Cross cultural conflict resolution styles: An extensive literature review

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to make a comparison of the preferred conflict resolution styles followed in Asia, America and Australia. Conflict is a culturally defined event, hence different conflict management styles in relation to different cultures are also explored. The specific emphasis in this paper has been placed on the studies related to India, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Australia and America.An interdisciplinary review of literature was undertaken, as current literature on the topic was limited in scope. The investigation aimed at finding out the differences and the similarities which existed across different cultures (Asian, America and Australian) as far as resolving interpersonal conflict was concerned and how cultural factors played a role in choosing different styles to conflict resolution. The Competing style is more favored by members of American cultures. In contrast to earlier presumption that members of Australia will show a similarity in conflict resolution style to Americans, there exist a diversion, since Australians show a preference for Collaborative and Compromising style according to the studies. The members of Asian countries, show an opposite pattern to Americans. In India the most preferred style to resolve the conflict is accommodating followed by Avoiding. Koreans resolve their conflicts mostly by Compromising and avoiding style. Chinese have a preference for compromising and avoiding again. Japanese prefer Avoiding and Accommodating styles in comparison to Malaysian who prefer integrating and Compromising styles.No extensive study was found on conflict resolution on a variety of cultures at one platform (Asia, America and Australia), though fragmented source of information exist on different countries. The paper presents a useful source of information which would benefit organizations in this globalization, which has faded the national boundaries and has brought people of different culture to work together on a single platform.

Key Words: cross cultural conflicts, literature review

1. Introduction

"Conflict is a crisis that forces us to recognise explicitly that we live with multiple realities and must negotiate a common reality ; that we bring to each situation differing –frequently contrasting – stories and must create together a single shared story with a role for each and for both."(Augsburger, 1992:11) .Conflict has become inseparable part and parcel of our lives, we experience conflict as we experience joy or sorrow in our day to day life. It has become a natural

phenomenon of our personal and professional existence. It is an unavoidable component of human activity (Brahnam et al., 2005, 204) that may be viewed as a situation in which the concerns of two or more individuals appear to be incompatible (Darling & Fogliasso, 1999, 394), and which tends to occur when individuals or groups perceive that others are preventing them from attaining their goals (Antonioni, 1998, 336). Channelling conflict in a positive or negative way may affect the nature of the conflict whether beneficial or destructive (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004, 325). If not managed properly, conflicts can result in bad feelings, high turnover and costly litigation (Hirschman, 2001, 59), and are said to be one of the most difficult challenges organizational members face (Phillips & Cheston, 1979) and one of the most frustrating and uncomfortable experiences for managers (Earnest & McCaslin, 1994). At the most serious levels conflicts can bring teams, departments and sometimes whole organizations to a virtual standstill (Fritchie & Leary, 1998). However, looking at the brighter side if properly managed, conflict can "increase individuals', innovativeness and productivity" (Uline, Tschannen-moran, & Perez, 2003), offer "interpersonal relationship satisfaction, creative problem solving, the growth of the global workforce, and domestic workplace diversity" (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001, p. 3) and leads to "improved efficiency, creativity, and profitability" (Axelrod & Johnson, 2005, p. 42).

1.1 Definition of Conflict

Conflict is understood differently by different people and so there exist a big list of definitions of conflict. Oxford Online Dictionary defines the term as "a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument", many scholars have viewed conflict from different perspective such as a process, situation or an interaction. Some of the authors who have defined conflict as a process are includes, Thomas who believes it to be "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his". Wall and Callister see conflict as "a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party". For Vecchio, it is, "the process that results when one person (or a group of people) perceives that another person or group is frustrating, or about to frustrate, an important concern. Conflict involves incompatible differences between parties that result in interference or opposition". Rahim looks it as, "an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc.)" and at last Poole and Putnam (1997) define conflict as the process of interaction by interdependent individuals who perceive incompatible goals. There are other for whom conflict is just a situation and nothing beyond it, as for Donohue and Kolt, it is "a situation in which interdependent people express (manifest or latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals". Giving one more angle to conflict as "interactive", L.L.Putnam and M.S. Poole, 1987, expresses it to be an "interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims and values and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals".Conflict is not only defined differently by different authors , but it's definition is different in different cultures as well, for instance,in France, conflict is associated with "a war – an encounter between contrary elements that oppose each other and 'to oppose' is a strong term, conveying powerful antagonism" (Faure, 1995, pp. 41-42). In China, conflict is seen as any unpleasant dispute, serious fighting and "contradictory struggle." In other words, any types of unharmonious situations in Chinese culture will initiate a conflict (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001).As far as Anglo-Saxons are concerned ,

conflict is defined diversely as any disagreement and undesired conditions preventing an individual from reaching one's goals (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2000; Lulofs & Cahn, 2000). If we just give a thought, we can always arrive at the logical conclusion that if conflict's definition is so varied in different context and for different people, then the modes to resolve this very conflict can take how many varied forms. So, what are the factors that can impact our response to conflict - gender, self- concept, expectations, situations, position, power, practice, communication skills, life experiences, values or the culture in which we have born and brought up. We cannot pick up any one and leave the rest, since our conflict resolution strategy is effected by all of these combined together. But it has been believed that conflict management strategies are not only influenced by personal characteristics, but also defined by socio-cultural norms (Haar & Krahé, 1999). What might be an appropriate way of managing disputes in one society may not be acceptable in the other due to different assumptions regarding behavioral natures, expectations, and values. Furthermore, there has been a blossoming interest regarding the study of cross-cultural communication and conflict management over the past two decades (Cai & Fink, 2002). For example, intercultural researchers have examined cross-cultural conflict management between Americans and Arabs (Elsayed-Elkhouly and Buda, 1996), Americans and Mexicans (Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson, & Villareal 1997), Americans and Japanese (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994), and Jordanians and Turkish (Kozan, 1990).

2. Definitions of Culture and relevant values of Cultures under study

People around the world are similar as well as different, they are similar since they share common characteristics, and at the same time they are different since each one of them have been born and brought up in different cultures having different set of values. According to Naylor (1997), all human beings are fundamentally the same, but culture makes them different and distinguishes them from other groups by creating and developing their "own version of culture" to meet their needs, desires and goals. In other words, culture serves as an element that helps humans to identify and define themselves. Therefore, Naylor (1997) defined culture as "the learned way (or ways) of belief, behavior, and the products of these (both physically and socially) that is shared (at least to some degree) within human groups and serves to distinguish that culture group from another learning different beliefs and behaviors" (p. 1). Ting-Toomey (1999) also made a similar definition of culture. She defined culture as "a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 10). Looking from another perspective culture refers to 'systems of meaning – values, beliefs, expectation, and goals – shared by a particular group of people distinguishing them from members of other groups' (Gooderham and Nordhaug 2003 pg 131; Schneider and Barsoux 2003, cited in Martin G. 2006).

People in different cultures quite often have different ideologies, and such differences are important to decide the way they respond and react in a conflicting situation. Before going to the main part of the study, it is important to have a brief look at the major values of the Cultures under study.

2.1 American Culture

America is a country, whose culture is characterized by advocating individualism, pursuing egalitarianism, expressing individual character, valuing individual achievement, and so on. Achievement orientation is high in American societies, that traditionally permit individual social mobility and hence America is a country of immigrants. In daily life, the people value freedom, democracy, independence, and are full of the competitive spirit and challenge. Americans strive for equality, promote individual accomplishments, focus on tasks over relationships, and welcome direct communication.

2.2 Chinese Culture

Chinese culture has been influenced for thousands of years by Confucian culture, and "benevolence, duty, courtesy, wisdom, trustworthiness" have become the particular cultural factors associated with Chinese culture. People advocate values like harmony, peaceful coexistence, kindness, order for old and young, politeness, modesty, honesty and sincerity in interpersonal relationships. Due to this kind of traditional culture, people usually have a negative view on conflict and quarrel. Chu and Kosinski (1994) point out that there is a strong link between Chinese conflict resolution behaviour and the values that influence Chinese people. Moreover, the core values embedded throughout modern Chinese culture include: respect for hierarchy; building relationships through guanxi (connections, reciprocal obligations); group-orientation; and mianzi (face) and harmony.

2.3 Malaysian Culture

Malaysians are characterized by underlying values of collectivist orientation, teamwork, cooperation, respect for seniors/elderly people and preserving face, respect for authority and hierarchy and values of harmony (Asma, 1992). Conflict is viewed as deleterious to team spirit and harmony since Malays have traditionally being living in a cooperative, communal lifestyle. Any work for the society is done in a cooperative way in Malaysian context.

2.4 Korean Culture

One of the most significant historical events to impact the modern attitude of Koreans to dispute resolution was the spread of Confucianism. Confucius' teachings, among other more personal strictures, outline the moral and ethical operation of the government, under the Confucian view, people should strive primarily for harmony with others and strive to be ethical. Confucius emphasized respect for the social hierarchy and the public interest. In Korea, honour, humility, and respect are important virtues and more important than wealth. Etiquette and courtesy are also extremely important to Koreans.The importance of hierarchy and the importance of keeping one's place in the hierarchy are deeply rooted in Korean culture and affect the way individuals approach resolving a dispute. In fact, persons who operate outside of the hierarchy are regarded as uncultured beings and not fit for society (Gardiner 1969, 53).

2.5 Indian Culture

In India socio-economic-cultural-religious, patriarchal, feudal and spiritual factors have a major influence on the work ethics and attitudes towards conflict at work place. Feelings, emotions and sentiments are very important attributes of Indian socio-cultural milieu and cannot be overlooked while addressing conflicts. Overall it would not be wrong to say that Indians view conflict as

detrimental for personal and organisational well being, since tolerance, forbearance, restraint, patience, moderation, assimilation and synthesis are virtues enshrined in Indian wisdom literature. Observers have argued that Indian managerial conflict resolution tendencies reflect Hindu norms of seeking a solution that pleases everyone, as well as British norms of active, mutual problem solving (Moran & Stripp, 1991).

2.6 Japanese Culture

Japanese culture would tends to be respectful and value hierarchical status and power of a person at a higher level in organisation. Yasunobu Sato's writes in his Commercial Dispute Processing and Japan, "Japan, together with China and other East Asian countries is influenced by Confucian philosophy. Roger Benjamin writes, the Japanese are held to be group-oriented, structure their individual and collective relationships in vertical combinations for social control purposes. Few values which are strongly held by Japanese include self criticism, self improvement, obligation to group, harmony, effort and collectivism.

2.7 Australian Culture

Australian culture is considered to be similar to American culture, since Western values are very much followed since 1960s. Some of the key values for which Australians thrive for can be underlined as economic opportunity, democracy, respect for each other, fairness, personal freedom, respect for law, security, strong physical and social infrastructure. Australians emphasise on personal goals the most. Australians' also emphasis on egalitarianism (McGaughey et al. 1997).

3. Methodology of the study

The present paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of the empirical studies conducted, to show the differences and the similarities which exist across cultures (Asian, America and Australian) as far as resolving interpersonal conflict is concerned and how cultural factors play a role in choosing different styles to conflict resolution. The prime sources of the studies reviewed herein include various websites, selected national and international journals, published and unpublished theses on the subject under reference. For this purpose some reputed libraries such as Central Library (GGS Indraprastha University, Delhi), Central Library (University of Mysore), Central Library (IIT, Kharagpur) were visited. It is expected that the study would be quite useful for the HR managers and the policy makers in this globalised world to know the major conflict resolution strategies adopted by Managers across cultures and to find out the values and behaviors which influence the conflict resolution strategy of managers in different cultures, resulting in reduction of cross- cultural conflict in organizational scenario, which will ultimately enhance the performance, productivity of employees and ultimately profitability for organizations.

3.1 Literature Review

Table 1:CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AMERICAN CULTURE	
Studies	**Conclusions drawn**
Su'udy, (2009) conducted a study to explore conflict management styles among Indonesians and Americans . The data was collected from 271 subjects from Indonesia and 243 subjects from Americans.	The results revealed that Americans preferred the integrating, compromising, dominating, emotional expression, and obliging styles significantly more than Indonesians. Indonesians preferred the avoiding style significantly more than Americans. Participants preferred the third-party help style equally.
Huang, (2009)compared U.S and Taiwanese students to find out their conflict resolution styles. For this, 15 US college students and 15 Taiwanese college students were selected.	The results showed that US college students were significantly associated with the use of direct or avoidance conflict resolution approaches, while the Taiwanese college students showed a significantly higher inclination towards an indirect approach or involving a third party.
Sabo, (2006) studied Cultural Influences on Conflict Management Styles Between Americans and West Africans.	Results suggest that Americans used the competing style more often than West Africans and West Africans were more prone to use the collaborative style.
In a recent research, Hodis (2005) studied how US college students and Taiwanese college students dealt with conflict in different situations. Data was collected from 20 volunteers, including 10 US students 10 Taiwanese students.	The statistical significant difference in the way Americans and Taiwanese responded to conflict.US students were more direct than their Taiwanese counterparts were. And just opposite to it, Taiwanese students preferred avoiding strategies more than US college students.
Wei et al. (2001) conducted a study to examine how national culture, organisational culture, and managerial factors influence managers' conflict resolution styles through an empirical study of 600 managers working in Singapore and belonging to four subgroups equally divided into Americans, Japanese, Chinese Singaporeans in MNCs and Singaporeans in local companies.	The study revealed that American managers were the mostly likely to resort to the dominating style and integrating style than their Asian counterparts and less likely to adopt avoiding style than Chinese Singaporeans working in local companies with the Japanese managers taking up the middle position.
Elsayed-Ekhouly et. al(1996) conducted a study on executives from United States and Middle East.	Result showed that executives from the United States used accommodating, controlling or compromising style the most in comparison to collaborating and avoiding style used by Middle east executives.
Chiu et al. (1994) investigated whether cultural differences and values would influence subjects' behaviours in response to conflict resolution. The data was collected from U.S. and Hong – Kong business graduate students.	The US graduate business students tended to resolve conflict in a more competitive, directive, assertive, and confrontational way; whereas, the Hong Kong students preferred a more collaborative and harmonious way.
A quantitative study was conducted by	The results revealed that,the U.S. participants

Toomey et al. (1991) to examine the conflict management of people from five different cultures i.e.Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States The sample pool consisted of 220 Euro-American 197 Japanese 117 Chinese, 207 South Korean and 224 Taiwanese.	showed a higher preference for using a dominating approach than the Japanese and Korean participants. The Chinese and Taiwanese participants showed a higher preference for using obliging and avoiding approaches than the U.S. participants.
Trubisky et al. (1991) examined the cultural differences in conflict management between American and Taiwan college students.	They found that American students use less of obliging and avoiding styles as compared to Taiwan students, moreover they also used less integrating and compromising styles in comparison to their counterpart.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ASIAN CULTURE	
China	
Studies	**Conclusions drawn**
A study was conducted by Zhenzhong Ma (2007) on 200 Chinese students, and the purpose was to investigate the nature of conflict styles in China and to explore the effects of different styles on negotiation process and outcomes.	The study showed a clear preference for compromising style surprisingly, a secondary preference for competing, followed by avoiding and collaborating. The results of this study provide strong support for the notion that Chinese tend to use non-confrontational style to resolve conflicts.
Brew et al.(2004) investigated how Anglos and Chinese handled a conflict in a workplace setting. The participants included university students with work experiences, and consisted of 163 Anglo-Australian and 133 East Asian ethnic Chinese university students.	The major findings showed that the Anglos preferred control, solution-oriented and confrontational conflict resolution approaches more than the Chinese. Also, a more direct interaction was preferred by the Anglos to resolve conflict compared to Chinese.
In a quantitative study by Tinsley et al. (2003), US mangers' and Chinese managers' responses to normative conflict were investigated. The participants were 86 US managers and 91 Chinese from part-time MBA programs in the United States and Beijing, China.	The results showed that the US managers preferred to respond to conflict directly while the Chinese managers tended to choose indirect methods.
Knutson, et al. (2002) did a quantitative study to investigate the Taiwanese Chinese style of conflict management in comparison to Americans. The subjects in this study consisted of a total of 365 students.	Overall results showed that the Taiwanese Chinese sample showed a higher preference for avoiding, face-to-face discussion of the matter, intermediary, indirect, and obliging styles of conflict management, whereas the U.S. sample was more likely to deal with conflict through assertive and competitive styles.
Morris, et al.(1998) conducted a survey of young mangers in U.S., China, Philippines and India to find out their preferred conflict resolution styles. Survey was conducted on 454 MBA students from 4 different countries.	The results showed that Chinese mangers relied most on avoiding style than managers in other three countries and U.S. managers preferred competing style most when compared to managers of other three

	nations.
Malaysia	
An empirical study was conducted by Suppiah (2006) among public sector managers in Malaysia to determine the conflict management styles used to handle interpersonal conflicts.	She reported that a high percentage (65.5%) of the managers used integrating style to handle interpersonal conflicts followed by the compromising style (23.8%).An insignificant percentage used dominating style (5.0%) and avoiding style (4.2%). The least used style was obliging style (1.5%).
Abdullah (2001) studied Malaysian Managers for their conflict handling approach in the Malaysian Context.	Abdullah found that Malaysians disliked aggressive behavior, brashness and insensitiveness. Malaysian managers preferred more relationship-based approaches. Thus, Malaysians prefered to choose consensus and compromise than confrontation.
Said (1996) studied interpersonal conflict handling styles among executives and their effectiveness in organizations in Malaysia.	Said found that majority of executives in the Malaysian public and private sector mostly used the integrating style to handle interpersonal conflicts with their superiors, peers and subordinates followed by obliging style and dominating style to be the least used style, followed by avoiding style and compromising style.
Wafa, et al.(1997) conducted a study of personality traits and conflict – handling behavior among Malaysian managers.	The study on Malaysian managers showed that they scored significantly high in the Integrating style, followed by compromising and obliging. However, they scored significantly lower in the dominating and avoiding styles.
Japan	
Ohbuchi et al. (1999), conducted another study on United States and Japanese sample to find out their conflict resolution style.	The result was in consistence with the earlier findings and showed that Japanese participants had a clear preference for avoidance tactics, whereas US preferred assertive, controlling, and active style to resolve their conflict.
Ohbuchi et al. (1994), conducted a study on Japanese and American students to find out their conflict management strategies. For this 94 Japanese and 98 American students were chosen as sample.	The result showed a particularly strong tendency to avoid conflict among Japanese subjects. Japanese used avoiding strategy 48% of the time, whereas Americans use this strategy 22% of the time.
Leung et al.(1992) explored preferred conflict resolution strategies in Japan and Spain. The subjects included 116 Japanese and 59 Spanish college students.	The results showed that Japanese participants were more likely to deal with conflict with mediation and arbitration than their Spanish counterparts. Therefore, the Japanese subjects needed to involve a third party help when in conflict. In addition,

	comparing the two samples, they found out that both groups preferred harmony enhancing strategies such as negotiating and complying and were less likely to employ threatening, accusing, and ignoring which were seen as confrontational.
Korea	
Hong,(2005) conducted a study to compare conflict management strategies (CMS) between Koreans and Americans involving. A total of 600 subjects participated in the study (300 Koreans and 300 Americans).	The findings of this study showed that Koreans prefer an avoidance strategy and a cooperative orientation, whereas Americans prefer a competition strategy and an assertive orientation.
Lee (1990, 1996, 2002) examined the Conflict Management Styles of Korean managers (1990), central government employees (1996) and local government employees (2002) with superiors, peers, and subordinates by using a mail survey and personal interviews.	He found that the CMS used by Korean managers and government employees varied depending on the relative status. In conflict with peers, Koreans tend to use the compromising style (46.9%) most frequently, and then integrating (17.1%), obliging (15.2%), dominating (10.4%), and avoiding (10.4%) styles, in turn (Lee, 2002).
Lee and Rogan (1991) compared Korean and US subjects to identify their conflict management behaviours in an organizational setting. The participants in this study were 80 Koreans and 90 US subjects.	The overall findings showed that Korean subjects preferred integrative conflict resolution strategies. Also, the data showed that the Korean group tended to use less non-confrontational strategies as they got older and had more power.
India	
Majumdar, (2010)attempted to find conflict management styles followed by Indians in various sectors (government, Private and Unorganised sector).	He found that avoidance, accommodation and compromise are the most preferred modes of conflict resolution in Indian situations and the least preference was given to Competing and Collaborating.
Prof. Anu Singh Lather, et al. (2009) conducted an empirical study to find out the conflict resolution modes adopted by employees of DDA and DJB (government agencies of National Capital Territory Region of Delhi, India) . The data was collected from 140 samples (70 from DDA and 70 from DJB).	The result showed that for both the organisations i.e. DDA and DJB, the preferred conflict resolution mode was accommodating and avoiding. The result also showed that least preference was given to competing and collaborating style of conflict resolution.
Umar K. Mohammed , et al.(2008), conducted a survey of 116 Project Managers using the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument to determine their approach toward managing conflict. The managers belonged to three different countries i.e. Indian, France and UK.	The significant factor reported was that there is a tendency for Indian Project Managers to adopt an Avoider style of conflict management (32.68%) whereas in France and the UK this is less prevalent (18.38% and 27% respectively). The result showed that a high percentage of Project Managers in France, and to a lesser extent in the UK, adopt a Competitive style of conflict management (17.86% and 32.14%

	respectively) whilst the propensity to take this approach in India is very low (7.14%).
Another empirical study conducted by Prof. Anu Singh Lather, et al. to compare the various conflict handling styles amongst – males, females, employees of private enterprise (academicians & corporate) and public enterprise (academicians, army personnel's & bureaucrats). The data for the research was collected from 250 employees from National Capital Territory Region of Delhi, India	The result showed that the most preferred style adopted by the participants was accommodating followed by avoiding and the least preferred style tends to be competing followed by collaborating. Also no significant differences was found in the conflict resolution style of employees of private and public enterprise.
Australia	
Rebecca Wilson et al.(2004) conducted a study to find out the conflict resolution styles among Australian Christians and Muslims. One hundred and thirty-one Australian citizens were involved in the study.	The results showed that Practising Christians resolved their conflicts through collaborator style whereas practising Muslims adopted compromiser style. On the other hand non-practising Christians also chose collaborator style but non-practising Muslims collaborator style. Hence, two conflict resolution styles featured strongly in the participants' responses and these were collaborator and compromiser.
Louise Fletcher, et al. compared conflict resolution styles of one collectivist (Asia) and one individualistic (Australia) country using a sample of 378 second year undergraduate students from Australian and Asian origins.	Analysis showed that Asians preferred compromising and avoiding to collaborating and accommodating, which in turn was preferred over competing . Australians reported a strong preference for compromise than for accommodating and completion. Asians and Australians showed an equal preference for compromising but Asians showed a stronger preference for compromising and avoiding than Australians did for any other strategy.
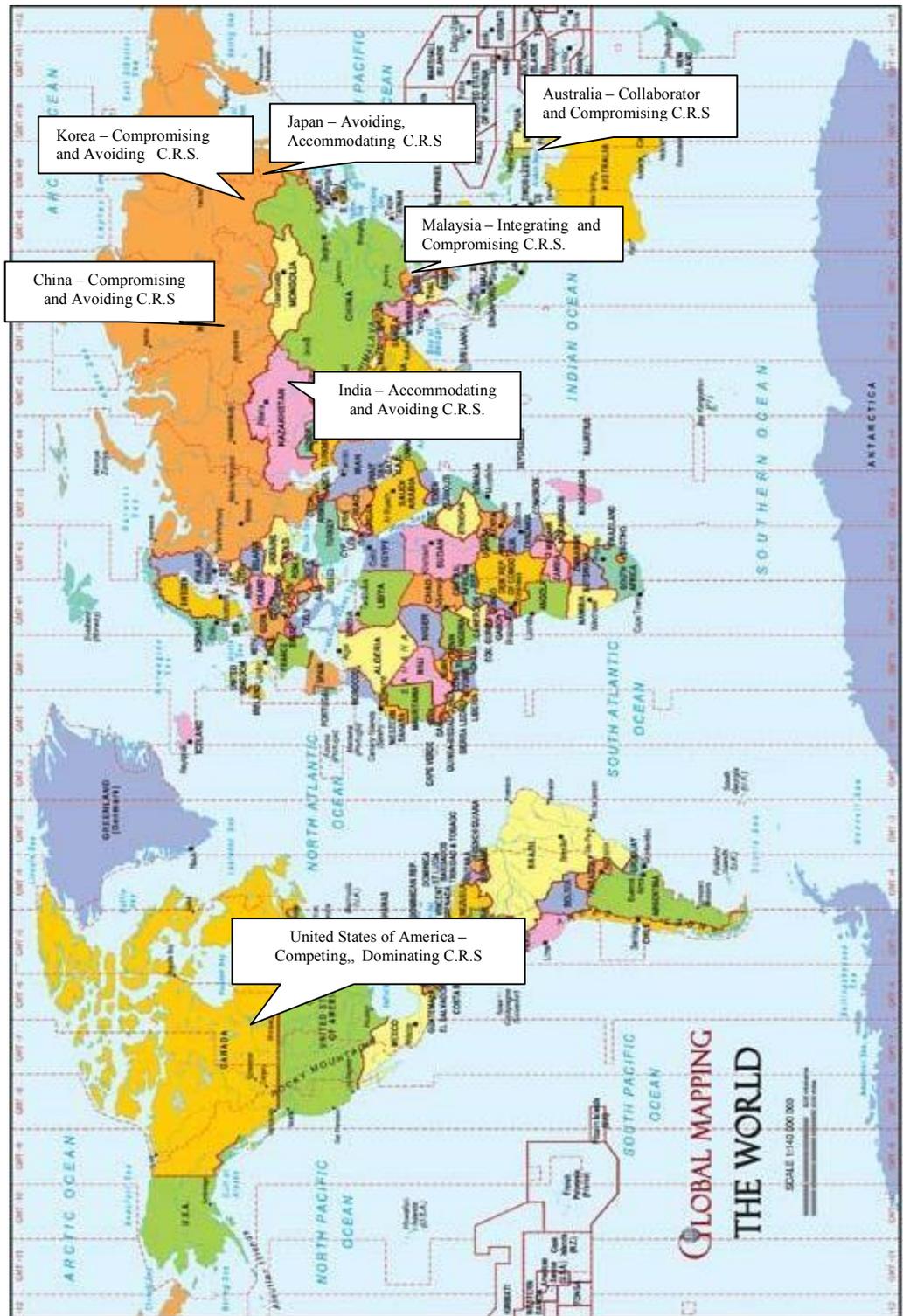
Figure 1: Map of the World showing the countries under study, with their preferred conflict resolution styles.

4. Findings

Conflict is a culturally defined event, hence different conflict management styles are practiced in different cultures. In recent times several studies have linked culture to conflict preference styles and many studies have investigated so-called "East-West differences" by comparing U.S. managers to a matched group in an Asian society. In this study an attempt has been made to examine intercultural conflict resolution style followed by Americans, Asians (China, India, Korea, Japan and Malaysia) and Australians. Some of the findings which has emerged out of the study have been that; Americans resort to direct, assertive, dominating and confrontational style the most compared to others in the study. They have been found to use less of obliging and avoiding style. Reasons for using such styles can be directly derived from the cultural factors and the values held by the Americans which are characterized by individualism, expressed individual character, valuing individual achievement, and so on. People value freedom, democracy, independence, and are full of the competitive spirit and challenge. They strive for equality, promote individual accomplishments, focus on tasks over relationships, and welcome direct communication. Looking at the Asian side, it is important to note that China, Japan and Korea in particular are very much influenced by Confucian teaching and the culture in these countries are guided by Confucian teachings till date. Chinese preferred conflict resolution style is compromising , they tend to avoid conflict as far as possible and use indirect method to resolve conflict. This is in direct connection with the Confucian culture followed by them which gives importance to harmony, peaceful coexistence, kindness, order for old and young, politeness, modesty, honesty and sincerity in interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the core values embedded throughout modern Chinese culture include including, respect for hierarchy; building relationships through guanxi (connections, reciprocal obligations); group-orientation; and mianzi (face) and harmony is seen in their conflict resolution style. In Malaysia the first preference is given to Integrating style followed by Compromising in almost all the studies undertake, also it was seen that Malays showed a dislike for aggressive behaviour, brashness and insensitiveness. This clearly shows a reflection of their values of collectivist orientation, teamwork, cooperation, respect for seniors/elderly people and preserving face, respect for authority and hierarchy and values of harmony. Japan showed a clear preference for avoiding style and the reason can be given to Confucian teachings.

Table 2: Countries under study

Countries under study	Most preferred Conflict Resolution Style (C.S.R.)	Second preferred Conflict Resolution Style (C.R.S)
United States of America	Competing Style	Dominating Style
China	Compromising Style	Avoiding Style
India	Accommodating Style	Avoiding Style
Malaysia	Integrating Style	Compromising Style
Korea	Compromising Style	Avoiding Style
Japan	Avoiding Style	Accommodating style
Australia	Collaborator style	Accommodating Style

Koreans use compromising, cooperative and integrative style and don't show and interest for confrontational strategies, and goes very well with the values of Koreans, which says, strive for harmony, honour, humility and respect. Etiquette and courtesy are also extremely important to Koreans. Indians, are somewhat different from their Asian counterparts (China, Japan and Korea), with the fact that mostly they preferred Accommodation as their first choice followed by Compromise. This is because Indians tend to seek a solution that pleases everyone and at the same time they follow British norms of active, mutual problem solving.Last but not the least Australians prefer to go for a collaborator style followed by accommodation and compromise styles since Australians emphasise on Egalitarianism. This showed a slight difference when compared with than Americans.

5. Conclusion

This study explores a new angle and is among the first to examine intercultural conflict resolution among America, Asia (China, India, Korea, Japan and Malaysia) and Australia. This is the first study which has brought three continents one platform and compared their differing conflict resolution styles in the light of their cultural values. A lot many studies have been done to compare "East- West" differences, by comparing U.S. to different Asian countries individually but for the first time U.S. has been compared to not only Asia but to Australia as well. As such, common limitations are to be noted of limited number of studies in Australian and Indian context. Much studies have not been done of Australian conflict resolution styles since it has always been equated to America and it has been believed that American conflict resolution style is replicated in Australia as well, but that does not stand hundred percent true since few differences lie in culture and values held by Australians.

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