Stephen A. Samaha, Joshua T. Beck, & Robert W. Palmatier

The Role of Culture in International Relationship Marketing

International relationships are increasingly critical to business performance. Yet despite a recent surge in international research on relationship marketing (RM), it is unclear whether or how RM should be adapted across cultures. The authors adopt Hofstede's dimensions of culture to conduct a comprehensive, multivariate, metaregression analysis of 47,864 relationships across 170 studies, 36 countries, and six continents. To guide theory, they propose four tenets that parsimoniously capture the essence of culture's effects on RM. Study 1 affirms these tenets and emphasizes the importance of taking a fine-grained perspective to understand the role of culture in RM because of the high degree of heterogeneity across different cultural dimensions and RM linkages. For example, the magnitude of individualism's effect is 71% greater on RM than other cultural dimensions, whereas masculinity has almost no effect; however, accounting only for individualism ignores significant moderating effects of power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions. To guide managers, Study 2 adopts a country-level approach and reveals that RM is much more effective outside the United States such that relationships are 55% more effective, on average, for increasing business performance in Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

Keywords: international relationship marketing, individualism–collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity–femininity

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Academics and practitioners maintain that relationship marketing (RM) enhances performance—a claim that is both empirically well documented (Swaminathan and Moorman 2009) and evident in managers' beliefs that relationships are decisive for achieving success (Würth Group 2010). From a global perspective, relationships also are increasingly critical. International trade accounts for 20% of global gross domestic product (GDP), and as trade expands rapidly across borders, firms and foreign customers become increasingly interlinked (Central Intelligence Agency 2010; World Trade Organization 2011). Among the Standard & Poor's 500 firms that report foreign sales, 46% of their total revenues in 2010 came from foreign markets (Silverblatt and Guarino 2011). Despite this increase in international relationships, managers and academics have little guidance regarding whether or how RM strategies should be adapted in different countries, beyond warnings that a "cross-national generalization should not be assumed" (Steenkamp 2005, p. 6; see also Ghemawat 2011). Thus, the objective of this article is to synthesize previous theoretical and empirical research to provide parsimonious guidance to researchers and managers aiming to understand and execute international RM.

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Most current practice extends a U.S.-centric RM framework to different countries, with relatively little consideration for how its effectiveness might depend on culture (Palmatier et al. 2006). Three key limitations of prior research prevent managers and researchers from developing a more holistic understanding of international RM. First, data restrictions constrain researchers to study one or, at most, a few countries at a time, which limits multicountry generalizations (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci 2001; Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1995). Second, RM research has typically investigated the impact of a single cultural dimension at a time (Ozdemir and Hewett 2010; Robinson, Irmak, and Jayachandran 2012), but because culture's impact on RM effectiveness is likely multidimensional, this approach undermines the ability to understand culture's "net effect" (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). Third, little theoretical or empirical research has addressed how culture influences specific links in the RM framework, which hinders the development of any fine-grained guidance about the efficacy of specific RM strategies across cultures. That is, extant international RM research is often U.S.-centric, theoretically constrained to a single cultural dimension, and limited in scope to a few RM strategies.

To overcome these limitations, we perform a comprehensive meta-analysis of RM research that synthesizes 47,864 relationships across 170 studies, 36 countries, and six continents. Our sample of 36 countries accounts for 81% of global GDP (United Nations Database 2012). We also investigate international RM in two complementary studies. In Study 1, we provide a parsimonious theoretical

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foundation for culture's influence on RM by simultaneously evaluating the moderating effects of multiple cultural dimensions on the classic "RM strategies → relational mediators (commitment, trust) → outcome" framework (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Thus, Study 1 provides theoretically relevant insights into how different cultural dimensions affect RM. In Study 2, we pursue more managerially relevant, country-level RM guidelines. Because recommendations specific to cultural dimensions do not account for the aggregate, simultaneous effect of all cultural dimensions on RM, they have limited value for firms that implement their marketing using a country or regional structure (Johansson 2009). By integrating our meta-analytic results from Study 1 with secondary cultural data for the 25 largest countries and seven geographic regions, we determine "net effects" of a country or region's culture on the efficacy of RM strategies (i.e., aggregating the simultaneous effects of multiple cultural dimensions for a specific county). Thus, Study 2 provides managerially relevant insights into how different countries affect RM.

As a theoretical basis for understanding how cultural differences affect RM, we adopt Hofstede's (1980) four primary dimensions of culture (individualism–collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity), which have strong precedence in marketing strategy (Erramilli and Rao 1993; Johnson and Tellis 2008). "Culture" refers to the pattern of values, norms, and beliefs that affect the way people assess information; it leads to differential processing and evaluations of environmental information (Hofstede 1991). It also should influence how people interpret and respond to various RM activities.

Our research makes several key contributions. First, we propose and find evidence in support of four parsimonious tenets that capture the theoretical essence of how each of Hofstede's (1980) four primary dimensions of culture moderates the specific linkages in the RM framework. For example, individualism–collectivism primarily influences the effectiveness of RM activities that emphasize long-term social bonding and dependence (e.g., duration), whereas power distance influences the effectiveness of RM activities that emphasize the importance of status (e.g., word of mouth [WOM]), and uncertainty avoidance is critical for RM activities that address risk and uncertainty (e.g., expertise). We offer a concise theoretical explanation for when each cultural dimension matters most and why. In contrast, extant research in this domain has typically theorized an effect of a single cultural dimension on a specific RM linkage, which prevents a holistic view of culture's effects. Adding to the meta-analytic benefits of our empirical synthesis of prior research, we provide a parsimonious theoretical synthesis of the results, using four tenets to guide our theoretical rationale for 28 potential moderating effects.

Second, we demonstrate the importance of taking a fine-grained perspective on the role of culture in international RM by noting the high degree of heterogeneity in our empirical results across both different cultural dimensions and various RM linkages. For example, in aggregate, individualism–collectivism seems to be the most important cultural dimension, with moderating effects on most RM linkages, which also are often greater in magnitude than the effects of other cultural dimensions (on average, 71% greater). In contrast, masculinity–femininity emerges as the least important dimension (only one significant interaction). However, accounting only for individualism–collectivism, as often occurs in marketing research (e.g., Ozdemir and Hewett 2010; Robinson, Irmak, and Jayachandran 2012), would fail to identify the significant moderating effect of the power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions on other RM linkages that remain unaffected by individualism (e.g., relational mediators → WOM behaviors). Our results thus demonstrate the need to either control for multiple cultural dimensions or select specific cultural dimensions on the basis of the theoretical content most relevant to the RM linkage (e.g., using tenets) before drawing conclusions. Research that grants equal weight to every cultural dimension by calculating the Euclidean distance across cultural factors may provide misleading guidance by failing to acknowledge the significant heterogeneity in effect sizes across cultural dimensions and RM linkages (Johnson and Tellis 2008; Kogut and Singh 1988; Mitra and Golder 2002).

Third, using our results from Study 2 , we offer the first specific, country-level recommendations pertaining to the effectiveness of different RM strategies for the 25 largest countries (in terms of GDP) by simultaneously accounting for all four cultural dimensions. Thus, managers can gain insights into the most impactful RM strategies as well as how much RM actually pays off in each country. For example, building dependence is a more effective relationship-building strategy in Russia ($r = .55$, 118% greater than in the United States) than are relationship investments ($r = .22$, 50% smaller than in the United States). These key differences would be missed or, worse, result in misleading guidance if U.S.-centric RM research were applied to other countries without accounting for the role of culture. For example, Palmatier et al.'s (2006, p. 150) assertion that dependence is "not an effective relationship-building strategy" without any country contingency is misleading because building dependence is very effective in Russia. The effect of relationships on performance also varies meaningfully across countries; in China, the effect of relationships on performance is 100% greater than it is in the United States, whereas the effects in Belgium, Norway, and the Netherlands are 27%–37% less than in the United States. The current study provides actionable guidelines for adapting RM strategies to account for cultural differences.

Fourth, our exploratory analysis to determine whether the hypothesized interactions between cultural dimensions and RM linkages are contingent on study- or industry-level contextual factors (i.e., three-way interactions) yields notable results. Most of culture's moderating effects remained unchanged (86% were nonsignificant), in support of the robustness of our findings, and yet a single linkage—between communication and relational mediators—accounted for all six significant three-way interactions. Our findings thus suggest that substantial advertising intensity can help suppress the already weak relationship between communication and relational mediators in individualist

cultures because "self-reliant" customers use advertising to gain their information, rather than relying on other, more interpersonal forms of communication. In contrast, in high power distance cultures, advertising seems to work more synergistically with communication, possibly by supporting effective, status-based differentiation through multiple channels (Alden, Hoyer, and Lee 1993). The overriding importance of communicating in dynamic environments also can significantly offset (individualism, power distance) or enhance (uncertainty avoidance) the effect of culture and, in some cases, even overwhelm its effect. Further research is especially critical because communication exerts the effect with the greatest magnitude on the relational mediators of all the RM strategies studied.

Culture's Effects on RM

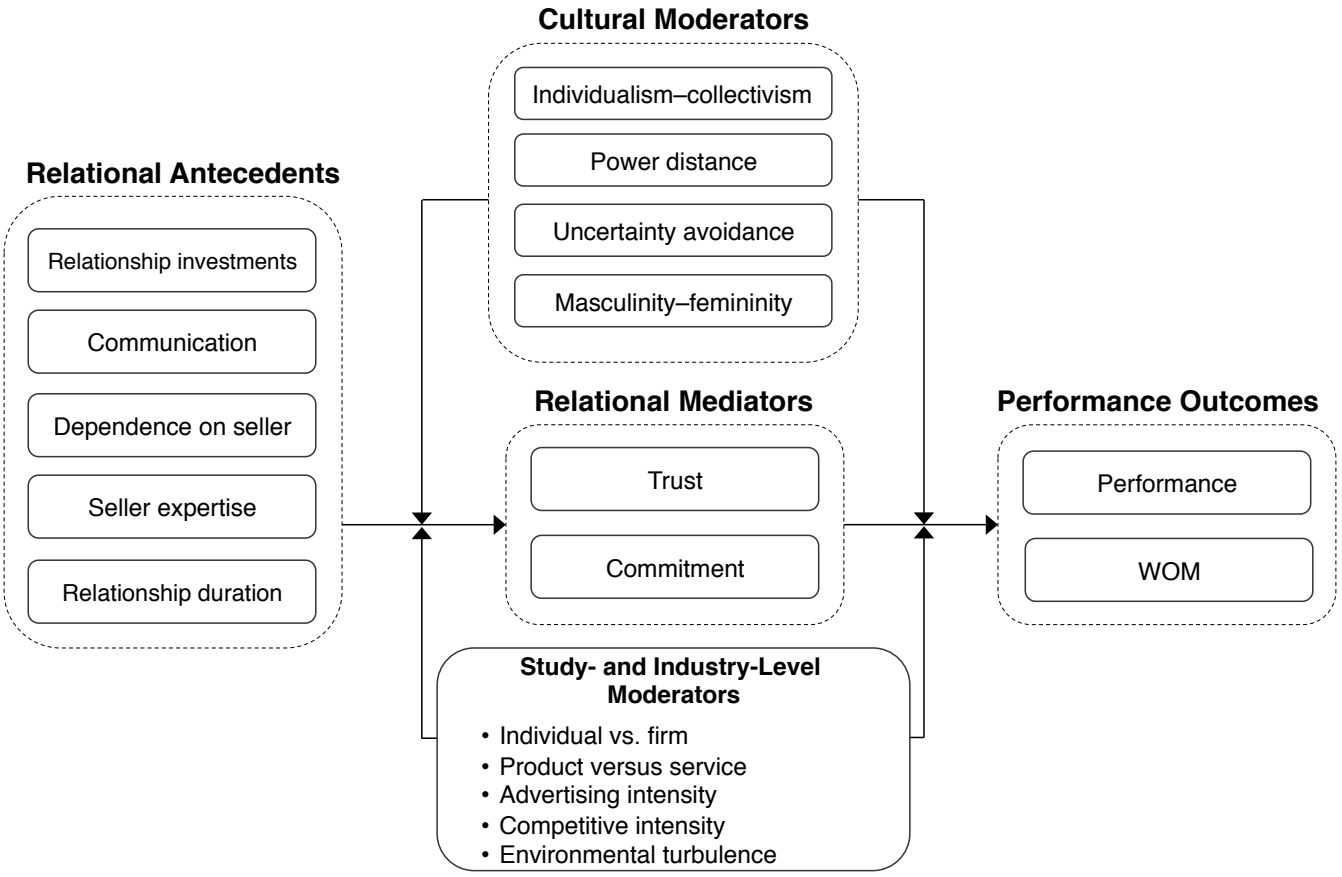
A country's culture is a key environmental force that shapes its people's perceptions, dispositions, and behaviors (Triandis 1989). Culture is "the training or refining of one's mind from social environments in which one grew up" (Hofstede 1991, p. 4). Because RM interactions are social exchanges, culture influences the norms, roles, and expectations of these relationships. Culture also influences the types of socially engaging and disengaging emotional processes that people experience (Kitayama, Mesquita, and Karasawa 2006), so it likely is critical for understanding international RM. The way social information is encoded and exploited also differs across countries, due to differences in value systems. We aim to evaluate how such ingrained cultural differences influence the effectiveness of RM strategies.

To do so, we synthesize results from cross-disciplinary research in marketing, psychology, sociology, and management to formulate hypotheses regarding the predicted moderating effects of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions on RM effectiveness. Table 1 includes a summary of selected literature pertaining to the role of culture in RM. Consistent with prior research (Palmatier et al. 2006), we test the moderating effects of each construct linked with trust and commitment separately as well as in aggregate. To simplify our terminology, when testing any hypotheses involving both trust and commitment, we use the generic term "relational mediators." Figure 1 illustrates our conceptual model. Because we do not anticipate that every cultural dimension matters equally for all constructs, we precede our hypotheses with a series of parsimonious tenets that capture the theoretical essence of how each cultural dimension should moderate the RM framework. Thus, we offer one tenet for each cultural dimension and then propose hypotheses tailored to test the validity of each tenet. Before presenting our moderation predictions, we offer brief theoretical arguments for the main effects, paralleling prior research (Palmatier et al. 2006). We then build on these main effect

TABLE 1
Selected Literature on the Role of Culture in RM

Reference	Key Constructs	Key Findings
Individualism–Collectivism		
Gudykunst, Yoon, and Nishida (1987); Noesjirwan (1978)	Communication	Collectivists are more likely to hide negative emotions to preserve group harmony and encourage greater communication intimacy than individualists.
Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010); Morishima and Minami (1983)	Dependence	Interdependence and affiliation are more important for collectivists than for individualists.
Wuyts and Geyskens (2005)	Relationship duration	Collectivist firms are more likely to select a close partner with whom they have shared prior close ties.
Earley and Gibson (1998); Kirkman (2001)	Performance	Having a collectivistic orientation improves performance on teams; being an individualist exerts a negative impact on performance. Individualism lowers productivity on teams.
Money, Gilly, and Graham (1998)	WOM	Japanese (collectivist) firms rely more on WOM referrals than U.S. (individualist) firms.
Power Distance		
Pornpitakpan and Francis (2001)	Expertise	People from high power distance cultures are more influenced by expertise than people from low power distance cultures.
Lam, Lee, and Mizerski (2009)	WOM	High power distance has a positive effect on in-group WOM.
Uncertainty Avoidance		
Hofstede (1980); Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010); Pornpitakpan and Francis (2001)	Expertise	High uncertainty avoidance cultures are more likely to rely on experts than generalists. Nonexperts are perceived as less competent than experts in high uncertainty avoidance cultures.
Kale and Barnes (1992); Kale and McIntyre (1991)	Relationship duration	Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance may exhibit a stronger resistance to change because of the high importance placed on stability.
Masculinity–Femininity		
Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010); Kale and Barnes (1992); Steensma et al. (2000)	Performance	Whereas feminine cultures generally emphasize relationships and collaboration for achieving success, masculine cultures emphasize the importance of competitiveness and winning.

FIGURE 1
Study 1: International RM Framework



arguments to develop moderating hypotheses for each cultural dimension.

Main Effects of Relational Antecedents → Relational Mediators → Outcomes

Our conceptual model has five relational antecedents and two outcomes. We include any relational construct that has been studied in eight or more countries. In Appendix A, we list the definitions, aliases, and representative studies for the constructs in our model. The five antecedents are relationship investments, communication, dependence on seller, seller expertise, and relationship duration. "Relationship investments" capture the "seller's time, effort, spending, and resources focused on building a stronger relationship," and "communication" refers to the "amount, frequency, and quality of information shared between exchange partners" (Palmatier et al. 2006, p. 138). Seller investments often generate gratitude and cycles of reciprocation that increase trust and social bonds (Palmatier et al. 2009). Communication enhances trust and commitment by coordinating and aligning goals among exchange partners (Wagner 1995). "Dependence on seller" (dependence) refers to the "customer's evaluation of the value of seller-provided resources for which few alternatives are available from other sellers" (Palmatier et al. 2006, p. 138). We include the modifier "seller" to designate the upstream exchange party for certain constructs for which the referent requires some clarification. However, evidence for the effect of dependence on relational mediators is mixed because dependence is a natural element of relationship building that can offer relational stability, even though some customers try to avoid it (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Thus, the effect of dependence on relational mediators hinges on whether customers accept reliance on sellers, which prior research has suggested typically occurs (Palmatier et al. 2006). "Seller expertise" (expertise) is the "knowledge, experience, and overall competency of the seller" (Palmatier et al. 2006, p. 138). Expertise enhances relational mediators by increasing the perceived credibility of seller claims and establishing the superiority of a seller in a market (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990). Finally, "relationship duration," which is the "length of time that the relationship between the exchange partners has existed" (Palmatier et al. 2006, p. 138), enhances relationships by providing exchange partners with opportunities to learn about seller capabilities and motives, thereby confirming expectations and reducing risk in the relationship (Doney and Cannon 1997).

We consider two outcomes in our model: WOM and performance. "Word of mouth" is the "likelihood of a customer positively referring the seller to another potential customer" (Palmatier et al. 2006, p. 138). Relational mediators enhance WOM because customers develop a desire to

promote preferred sellers over competitors, communicate access to relational resources (e.g., preferred treatment, insider knowledge), and demonstrate their opinion leadership to others (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). "Performance" refers to improvements in outcomes such as sales, share of wallet, profit performance, and other positive changes to the seller's business. Relational mediators enhance performance because the reciprocity norms that govern the relationship increase customers' desire to reward relational partners with repeat business and higher margins (Palmatier et al. 2009). Because these main effects are replications, we do not offer hypotheses but instead focus on how Hofstede's (1980) four primary dimensions of culture moderate the main effects.[1]

Moderating Role of Individualism–Collectivism in RM

We begin our discussion with individualism–collectivism, which has received the most attention in cross-cultural research (Allik and Realo 2004; Williams, Han, and Qualls 1998). The individualism–collectivism cultural dimension captures the extent to which people are expected to be self-reliant and distant from others (individualism) instead of mutually dependent and closely tied to others (collectivism). Compared with individualist cultures, collectivist cultures may respond more positively to RM efforts because they are more sensitive and responsive to RM norms. In collectivist cultures, reciprocity norms and mutual interdependence govern relationships (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010; Morishima and Minami 1983). Collectivists are more concerned with the collective well-being of their entire group, and members rely on and work with one another to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Collectivists also are more receptive to social bonding (the process of forming attachments with others) than members of individualist cultures and value long-term group ties, similar to the ties binding extended families (Triandis 1995). Thus, collectivism emphasizes long-term social bonding and dependence, manifested as familiarity, friendship, long-term ties, and close personal relationships (Williams, Han, and Qualls 1998).

Compared with collectivists, individualists prefer arm's-length relationships that persist for self-serving (as opposed to mutually beneficial) reasons (Steensma et al. 2000). Because individualists value individual goals over group goals, they build and maintain relationships only to the extent that doing so is instrumental to their individual goal achievement (Triandis 1989, 1995). Should a given relationship interfere with such pursuits, an individualist severs ties and forms new relationships. All else being equal, we anticipate that as a culture becomes increasingly individualist, relationships based on long-term social bonding and dependence become more difficult to form, and the benefits associated with having strong relationships decline. With this logic, we propose the first of our four cultural RM tenets:

> Tenet 1: In cultures with higher individualism, relationships based on long-term social bonding and dependence become more difficult to form, and the beneficial effects of relationships on outcomes are weaker.

Because long-term social bonding and interdependence are central to collectivist cultures, we also anticipate that RM strategies and outcomes linked to long-term social bonding and dependence grow stronger (positively moderated) in collectivist cultures but weaker (negatively moderated) in individualist cultures. Five constructs in our framework related to long-term social bonding and dependence should be affected by this cultural dimension: (1) communication, (2) dependence, (3) relationship duration, (4) WOM, and (5) performance. Communication is critical in collectivist cultures because collectivists rely on close coordination and communication to enable them to act in unison and achieve shared goals; they are open and willing to communicate. Communicating and socially identifying with others also helps establish the primacy of group goals over individual goals (Wagner 1995). Thus, customers should be more open and responsive to communicating in collectivist cultures, whereas in individualist cultures, they may be less receptive to communicating for social bonding purposes; therefore, communication should grow more effective as collectivism increases. For example, collectivist cultures prioritize communication intimacy, which encourages sharing and in turn increases opportunities for relationship building (Gudykunst, Yoon, and Nishida 1987).

Dependence also has a more central role in collectivist than in individualist cultures (Morishima and Minami 1983). Collectivists are expected to contribute to the overall well-being of their entire group, and in exchange, they receive protection and share in the group's successes (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). Mutual interdependence and reciprocity help guide member behaviors to ensure that they align with collective group goals. Conversely, individualist cultures tend to be driven by personal beliefs, values, and attitudes (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010); members are expected to look after themselves and make decisions independently of others (Roth 1995). Individualists try to avoid dependency, undermining the link between dependence and relational bonds, whereas collectivists are receptive to building interdependent bonds and regard dependence as a natural precursor of strong relationships.

Finally, relationship duration should be more critical in collectivist than in individualist cultures. Collectivists are more likely than individualists to partner with someone with whom they have shared prior close ties (Wuyts and Geyskens 2005). Firms rarely conduct business with unfamiliar firms and rely instead on long-term relationships (Wuyts and Geyskens 2005). Whereas individualists remain in a relationship for only as long as it is convenient, collectivists view relationships as inherently long term (Hofstede,

[1]We considered including more recently added dimensions of culture (e.g., long-term orientation) but ultimately concentrated our investigation on Hofstede's (1980) primary four dimensions because of (1) their representation in the RM literature, (2) sample restrictions, and (3) nonsignificant effects associated with dimensions such as long-term orientation. Moreover, we only hypothesize theoretically supported moderating effects, but we test and report all possible moderating effects for completeness (Table 2).

Hofstede, and Minkov 2010); therefore, relationship length likely carries more weight as collectivism increases.

H_1: The positive effects of (a) communication, (b) dependence on seller, and (c) relationship duration on relational mediators are weaker in cultures with higher individualism.

Because collectivist cultures place a premium on the importance of relationships, customers' sensitivity to existing relational bonds likely increases such that trust and commitment can effectively increase WOM and performance with greater collectivism. If two customers are equally committed to a seller, the customer in the more collectivist culture should feel greater normative pressure to offer support, by speaking highly of and giving higher prices or more business to a partner, than the customer in an individualist culture. Wasti (2003) finds, in an organizational context, that employee commitment yields less turnover in more collectivist cultures because these employees are more "susceptible" to norms, so a relationship of a given level of strength has stronger effects on behavior. In addition, collectivist cultures are more interested in and receptive to information about ongoing relationships (Singh 1990), so collectivism creates conditions that strengthen the link between exchange relationships and WOM. Thus, strong relationships exert greater (smaller) effects on WOM and performance in more collectivist (individualist) cultures because of the increased (decreased) sensitivity and responsiveness to relational norms in these cultures (Sambharya and Banerji 2006).

H_2: The positive effects of relational mediators on (a) WOM and (b) performance are weaker in cultures with higher individualism.

Moderating Role of Power Distance

The power distance cultural dimension captures the extent to which inequalities between more and less powerful members of society are considered acceptable (Hofstede 1991). In high power distance cultures, an existing hierarchical and normative system supports inequalities among people. Organizations and policies emphasize differences in power and status through prestige symbols (e.g., separate dining rooms, better parking places). In such cultures, people desire and openly accept exclusive privileges and other symbolic behaviors that make them appear powerful (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). In contrast, privileges and status symbols are typically frowned on and avoided in low power distance cultures. Because customers are more open to and accepting of status differences as power distance increases, status-based RM strategies should be more effective in high power distance cultures. Thus, we propose the following:

Tenet 2: In cultures with higher power distance, status-based relationships become easier to form, and the beneficial effects of relationships on status-based outcomes are stronger.

Power distance may moderate three relational constructs related to status in our conceptual framework: seller expertise, WOM, and performance. Expertise conveys superior knowledge, competence, and experience, which should be more highly regarded in high power distance cultures because expertise is a form of status. In decision-making settings, people in high power distance cultures tend to value, accept, and rely more on people with higher status, whereas people from low power distance cultures rely on their own experiences, and expertise might not even be acknowledged as a source of status (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). All else being equal, customers should be more receptive and work harder to build or maintain relationships with experts in high versus low power distance cultures because of their higher perceived value of and reliance on expertise with greater power distance.

H_3: The positive effects of seller expertise on relational mediators are stronger in cultures with higher power distance.

Communicating relational resources through WOM activities—which demonstrate that the sender has received preferential treatment—enhances reputation (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster 1998), especially in high power distance cultures, in which reputation (i.e., status) is more important and accepted. In high power distance cultures, such status motives increase the likelihood that customers signal to others that they have relational resources. For example, in more status-salient cultures, a customer should be more likely to tell friends about the special deals she gets from a relationally bonded salesperson because this WOM enhances the her status among those friends. Appearing "relationally special" elevates status such that relationships can have stronger effects on WOM behaviors in cultures that prioritize status as desired and acceptable and thus encourage its communication to others. In a similar vein, status motives that increase the connection of relational mediators with WOM also should enhance the link with performance. Granting repeat, high-margin business to relational partners fulfills reciprocal relational expectations and thereby helps build and maintain a relationship and the status-generating resources that it provides. Because unique access to resources enhances status (Huberman, Loch, and Önçüler 2004), customers in cultures with higher power distance likely try to secure relational resources by giving more and higher-margin business to relational partners to gain and protect their source of status.

H_4: The positive effects of relational mediators on (a) WOM and (b) performance are stronger in cultures with higher power distance.

Moderating Role of Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, the feeling that "what is different is dangerous" prevails (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010, p. 203). Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance embrace predictability and avoid ambiguity; those with low uncertainty avoidance accept uncertainty more readily, take more risks, and value flexibility over the use of formal rules and explicit guidelines. Because risk management has a central role in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, we anticipate that RM strategies linked to

uncertainty reductions are more effective at building and maintaining relationships in high uncertainty avoidance cultures and less effective in low uncertainty avoidance cultures. With this rationale, we propose the third cultural RM tenet:

Tenet 3: In cultures with higher uncertainty avoidance, activities that reduce uncertainty make relationships easier to form.

The two relational constructs related to uncertainty reduction in our framework that may be moderated by uncertainty avoidance are seller expertise and relationship duration. Customers in high uncertainty avoidance cultures are motivated to reduce risk, and they extract more value from sellers with expertise, which seemingly can generate more predictable outcomes. Thus, customers have greater motivation to build and maintain strong relational bonds with expert sellers when uncertainty avoidance increases. For example, advertisements in high uncertainty avoidance cultures often depict physicians dressed in white lab coats to increase perceived expertise and take advantage of customer preferences for uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). In contrast, because low uncertainty avoidance cultures cope more easily with risk, they rely less on expertise, which likely undermines the link between expertise and relationships (Doney, Cannon, and Mullen 1998).

Similarly, relationship duration is more important in high uncertainty avoidance cultures because customers desire stability and want to avoid change (Kale and Barnes 1992; Kale and McIntyre 1991). In such cultures, people tend to rely on what is familiar rather than what is new or different, and new relationships seem more risky than existing ones (Doney and Cannon 1997). Thus, relationship duration should have a stronger effect on relationships in high uncertainty avoidance cultures because customers work harder to maintain existing relationships, rather than build new ones, to avoid the risk associated with new partners.

H_5: The positive effects of (a) seller expertise and (b) relationship duration on relational mediators are stronger in cultures with higher uncertainty avoidance.

Moderating Role of Masculinity–Femininity

The masculinity–femininity cultural dimension captures the degree to which "tough" (masculine) values prevail over "tender" (feminine) values in a society (Doney, Cannon, and Mullen 1998; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). In highly masculine cultures, values such as assertiveness, competitiveness, and aggressiveness are deemed most important. In feminine cultures, relational values such as reciprocity, mutuality, and benevolence are more important, with an emphasis on nurturing and compromising (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). Despite some seeming similarities, the individualism–collectivism and masculinity–femininity cultural dimensions differ in important ways. For example, collectivist cultures promote the maintenance of and dependence on the in-group versus self-reliance, whereas feminine cultures encourage enhanced compromise versus competitiveness, regardless of group affiliation. As an illustration, individualist cultures promote more merit-based than egalitarian-based rules for allocating rewards, which encourage self-reliance rather than group harmony, but the type of reward delivered varies with the level of masculinity such that more masculine cultures choose rewards that reflect competitiveness values (e.g., a trophy), whereas feminine cultures choose rewards that promote nurturing values (e.g., spa treatment; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). The values of feminine cultures tend to align better with key relational processes, such as reciprocation and mutuality, such that as femininity increases, decisions should be more affected by relationships factors. In line with this reasoning, we offer our fourth and final tenet:

Tenet 4: In cultures with higher masculinity, the beneficial effects of relationships on outcomes are weaker.

The increased salience of relationship factors in customer decision making as femininity increases also suggests that strong relationships drive outcomes (e.g., WOM, performance) more effectively in feminine than masculine cultures. Customers in feminine cultures likely reciprocate relational benefits received from a seller with benevolent actions to help that seller, such as positive WOM, more purchases, or payments of higher prices. Alternatively, in more masculine cultures, competitiveness, aggressiveness, and a lack of reciprocity undermine the connection between relational bonds and positive outcome behaviors because customers are less likely to reward sellers who provide relational benefits. Masculine cultures regard business relationships or alliances not as long-term, win–win situations (Steensma et al. 2000), but rather as unilateral, short-term, competitive engagements such that their people find little value in nurturing a relationship or "unnecessarily" repaying a partner (Kale and Barnes 1992). Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010, p. 161) summarize the focus of masculine cultures: "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." Thus, customers in masculine cultures spend little time or effort to provide WOM or other benefits to relationally linked sellers. Overall, the positive effects of relationships on WOM and performance should decrease in masculine cultures, which devalue reciprocating exchange partners for any relational benefits received.

H_6: The positive effects of relational mediators on (a) WOM and (b) performance are weaker in cultures with higher masculinity.

Study 1: Meta-Analysis of Moderating Effects of Culture on RM

Study 1 advances extant theory by applying Hofstede's (1980; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010) four dimensions of culture in a relational context to test our hypotheses directly and assess the related tenets indirectly, providing a parsimonious, theoretically based synthesis of how culture affects RM. In contrast to most prior international RM research, we evaluate the effectiveness of each cultural dimension while controlling for the simultaneous effects of the other dimensions, which provides a robust test of how culture affects RM.

Sample and Analytic Approach

To identify articles that feature empirical links among previously identified key RM constructs (see Palmatier et al. 2006), we began by searching several databases, including ABI/INFORM, PsychINFO, ProQuest, Science Direct, and Business Source Complete. We also conducted a thorough search of the Social Sciences Citation Index to identify additional articles in our research domain. Next, we conducted a manual shelf search of journals that contained results relevant to our analysis. Web Appendix A lists all the articles in our sample.

The most common method to report relationships among variables of interest involved correlation coefficients, so we used them as our primary measure of effect size. Two independent researchers coded the studies and resolved any differences through discussion (overall agreement > 95%). When coding studies, we referred to the original scales and items reported in each study. We undertook this additional step in the coding process so that dissimilar elements would not be combined inappropriately and conceptually similar variables would not be coded separately, such as when different authors use slightly different labels to refer to similar constructs. When articles reported multiple effect sizes for the same relationship and study, we followed convention and calculated an average effect size (Brown, Homer, and Inman 1998; Palmatier et al. 2006). Our final sample includes 360 reported correlations (75 averaged) collected across 47,864 relationships, 170 studies, 36 countries, and six continents.

We corrected the correlations obtained in each study for measurement error by dividing each correlation coefficient by the product of the square root of the respective reliabilities of the two constructs (Hunter and Schmidt 2004). When a study did not report the reliability for a relevant construct, we used the average reliability for that construct across all the studies we collected. Consistent with prior research, we transformed the reliability-corrected correlations into Fisher's z coefficients, weighted them by the estimated inverse of their variance (N – 3) to give greater weight to more precise estimates, and then converted them back to correlation coefficients (Kirca, Jayachandran, and Bearden 2005).

To assess the effects of culture on the RM framework, we used the country-of-study information from each publication to assign scores for each of Hofstede's primary cultural dimensions. In this study of the effect of antecedents on an exchange relationship and its subsequent influences on outcomes, we focus on the culture in which the exchange relationship is embedded. Only 23 of 170 total studies reported that buyers and sellers were from different countries, but post hoc tests indicated no evidence that our results differed in this sample (using both dummy coding and cultural distance). Thus, our analyses assess the effect of the cultural context in which the exchange relationship transpires. To analyze the moderating effects of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on construct correlations, we used multiple metaregressions (Brown, Homer, and Inman 1998; Kirca, Jayachandran, and Bearden 2005). In addition to using the four cultural variables as covariates, we included two control variables in each model: average firm size in an industry segment (computed from Compustat data as the sum of annual revenue of all firms in each North American Industrial Classification System [NAICS] code, divided by the sum of firm counts per NAICS code from 2000 to 2012, which reflect 75% of our sample) and channel exchange (dummy coded: 1 = channel, and 0 = direct relationship). Average firm size accounts for potential differences in complexity, bureaucracy, and rigidity that may impede RM efforts in large firms; channel partners rely more on RM than do partners in direct relationships (Palmatier et al. 2006). We then followed a procedure outlined by Hedges and Olkin (1985) and regressed the Fisher z-transformed, reliability-adjusted correlations on the Hofstedian variables and the control variables.[2] The weighted least squares technique weighted each observation by the inverse of its variance (N – 3). For the country in which each study was conducted, we used the values of its four cultural dimensions reported by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010).

Results: Moderating Effects of Cultural Dimensions on RM

The baseline, main effects–only model is a replication of previous work, so we present these results in Appendix B. Apart from the increase in variance across correlations (due to the inclusion of more international studies in the sample), the results are consistent with Palmatier et al.'s (2006) meta-analysis. We report our culturally moderated model results in Table 2. Consistent with precedent, we abbreviate individualism–collectivism and masculinity–femininity as "individualism" and "masculinity" because high cultural scores are typically represented as more individualist and more masculine (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010).

We find strong support for Tenet 1: in cultures with higher individualism, relationships based on long-term social bonding and dependence become more difficult to form, and the beneficial effects of relationships on outcomes are weaker. The effectiveness of communication ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .01$), dependence ($\beta = -.40$, $p < .05$), and relationship duration ($\beta = -.40$, $p < .01$) on relational mediators all decrease as cultural individualism increases, in support of $H_{1a–c}$. We also find support for H_{2b}; as a culture's individualism increases, the impact of relational mediators on performance is suppressed ($\beta = -.46$, $p < .01$). However, in contrast with H_{2a}, increases in individualism do not significantly suppress the effects of relational mediators on WOM ($\beta = -.26$, $p = .14$). Although not hypothesized, our results show that the positive effect of expertise on relational mediators decreases with greater cultural individualism ($\beta = -.34$, $p < .05$). The reason for this result is unclear, but it may stem from a focus on self-reliance in individualist

[2]Our analyses include the simultaneous effects of all cultural variables and the two control variables, with the exception of individualism–collectivism in the power distance model and power distance in all other models, due to the high multicollinearity between individualism–collectivism and power distance (Steensma et al. 2000). All other reported results indicate low multicollinearity (all variance inflation factors < 3.0). Additional details regarding model specifications are available in Web Appendix B.

TABLE 2
Study 1: Influence of Cultural Moderators on the RM Framework

Proposed Relationships	Number of Raw Effects	Number of Countries	Individualism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Control Variables: Average Firm Size	Control Variables: Channel Exchange	Model R^2
Antecedents									
Relationship investments → commitment	12	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Relationship investments → trust	18	10	−.03	−.07	−.27	−.06	−.30	.01	.24
Relationship investments → relational mediators	30	10	−.08	−.00	−.37*	.11	−.25	−.18	.30
Communication → commitment	39	15	−.23*	.14	−.23	.18	−.21	.27	.35
Communication → trust	48	17	−.31**	.26	.02	−.03	−.26	−.09	.17
Communication → relational mediators	87	19	−.27***	.21*	−.07	.04	−.22*	.00	.14
Dependence on seller → commitment	24	10	−.47**	.41	−.00	.02	−.29	.31	.25
Dependence on seller → trust	29	10	−.36*	.14	−.06	−.19	.18	−.42**	.50
Dependence → relational mediators	53	12	−.40**	.28*	−.06	−.01	−.04	−.09	.18
Seller expertise → commitment	8	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seller expertise → trust	28	14	−.42**	.49***	.29*	−.00	.06	−.29	.44
Seller expertise → relational mediators	36	16	−.34**	.39***	.30**	−.06	.03	−.27*	.38
Relationship duration → commitment	20	9	−.42**	.32	−.10	.55	.18	−.70*	.37
Relationship duration → trust	24	10	−.44**	.41*	.17	.22	−.40*	−.01	.42
Relationship duration → relational mediators	44	12	−.40***	.34*	.07	.29	−.13	−.30	.28
Outcomes									
Commitment → WOM	16	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trust → WOM	15	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Relational mediators → WOM	31	9	−.26	.42**	−.44*	−.32**	.01	.01	.24
Commitment → performance	33	14	−.63***	.65***	−.15	.38	−.17	−.07	.52
Trust → performance	46	16	−.32***	.21*	−.26*	.11	−.35**	.02	.36
Relational mediators → performance	79	18	−.46***	.39***	−.22**	.22	−.26***	.01	.38

*$p < .10$.
**$p < .05$.
***$p < .01$.
Notes: Operationally, we attempted calculations only when there were a minimum of ten raw effects and eight countries associated with a relationship. A dash (—) indicates when this condition was not met. Standardized estimates of the regression analyses are reported for each cultural dimension and control variable.

cultures, which makes expertise less important for building relationships.

In line with Tenet 2, in cultures with higher power distance, status-based relationships become easier to form, and the beneficial effects of relationships on status-based outcomes are stronger. Specifically, we find support for H_3 ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$); as power distance increases, the impact of seller expertise on relational mediators increases. Similarly, in support of $H_{4a–b}$, as power distance increases, the impact of relational mediators on both WOM ($\beta = .42$, $p < .05$) and performance ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$) is enhanced.

We find partial support for Tenet 3; in cultures with higher uncertainty avoidance, activities that reduce uncertainty make relationships easier to form. In support of H_{5a}, greater uncertainty avoidance enhances the impact of expertise on relational mediators ($\beta = .30$, $p < .05$). However, in relation to H_{5b}, the impact of relationship duration on relational mediators does not increase with greater uncertainty avoidance ($\beta = .07$, $p = .33$).

Finally, we find partial support for Tenet 4; in cultures with higher masculinity, the beneficial effects of relationships on outcomes are weaker. The effect of relational mediators on WOM ($\beta = –.32$, $p < .05$) decreases as masculinity increases, in support of H_{6a}. However, we do not find support for H_{6b}, because as masculinity increases, the impact of relational mediators on performance does not decline ($\beta = .22$, $p = .97$). Average firm size seems to suppress the linkage between relational mediators and performance, in line with our expectations that in larger firms, complexity, bureaucracy, and rigidity may reduce the effectiveness of RM.

Exploratory Analysis: Effect of Culture on RM in the Presence of Contextual Moderators

To explore whether culture's effect on the RM framework is contingent on the context, as well as to check the robustness of our results, we tested whether culture's moderating effects on RM also might be moderated by study- and industry-specific characteristics (i.e., three-way interactions). Our sample featured two study-level moderators: product versus service and individual versus organizational relationships. We anticipated that the effects of culture on RM might vary according to whether relational partners exchange services, which entail greater coproduction and adaptation (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry 1985), or products, for which preferences tend to be culturally constructed (Johansson 2009). Because relationships with people differ from relationships with organizations (Palmatier, Scheer, and Steenkamp 2007), we also examine whether the effects of culture on RM vary with the type of relationship.

Next, we incorporated three industry-level contextual variables that prior research suggests moderate RM linkages (Fang, Palmatier, and Steenkamp 2008): advertising intensity, competitive intensity, and environmental turbulence. These variables were constructed from NAICS data drawn from Compustat and assigned to each study in line with the sample's industry description. We computed advertising intensity as the annual advertising expenditure per NAICS code, scaled by revenue (McAlister, Srinivasan, and Kim 2007). We then calculated the mean advertising intensity from 2000 to 2012 to control for fluctuations over time. For competitive intensity, we calculated the Hirschman–Herfindahl index for each industry, which ranges from 0 (less concentrated, more competitive) to 1 (more concentrated, less competitive). We calculated the mean Hirschman–Herfindahl index for 2000–2012. Finally, we computed environmental turbulence by calculating the standard deviation of revenue for 2000–2012, divided by the mean value of revenue across those years (Fang, Palmatier, and Steenkamp 2008). We assigned studies to high or low subgroups for the moderation analysis with a median split on each variable.

Table 3 reports the results of culture's moderating effects on RM in the presence of contextual moderator variables. We only report results when there are at least 12 raw effects and six countries in both subgroups, to support the moderation analysis. To assess whether the effects of each cultural dimension varied across study- and industry-level moderators, we computed 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients of each cultural dimension for each subgroup. Thus, we examine whether the effect of each dimension (e.g., individualism) on each path (e.g., communication → relational mediators) for one subgroup of a study- or industry-level moderator (e.g., product) differs significantly from its effect for the other subgroup (e.g., service).

The majority of culture's moderating effects did not differ significantly across study- and industry-level moderators (86% were nonsignificant), in support of the robustness of our findings. Yet the effect of communication on relational mediators indicated substantial moderations (six significant three-way interactions). Specifically, individualism reduces the positive effect of communication on relational mediators, as we hypothesized (H_{1a}), but this reduction is even greater when advertising intensity is high ($\beta = –.49$, $p < .01$) rather than low ($\beta = –.02$, $p > .10$) and when environmental turbulence is low ($\beta = –.49$, $p < .01$) rather than high ($\beta = –.04$, $p > .10$). Evidently, when advertising is abundant, it helps weaken the already tenuous relationship between communication and relational mediators in individualist cultures. These more self-reliant customers become more likely to use advertising to gain their information instead of relying on other, more interpersonal forms of communication. Alternatively, because high environmental turbulence means that customers must constantly reconfigure their resources, the weakening of the ties between communication and relational mediators when individualism increases may be partially offset; even individualist customers find value in more communication with partners when adapting or redeploying resources in dynamic environments.

For power distance, we find that, in general, the effect of communication on relational mediators is stronger in cultures with higher power distance ($\beta = .21$, $p < .10$; Table 2), and the additional moderation analyses indicate a more enhanced effect when advertising intensity is high ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$) versus low ($\beta = –.07$, $p > .10$) and when environmental turbulence is low ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$) versus high ($\beta =$

TABLE 3
Study 1: Simultaneous Influence of Cultural and Study-/Industry-Level Moderators on RM Framework

Proposed Relationships	Moderator	Number of Raw Effects	Number of Countries	Individual-ism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Control Variables: Average Firm Size	Control Variables: Channel Exchange
Antecedents									
Communication → relational mediators	Product	72	16	–.36***	.32**	–.08	.01	–.22*	.05
Communication → relational mediators	Service	15	6	–.07	.05	.48	.43	–.04	–.00
Communication → relational mediators	Low advertising intensity	33	11	–.02[a]	–.07[a]	.47**[a]	–.42**	.18	.43*
Communication → relational mediators	High advertising intensity	54	13	–.49***[a]	.46***[a]	–.30*[a]	.22	–.13	–.17
Communication → relational mediators	Low environmental turbulence	54	13	–.49***[a]	.46***[a]	–.29*[a]	.21	–.12	–.16
Communication → relational mediators	High environmental turbulence	33	11	–.04[a]	–.11[a]	.46**[a]	–.47**	.28	.43
Seller expertise → relational mediators	Product	24	13	–.36	.45**	.19	.01	.15	–.20
Seller expertise → relational mediators	Service	12	7	.33	–.84	.89	–.38	–.20	–.10
Seller expertise → relational mediators	Low advertising intensity	19	9	–.23	.38*	.63**	–.23	–.12	–.06
Seller expertise → relational mediators	High advertising intensity	17	12	–.36	.40*	.32	.30	–.38	–.56**
Relationship duration → relational mediators	Low environmental turbulence	22	8	–.37	.33	.07	–.01	–.06	–.35
Relationship duration → relational mediators	High environmental turbulence	22	7	–.48**	.60**	.16	.48*	–.32	–.49*
Outcomes									
Relational mediators → performance	Product	51	11	–.38**	.34**	–.19	.05	–.15	.03
Relational mediators → performance	Service	28	15	–.41***	.37**	–.26*	.09	–.42***	.06
Relational mediators → performance	Individual	26	7	–.05	–.21	.20	.06	–.27	–.34
Relational mediators → performance	Firm	53	15	–.45***	.43***	–.24**	.01	–.37***	.21
Relational mediators → performance	Low advertising intensity	41	15	–.35***	.29**	–.27**	.00	–.51***	.25*
Relational mediators → performance	High advertising intensity	38	8	–.47**	.46**	–.27	–.03	–.17	–.19
Relational mediators → performance	Low competitive intensity	60	16	–.40***	.33**	–.04	.36**	–.23*	–.06
Relational mediators → performance	High competitive intensity	19	6	–.62***	.55***	–.73***	–.14	–.18	.17
Relational mediators → performance	Low environmental turbulence	40	9	–.49***	.50***	–.30*	–.01	–.21	–.22
Relational mediators → performance	High environmental turbulence	39	15	–.45***	.36**	–.26**	–.03	–.35**	.25

*$p < .10$.
**$p < .05$.
***$p < .01$.
[a]Indicates that the regression estimates are significantly different from each other ($p < .05$) across the two moderator groups (e.g., product vs. service).
Notes: All reported results are two-tailed. Results are reported only when there are at least 12 raw effects and six countries on both sides of the moderating relationship. We report standardized estimates of the regression analyses for each cultural dimension and control variable for each subgroup of study- and industry-level moderators.

–.11, $p > .10$). This pattern of effects is notable because it suggests that in high power distance cultures, communication works more synergistically with advertising. In cultures in which status differences are more salient, communicating and advertising work together more readily to develop strong customer relationships, perhaps by supporting differentiation through status-based messaging. This finding is consistent with research showing that firms in high power distance cultures emphasize unequal status in their advertising more than do those in lower power distance cultures (Alden, Hoyer, and Lee 1993). However, the enhanced effectiveness of communication for relationship building in more status-salient cultures is suppressed in turbulent environments, again suggesting that the effects of culture can be offset by environmental turbulence.

Finally, we find that although uncertainty avoidance has no (two-way) moderating effect on the communication → relational mediator linkage, the effect of uncertainty avoidance on the efficacy of communication is significant and may reverse direction depending on whether advertising intensity is low ($\beta = .47$, $p < .05$) or high ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .10$) and whether environmental turbulence is high ($\beta = .46$, $p < .05$) or low ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .10$). In cultures in which customers avoid ambiguity, the effectiveness of communication increases when advertising intensity is low, possibly because people try to avoid conflicting messages across the two channels. Communication also may be more valuable for building relationships in dynamic environments for customers in cultures that prefer to avoid ambiguity.

It is intriguing not only that communication is the only antecedent jointly influenced by culture and contextual moderators but also that the three-way interactions are significant across the three cultural dimensions and often display crossover effects (i.e., switching signs). We offer two tentative conclusions that require additional research to confirm:

1. Communication is highly intertwined with culture, and RM research studying the effects of communication should account for culture to prevent misleading findings as well as to help disentangle the mechanisms that generate the complex pattern of results.
2. The importance of communicating in dynamic environments can significantly offset (individualism, power distance) or enhance (uncertainty avoidance) the effect of culture. Further research to understand these effects is especially critical because communication has the greatest magnitude effect on relational mediators (r = .56) of all the antecedents studied (Appendix B).

Discussion

Accounting for culture is critical for understanding the effectiveness of international RM. In Table 4, we summarize the findings from Study 1 and the overall level of support for the four proposed tenets—namely, strong support for Tenets 1 and 2 regarding the individualism and power distance cultural dimensions and partial support for Tenets 3 and 4 related to uncertainty avoidance and masculinity. Thus, we provide parsimonious theoretical insights into when and how each cultural dimension moderates specific linkages in the RM framework. Individualism is the most important cultural dimension: it suppresses the effectiveness of many relationship-building strategies (communication, dependence, expertise, and duration) as well as the effect of relationships on performance. In addition, it exerts the largest absolute impact on RM, averaging magnitudes of 14%, 90%, and 109% greater than those of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity, respectively (based on the average of standardized regression coefficients; see Table 2). In contrast, masculinity emerges as the least important cultural dimension, with little impact on the effectiveness of relationship-building strategies or links to performance. Masculinity's only moderating role, across the links tested in our model, is to suppress the effect of

TABLE 4
Summary of Results: Support for Tenets and Hypotheses

Tenet/ Hypothesis	Hypothesized Path	Cultural Moderator	Hypothesized Moderating Effect	Result of Hypothesis Test
Tenet 1	*In cultures with higher individualism, relationships based on long-term social bonding and dependence become more difficult to form, and the beneficial effects of relationships on outcomes are weaker.*			
H_{1a}	Communication → Relational mediators	Individualism	– Decreased	Supported
H_{1b}	Dependence on seller → Relational mediators	Individualism	– Decreased	Supported
H_{1c}	Relationship duration → Relational mediators	Individualism	– Decreased	Supported
H_{2a}	Relational mediators → WOM	Individualism	– Decreased	Not supported
H_{2b}	Relational mediators → performance	Individualism	– Decreased	Supported
Tenet 2	*In cultures with higher power distance, status-based relationships become easier to form, and the beneficial effects of relationships on status-based outcomes are stronger.*			
H_3	Seller expertise → relational mediators	Power distance	+ Increased	Supported
H_{4a}	Relational mediators → WOM	Power distance	+ Increased	Supported
H_{4b}	Relational mediators → performance	Power distance	+ Increased	Supported
Tenet 3	*In cultures with higher uncertainty avoidance, activities that reduce uncertainty make relationships easier to form.*			
H_{5a}	Seller expertise → relational mediators	Uncertainty avoidance	+ Increased	Supported
H_{5b}	Relationship duration → relational mediators	Uncertainty avoidance	+ Increased	Not supported
Tenet 4	*In cultures with higher masculinity, the beneficial effects of relationships on outcomes are weaker.*			
H_{6a}	Relational mediators → WOM	Masculinity	– Decreased	Supported
H_{6b}	Relational mediators → Performance	Masculinity	– Decreased	Not supported

relationships on generating WOM behaviors. Overall, our findings suggest that cultural effects vary significantly across dimensions and RM linkages, which is noteworthy because prior research often only controls for one aspect of culture, assumes equal influences across dimensions, and fails to differentiate the role of culture across RM linkages. For example, measures of cultural similarity calculate the Euclidean distances between cultural factors, with the implicit assumption that each cultural factor has the same weight (Johnson and Tellis 2008; Mitra and Golder 2002). Our results suggest otherwise. The four international RM tenets provide parsimonious guidance based on relevant theoretical content of the specific RM linkage on which cultural dimension, if any, may be most relevant.

Applying the tenets for each cultural dimension to specific RM strategies also provides managerial insights into how the effectiveness of RM strategies may depend on each cultural dimension. For example, power distance is critical for RM activities that emphasize status because seller expertise is more effective at building relationships, and relationships have a stronger effect on WOM behaviors in high power distance cultures. Extending this tenet to brands suggests that emphasizing exclusivity or a premium brand positioning should be more effective in high rather than low power distance cultures, consistent with our three-way analysis of advertising intensity. Managers should recognize how each country's cultural profile may interact with marketing strategies before making implementation decisions. For example, managers seeking strong relationships with the highest payoff should focus on countries that are highly collectivist and rank high on power distance.

Study 1 thus emphasizes the contingent nature of international RM. Understanding how cultural dimensions influence RM is an important theoretical first step, but the findings are not directly applicable for managers. First, managers tend to implement marketing strategies using country-level structures, so guidance based on theoretically relevant cultural dimensions is not ideal (Johansson 2009). They would benefit more from country-level suggestions. Second, the effects of culture on RM are multidimensional, and some cultural dimensions have countervailing effects (e.g., individualism and power distance's moderating effect on the link between relational mediators and performance). The net effect of culture on RM in any particular country thus is unclear. To address these issues, we integrate our meta-analytic results from Study 1 with secondary cultural data to determine the "net effect" of a country's culture on the efficacy of RM strategies in Study 2.

Study 2: Effects of Country and Regional Cultural Profiles on RM

With Study 2, we complement Study 1's theoretical insights into the effects of culture by taking a managerial perspective at the country and regional levels to address two important questions. First, in what countries and regions do relationships offer the highest payoff? Second, what relationship-building strategies are most effective in such countries and regions? The country-level analysis in Study 2 provides managers with answers to both questions in a format aligned with their needs. However, a challenge for any country-level analysis is capturing the simultaneous effects of all four cultural dimensions (individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity) to model culture's net effect on RM in a specific country or region.

Modeling the Effectiveness of RM by Country and Region

We begin Study 2 by determining where relationships contribute most to performance so that we can provide managers with practical insights for selecting countries in which to pursue RM versus other strategies. After defining where relationships pay off most, we then determine the country-level effectiveness of specific relationship-building strategies to help managers allocate their RM budgets across RM programs in that country.

Our analysis includes the 25 largest countries in terms of GDP as well as seven geographic regions. In Table 5, we reproduce the cultural profiles from secondary sources (Hofstede and Hofstede 2013); by combining these profiles with our results from Study 1, we model how the effectiveness of RM varies by country. Thus, our results are not confined only to countries with sufficient studies in our meta-analysis sample, because our model can estimate RM effectiveness for any country with available cultural scores. We insert the cultural profiles for the 25 largest countries and seven geographic regions into our multiple metaregression models and compute predicted correlations using the regression coefficients from each respective model, determined from our meta-analysis results of almost 48,000 relationships from extant research (Table 2; Bijmolt, Van Heerde, and Pieters 2005). To increase confidence in our results, we only performed the analysis for linkages in the RM framework for which at least ten countries appeared in the meta-analysis (Study 1).[3]

Results and Discussion

Effect of relationships on performance by country and region. In Table 5, we report the results of our analysis of the effect of relationships on performance by country and region, providing both absolute (correlation coefficients for each country and region) and relative (ranking across countries/regions and compared with the United States) effects. Nearly half (41%) of the studies in our data collection came from the United States, so this country offers a useful benchmark for gauging the relative effectiveness of RM in

[3]As noted previously, high multicollinearity between individualism–collectivism and power distance made it impossible to include both covariates in our model at the same time (Steensma et al. 2000). Instead, we ran two models: (1) one with individualism–collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity (plus two control variables) and (2) another with power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity (and the two control variables). We then averaged the results from these two models to report predicted correlations by country and region. We conducted multiple sensitivity tests that confirmed the stability of our results (e.g., by comparing our results with a subset of models in which sample size supported the inclusion of all four cultural dimensions in the model); the details of these post hoc analyses are available from the authors.

TABLE 5
Study 2: Effects of Relational Mediators on Performance and Cultural Scores by Country

	Performance			Cultural Dimension Scores[a]			
	Estimated Effect	Rank Order	Relative to United States	Individualism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity
Country							
Australia	.32	20	–12%	90	36	51	61
Belgium	.26	23	–27%	75	65	94	54
Brazil	.46	6	28%	38	69	76	49
Canada	.36	15	–2%	80	39	48	52
China	.73	1	100%	20	80	30	66
France	.30	22	–17%	71	68	86	43
Great Britain	.41	11	12%	89	35	35	66
Germany	.32	18	–11%	67	35	65	66
Indonesia	.65	2	79%	14	78	48	46
India	.62	3	71%	48	77	40	56
Iran	.47	5	30%	41	58	59	43
Italy	.33	17	–9%	76	50	75	70
Japan	.41	10	13%	46	54	92	95
South Korea	.41	9	14%	18	60	85	39
Mexico	.55	4	50%	30	81	82	69
Netherlands	.23	24	–37%	80	38	53	14
Norway	.23	25	–37%	69	31	50	08
Poland	.35	16	–3%	60	68	93	64
Russia	.44	8	20%	39	93	95	36
Saudi Arabia	.45	7	25%	43	61	68	49
Spain	.31	21	–14%	51	57	86	42
Sweden	.32	19	–12%	71	31	29	05
Switzerland	.36	14	–1%	68	34	58	70
Turkey	.40	12	11%	37	66	85	45
United States	.36	13	0%	91	40	46	62
Country Averages	**.40**		**11%**	**55**	**57**	**66**	**50**
Region							
Africa	.51	2	40%	36	67	65	49
Asia	.62	1	70%	24	73	50	53
Eastern Europe	.43	6	19%	46	66	74	47
Latin America	.46	4	28%	23	71	86	47
North America	.46	5	27%	54	49	51	55
Middle East	.46	3	28%	38	65	71	47
Western Europe	.32	7	–11%	63	46	69	48
Regional Averages	**.47**		**29%**	**41**	**62**	**67**	**50**

[a]Cultural dimension scores reproduced from Hofstede and Hofstede (2013).
Notes: The country averages exclude the United States. "Estimated Effect" represents the model estimated effect of relational mediators on outcomes in the countries and regions listed (i.e., predicted correlations between relational mediators and performance from the metaregression models).

other countries. As Table 5 illustrates, the United States ranks 13th of 25 countries in terms of the effectiveness of market relationships for enhancing performance. With a correlation of .36, it falls below the average correlation of .40 and is far from the highest reported correlation in the entire sample (i.e., .73 for China), which indicates that the United States is less than half as effective in using RM to drive performance as China. The second- and third-highest correlations in our sample are Indonesia (.65) and India (.62), and strong customer–seller relationships in these top-three-ranked countries result in predicted performance outcomes that are 100%, 79%, and 71% higher, respectively, than in the United States. On average, relationships drive performance 11% more outside the United States than in it, and these differences are often substantial.

With the exception of Western Europe, relationships are more effective at driving performance in other geographic regions. Perhaps most notably, relationships increase performance substantially in Asia, where their impact is calculated to be 70% higher than in the United States. These results are consistent with Study 1. For example, compared with the United States, Asia is more collectivist, whereas high individualism negatively moderates the impact of relationships on performance. These findings also are consistent with research that emphasizes the central role of relationships in Asia for achieving business success (e.g., *guanxi* in China, *keiretsu* in Japan; Lee and Dawes 2005; Sambharya and Banerji 2006). However, departing from the results from Study 1, which offer insight into the effects of cultural dimensions, Study 2 demonstrates specifically where customer relationships are most effective.

Effects of relationship-building strategies by country and region. In Table 6, we report the results of our analysis

TABLE 6
Study 2: Effects of Antecedents on Relational Mediators Across Countries

	Communication			Seller Expertise			Dependence on Seller			Relationship Investments			Relationship Duration		
	Estimated Effect	Rank Order	Relative to United States	Estimated Effect	Rank Order	Relative to United States	Estimated Effect	Rank Order	Relative to United States	Estimated Effect	Rank Order	Relative to United States	Estimated Effect	Rank Order	Relative to United States
Country															
Australia	.53	25	–2%	.35	23	6%	.24	24	–5%	.42	8	–5%	.12	22	–6%
Belgium	.57	15	5%	.74	8	125%	.37	14	47%	.23	24	–48%	.18	14	43%
Brazil	.65	6	21%	.75	6	127%	.48	7	91%	.33	17	–27%	.24	8	95%
Canada	.55	19	2%	.40	21	20%	.29	20	14%	.43	7	–3%	.13	19	2%
China	.73	1	35%	.58	15	76%	.55	3	116%	.54	1	21%	.32	1	157%
France	.59	14	9%	.74	9	124%	.41	13	61%	.26	22	–42%	.17	15	41%
Great Britain	.54	21	1%	.21	25	–36%	.24	25	–6%	.49	2	11%	.13	20	2%
Germany	.55	20	2%	.48	19	45%	.28	21	12%	.38	11	–14%	.16	18	28%
Indonesia	.72	2	33%	.71	10	115%	.57	1	125%	.45	5	2%	.29	3	138%
India	.68	3	26%	.58	14	77%	.49	6	94%	.48	3	8%	.25	6	105%
Iran	.64	8	19%	.65	13	97%	.46	9	80%	.39	10	–12%	.21	12	70%
Italy	.56	17	3%	.58	16	75%	.31	19	22%	.34	15	–24%	.17	16	41%
Japan	.60	12	11%	.67	12	104%	.36	15	41%	.31	18	–31%	.26	4	111%
South Korea	.65	7	21%	.79	2	140%	.51	5	100%	.28	19	–36%	.24	7	95%
Mexico	.68	4	26%	.78	3	137%	.51	4	103%	.33	16	–26%	.30	2	142%
Netherlands	.54	24	0%	.52	17	58%	.33	18	31%	.36	13	–18%	.07	23	–45%
Norway	.54	22	1%	.51	18	56%	.34	17	35%	.38	12	–15%	.07	24	–47%
Poland	.60	11	12%	.75	5	128%	.41	12	62%	.26	23	–42%	.22	10	79%
Russia	.67	5	24%	.86	1	160%	.55	2	118%	.22	25	–50%	.26	5	110%
Saudi Arabia	.64	10	18%	.68	11	108%	.45	10	78%	.36	14	–19%	.22	11	78%
Spain	.60	13	11%	.74	7	126%	.42	11	67%	.26	21	–40%	.19	13	51%
Sweden	.56	16	4%	.38	22	16%	.35	16	38%	.46	4	3%	.06	25	–51%
Switzerland	.55	18	2%	.41	20	26%	.27	22	8%	.41	9	–7%	.16	17	31%
Turkey	.64	9	18%	.78	4	136%	.48	8	89%	.28	20	–37%	.23	9	86%
United States	.54	23	0%	.33	24	0%	.25	23	0%	.44	6	0%	.12	21	0%
Country Averages	**.61**		**13%**	**.61**		**85%**	**.40**		**59%**	**.36**		**–19%**	**.19**		**56%**
Region															
Africa	.66	3	22%	.70	4	114%	.49	3	92%	.37	3	–16%	.24	3	96%
Asia	.70	1	29%	.67	5	104%	.53	1	108%	.45	1	1%	.28	1	125%
Eastern Europe	.63	5	17%	.72	2	119%	.46	5	81%	.33	6	–26%	.22	5	77%
Latin America	.66	2	23%	.80	1	144%	.52	2	105%	.29	7	–35%	.26	2	113%
Middle East	.65	4	20%	.72	3	118%	.47	4	87%	.35	4	–22%	.23	4	87%
North America	.61	6	13%	.52	7	57%	.38	6	51%	.43	2	–3%	.19	6	55%
Western Europe	.57	7	6%	.60	6	82%	.35	7	40%	.34	5	–22%	.16	7	27%
Regional Averages	**.64**		**19%**	**.68**		**106%**	**.46**		**81%**	**.36**		**–18%**	**.23**		**83%**

Notes: The country averages exclude the United States. "Estimated Effect" represents the model estimated effect of antecedents on relational mediators in countries and regions listed (i.e., predicted correlations between each antecedent and the relational mediators from the metaregression models).

of the effects of the five relationship-building strategies on relationships by country and region. Again, we report both the absolute and relative effects for each path. The results suggest that communication and seller expertise are the two most effective relationship-building strategies across the entire sample, consistent with prior research (Palmatier et al. 2006). They also illustrate significant country and regional variations. Similar to our findings regarding the effect of relationships on performance, the United States ranks toward the bottom of the list of countries in terms of the effectiveness of four RM strategies for building relationships. Comparing overall country averages with U.S. averages, we find that communication, seller expertise, dependence, and relationship duration are, respectively, 13%, 85%, 59%, and 56% more effective in other countries. These findings are consistent with our hypotheses and tenets, which consistently predict that RM strategies will be less effective in cultures resembling that of the United States. The use of communication to build relationships is a more effective RM strategy in all regions, from Asia (29% greater than the United States) to Western Europe (6% greater than the United States). However, relationship investments are 19% less effective in countries outside the United States—the only relationship-building strategy in which the U.S. ranking is significantly above average (ranked 6th of 25 countries).

Robustness Analysis

To test the robustness of the results from Study 2, we compared our predicted results for any path in the RM framework (Figure 1) that appeared in at least 12 studies from a specific country or region in our sample with the results of a separate country/regional meta-analysis. Specifically, we performed a country/regional meta-analysis on groups for which sufficient data were available. We were able to calculate 16 sample-weighted, reliability-adjusted correlations for different country and region subgroups. The average of the absolute difference between Study 2's predicted results (using Study 1 regression coefficients and secondary cultural scores) and the meta-derived results (which inherently capture the net effect of culture for that country or region) across all these correlations was only .038. This result increased confidence in our country- and regional-level results from Study 2.

General Discussion and Implications

Relationship marketing is a powerful strategy for firms aiming to differentiate their offering (Swaminathan and Moorman 2009), and it has been the focus of increasingly more international research and practice as economies develop and global trade expands. Most research has accepted and applied a U.S.-based RM framework, but we show that it is necessary to adapt this model culturally before applying it to global markets. The results from our two studies confirm that cultural dimensions fundamentally alter the effectiveness of different RM strategies as well as the effectiveness of customer relationships for enhancing WOM and performance as RM is implemented in different countries. Thus, we extend RM research by considering how it is shaped by culture. In doing so, we both advance theory with regard to the role of culture in RM and offer managerial insights and tools for adapting RM strategies across different countries and regions.

Theoretical Implications

By assessing the effects of multiple cultural dimensions across a large sample of international studies, we contribute to RM theory. First, we find support for four parsimonious tenets that offer a concise theoretical explanation for when each cultural dimension matters most and why. The findings provide theoretical guidance for selecting relevant cultural dimension(s), depending on the nature of the RM linkage, because it is often not empirically viable to include all four dimensions. For example, individualism–collectivism is most relevant for RM linkages that emphasize long-term social bonding and dependence, power distance is critical for status-relevant linkages, and uncertainty avoidance is relevant for RM linkages that address risk and uncertainty. Previous research has typically investigated the effect of a single cultural dimension on a few RM linkages, which prevents the development of a holistic perspective of culture's effects on RM; our meta-analytic approach addresses this research gap.

Second, by simultaneously accounting for the moderating effects of multiple cultural dimensions on the overall RM framework, we provide unique insights into heterogeneity across different cultural dimensions and RM linkages. Individualism initially seems to be the most important dimension, with moderating effects on the most RM linkages, which also tend to be greater in magnitude than the effects of other dimensions. Masculinity emerges as the least important dimension. However, only accounting for individualism–collectivism, as marketing research frequently does (e.g., Ozdemir and Hewett 2010; Robinson, Irmak, and Jayachandran 2012), ignores the significant moderating effects of power distance and uncertainty avoidance on other RM linkages that remain unaffected by individualism. Research with a multidimensional view of culture that weights each cultural dimension equally may also generate biased results.

Third, our analysis of the interaction among cultural dimensions and RM linkages and whether they are contingent on contextual factors (i.e., three-way interactions) yields some notable results that suggest avenues for further research. Most moderating effects were insensitive to context, indicating the robustness of our findings, but the positive effect of communication on relational mediators was moderated by both advertising intensity and environmental turbulence (accounting for all six significant three-way interactions). For different cultural dimensions, the interaction of advertising intensity and communication on customer relationships can be synergistic (power distance) or dissynergistic (individualist, uncertainty avoidance). The strong three-way moderating effect of culture on the efficacy of two key market mix elements (RM and advertising) represents an exploratory result for this study, requiring fur-

ther research to tease out its theoretical underpinning. Our three-way analysis using environmental turbulence suggests that the overriding importance of communicating in dynamic environments can significantly suppress (individualism, power distance) or enhance (uncertainty avoidance) the moderating effect of culture. Because communication seems to be highly intertwined with culture, researchers should disentangle the mechanisms that generate this complex pattern of results.

Managerial Implications

Understanding how cultural dimensions influence RM is an important theoretical step, but the findings are not directly applicable for managers because firms implement their strategies by country, and the effects of culture on RM are multidimensional such that some cultural dimensions have countervailing effects that make the net effects in any country unclear. With Study 2, we offer specific, country-level guidance regarding the effectiveness of different RM strategies for the largest 25 countries by GDP by simultaneously accounting for all four cultural dimensions. Thus, managers can gain insight into the most effective RM strategies for their country of interest rather than simply using insights from U.S.-centric RM (Table 6); this is consistent with an adaptation rather than aggregation approach to foreign operation (Ghemawat 2011). For example, researchers have suggested that dependence does not offer an effective strategy for building relationships (Palmatier et al. 2006). However, our results show that in Russia, dependence is more than twice as effective as it is in the United States, whereas the effect of relationship investments on relational mediators is 50% lower in Russia than in the United States. On average, communication, expertise, dependence, and relationship duration are more effective at building relationships outside the United States (53%), whereas relationship investments are 19% less effective in other countries. Furthermore, we offer regional heuristics for effective RM. For example, in Latin America, seller expertise is 144% more effective than in the United States, and relationship investments are 35% less effective than in the United States. Therefore, in Latin America, managers may expect expertise to outperform relationship investments. These benchmark results enable managers to adopt the most effective relationship-building strategies that can leverage the unique constellation of cultural values for any specific country.

The effect of relationships on performance also varies meaningfully across countries, as Table 5 shows. The United States ranks only 13th (out of 25 countries) in terms of RM effectiveness on performance; on average, building strong relationships is 11% more effective outside the United States. However, RM is 28%, 20%, 71%, and 100% more effective in Brazil, Russia, India, and China, respectively. Thus, although RM is an effective strategy in developing countries, its effectiveness varies dramatically across them. Managers launching on-the-ground RM initiatives in emerging economies should expect differential returns on investment, relative to comparable U.S. programs; the results in Table 5 should inform their performance expectations. The tables included in this article serve as useful tools for managers aiming to tailor their RM strategies for specific country markets.

Limitations and Further Research

This research has some limitations typical of meta-analyses. First, we attempted to be comprehensive in our inclusion of RM constructs across publication outlets, but we may have overlooked some studies. Second, because most research has adopted a U.S.-based RM framework, we are limited in the scope of available constructs. Our finding that culture has a complex pattern of effects across RM linkages suggests a clear opportunity for research that can identify the "unknown unknowns" of international RM; we did not include some key RM constructs in our analysis because of the lack of primary research (e.g., conflict, gratitude, unfairness). This limitation is especially pertinent for other three-way contextual effects that we could not evaluate. Third, our sample includes constructs (e.g., performance) that necessarily aggregate related but distinct variables (e.g., profit and price premium). Although we tested for and found no evidence of aggregation biases, they could still exist. In addition, we are unable to assess potential measurement error in the secondary culture scores used in Study 2.

Culture is typically examined at societal or national levels (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010), but it is also relevant at regional, organizational, and individual levels (Earley and Gibson 1998; Triandis 1989, 1995). Thus, further research should investigate how the levels of analysis for different cultural entities interact and influence RM. For example, a Japanese organization with U.S. operations manages employee cultures in two countries with very different cultural profiles, which may be increasingly challenging in changing relationship environments (Brown et al. 2005). Furthermore, although RM is especially effective in cultures with high collectivism, future studies might consider downsides of collectivism, such as limits on innovation. In addition, researchers could consider the effectiveness of RM in contexts in which buyers and sellers are from different countries, which occurred infrequently in our sample. Finally, diasporas and immigrant cultural enclaves operate in foreign countries and have vast economic consequences (i.e., 215 million first-generation migrants globally; *The Economist* 2011). Understanding how to implement culturally balanced RM strategies with these populations requires additional research.

APPENDIX A
Construct Definitions, Aliases, and Representative Studies

Constructs	Definitions	Common Aliases	Representative Studies
Relational Mediators			
Trust	Confidence in an exchange partner's reliability, integrity, and forthrightness	Trustworthiness, credibility, benevolence, and honesty	Doney and Cannon (1997); Morgan and Hunt (1994)
Commitment	An enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship	Affective, behavioral, obligation, and normative commitment	Anderson and Weitz (1992); Morgan and Hunt (1994)
Antecedents			
Relationship investments	Seller's investment of time, effort, spending, and resources focused on building a stronger relationship	Support, gifts, resources, investments, and loyalty programs	De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci (2001); Palmatier, Gopalalkrishna, and Houston (2006)
Communication	Amount, frequency, and quality of information shared between exchange partners	Bilateral or collaborative communication, information exchange, and sharing	Anderson and Weitz (1992); Morgan and Hunt (1994)
Dependence on seller	Customer's evaluation of the value of seller-provided resources for which few alternatives are available from other sellers	Relative and asymmetric dependence, switching costs, and imbalance of power	Morgan and Hunt (1994); Palmatier et al. (2006)
Seller expertise	Knowledge, experience, and overall competency of seller	Competence, skill, knowledge, and ability	Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990)
Relationship duration	Length of time that the relationship between exchange partners has existed	Relationship age or length, continuity, and duration with firm or salesperson	Anderson and Weitz (1989); Doney and Cannon (1997)
Outcomes			
WOM	Likelihood of a customer positively referring the seller to another potential customer	Referrals and customer referrals	Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2002); Palmatier et al. (2006)
Performance	Refers to improvements in outcomes such as sales, share of wallet, profit performance, and other positive changes to the seller's business	Sales, share, sales effectiveness, profit, and sales performance	Johnson and Tellis (2008); Palmatier, Gopalalkrishna, and Houston (2006)

Notes: Adapted from Palmatier et al. 2006.

APPENDIX B
Study 1: RM Framework Without Cultural Moderation

Proposed Relationships	Number of Raw Effects	Total N	Simple Average r	Average r Adjusted for Reliability	Sample Weighted Reliability Adjusted Average r	95% Confidence Interval		File Drawer N[a]	Q-Statistic for Homogeneity Test (d.f.)
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Antecedents									
Relationship investments → commitment	12	3,240	.36	.45	.41	.38	.44	1,981	250.91 (11)
Relationship investments → trust	18	4,049	.38	.46	.37	.35	.40	3,214	274.82 (17)
Relationship investments → relational mediators	**30**	**7,289**	**.37**	**.45**	**.39**	**.37**	**.41**	**10,269**	**528.88 (29)**
Communication → commitment	39	8,013	.48	.58	.57	.56	.59	32,261	563.51 (38)
Communication → trust	48	10,201	.46	.59	.55	.54	.56	49,219	2,473.69 (47)
Communication → relational mediators	**87**	**18,214**	**.47**	**.58**	**.56**	**.55**	**.57**	**161,261**	**3,041.52 (86)**
Dependence on seller → commitment	24	7,796	.33	.40	.37	.35	.39	6,510	447.44 (23)
Dependence on seller → trust	29	5,929	.16	.19	.18	.16	.21	1,464	349.74 (28)
Dependence on seller → relational mediators	**53**	**13,725**	**.24**	**.29**	**.29**	**.28**	**.31**	**14,217**	**938.89 (52)**
Seller expertise → commitment	8	1,682	.31	.39	.34	.30	.38	486	264.46 (7)
Seller expertise → trust	28	10,670	.42	.53	.33	.31	.34	13,245	1,386.83 (27)
Seller expertise → relational mediators	**36**	**12,352**	**.40**	**.50**	**.33**	**.31**	**.34**	**18,849**	**1,651.81 (35)**
Relationship duration → commitment	20	9,685	.12	.13	.13	.11	.15	679	322.31 (19)
Relationship duration → trust	24	10,247	.14	.15	.14	.12	.16	1,103	96.67 (23)
Relationship duration → relational mediators	**44**	**19,932**	**.13**	**.14**	**.14**	**.12**	**.15**	**3,556**	**420.31 (43)**
Outcomes									
Commitment → WOM	16	4,240	.63	.69	.66	.64	.68	11,532	523.05 (15)
Trust → WOM	15	4,310	.62	.74	.63	.61	.65	10,862	2,589.84 (14)
Relational mediators → WOM	**31**	**8,550**	**.63**	**.72**	**.64**	**.63**	**.66**	**44,806**	**3,119.15 (30)**
Commitment → performance	33	8,512	.39	.46	.35	.34	.37	11,508	998.70 (32)
Trust → performance	46	10,917	.39	.48	.43	.41	.44	27,637	1,708.40 (45)
Relational mediators → performance	**79**	**19,429**	**.39**	**.47**	**.39**	**.38**	**.41**	**74,892**	**2,739.95 (78)**

[a]Using a two-tailed test.

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