA.

The research finds a number of differences between men and women in the importance they attach to work-related goals. However, the gender-stereotyped profiles and hypotheses are supported neither in general, nor by specific country analysis, nor by sub-category intra-country position analyses. Men do not necessarily value more highly the traditionally stereotypical masculine factors and, similarly, women do not necessarily value more highly the proposed feminine factors.

The analysis of employees’ preferences of specific performance rewards shows that gender similarities considerably outweigh differences. By and large, men and women prefer similar incentives across countries. Regarding the few isolated differences, culture may be the main explanation. This is what one may expect for our sample of full-time employees where they have been engaged in executing their professional expertise for a number of years for this MNC. Similarities may be produced by the fact that women and men performing the same tasks for the same organization, even though the various divisions are in different institutional frameworks, would have more similarities respecting the importance that they attach to particular work-related goals, the performance rewards to which they would respond and preferences for particular management styles due to the similarities of the work which they all have in common. Consistent with the literature cited above, which reports prevailing similarities, one may note that the work milieu, particularly for MNCs, may override to a great extent the cultural component of the institutional framework. Where more differences may start to emerge is where the workforce starts to exhibit more career-related differences. For example, for organizations where the workforce is
mixed between full-time career track, work-at-home contract workers and part-time workers, one may expect to observe more differences principally due to the inherent differences in the constitution of the workforce (Hakim, 1995).

The analysis of managers’ decision-making style preference also exhibits to a great extent gender similarity. All the groups studied unanimously reject the authoritarian style in favour of the more mentor, consultative, or collaborative types of managers. Consistent with the work of Konrad et al. (2000), such similarities are perhaps due to the transfer of information regarding management practices across the various institutional groups. Such homogenization is a natural aspect of groups working together and may be another reason for the prevalence of similarities in our study.

In summary, the data do not confirm the stereotypical expectations of women and men with respect to work-related factors. Although some gender differences exist regarding the importance of work goals, men and women exhibit similar preferences concerning performance, rewards and managerial styles. Therefore, our results follow the findings of Hyde (2005), who concludes, based upon the results of an extensive meta-analysis, that there is more support for gender similarities than for differences. Additionally, our findings support the argument that national culture as a contextual variable plays an important role in shaping employees’ work value orientation.

To be clear, we find that the prevailing gender stereotypes do not seem to provide design information that can be used by human resource managers to develop effective and efficient incentive programmes. This should not be read as asserting that the problem is that the stereotypes are merely out of date and that one should try to update the stereotypical information and then use these updated stereotypes as input into the design process — quite the contrary. The problem is that however tempting gender stereotypes are in their simplicity, they are nevertheless caricatures that often miss the opportunity to nuance the development of incentive systems and so make them more relevant to a greater number of individuals. Our results support the argument of Schuler and Rogovsky (1998) that when considering culture, one must examine also other possible variables such as occupation type, organizational form, company size and family variables on a case-by-case basis. To this end the authors are happy to share the questionnaire that was discussed above with interested parties and to offer case-specific recommendations as to how this questionnaire may be used in the development of nuanced incentive design information.

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