Culture and Employees’ Voice: Does Culture Matter?

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Since the publication of Hirschman's (1970) “exit, voice, and loyalty,” the topic of employees’ voice has attracted the academic interests in various disciplines and Hirschman’s exit-voice model has been used widely for understanding how employees respond to dissatisfaction at work (Addison & Belfied, 2004; Batt, et al., 2002; Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Keith Dowding et al., 2000; Lewin & Mitchell, 1992; Rusbult et al., 1988; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003; Withey & Cooper; 1989). Common to the following studies is the suggestion that employees’ response to dissatisfaction is much more complex than Hirschman’s initial exit-voice model and for further understanding of this phenomenon, they attempted to contribute to voice research mainly by three ways: 1) by expanding the Hirschman’s initial exit-voice construct (Budd, 2004; Dowding et. a., 2000; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Lewin and Mitchell, 1992; Liu et. al., 2010), 2) by exploring uncovered conditional factors both at the individual level (Avery, 2003; Brockner, et. al., 1998; Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Landau, 2009; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Parker, 1993; Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Rusbult et al., 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989) as well as the contextual level (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009; Chia, et. al., 2001; Janssen, et. al., 1998; Kassing, 2000; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Saunders, et. al., 1992; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009) and 3) by testing their outcomes.

Despite impressive advances in the field over the course of the four decades, there are still much more to be uncovered for better understanding of employees’ response to dissatisfaction at work: in this line, Edwards and Greenberg (2009) suggested six directions for future research in employees’ voice research: 1) clarifying key constructs, 2) developing valid measures, 3) using
appropriate methods, 4) conducting cross-cultural studies, 5) investigating temporal aspects of silence and voice, and 6) conducting research with practical relevance. In this point, this study has the potential to make important contributions to expansion of this area by exploring relatively less examined factor, that is, mainly by testing the possible impact of ‘culture’ on employees’ response to dissatisfaction.

The study starts with the argument that, despite the large volume of exit-voice studies, most of them, if not all, has been developed and tested in so-called “Western countries,” such as the United States, without much consideration for their potential global scope and without paying attention to the possible contribution of the culture in this area. If we consider that these western countries share certain values and assumptions associated with the employment relationship, it is possible that this commonality can affect employee cognition and behavior in the employment relationships. For instance, in the United States, the calculative view of employment relations, derived from the neoclassical view of so-called “economic man,” assumes that attitudes and cost benefit calculation, rather than cultural norms, are the primary the determinants of an individual’s employment-related behaviors (Block, Berg, & Belman, 2006; Triandis, 1995). The employer-employee relationship is a business relationship and employee behaviors in the organization are determined by the individual’s calculus of the advantages or disadvantages the individual associates with a behavior (Allen, Miller, & Nath, 1988; Redding, Norman, & Schlander, 1994).

It is questionable, however, whether this “economic” conception of employment in the western countries can be applied in the countries that do not share this view of employment, especially
considering that there is a large volume of previous studies suggesting that various cultural dimensions influence work-related psychological and behavioral phenomena (Bontempo & Rivero, 1992; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Suh, et al., 1998; Triandis, et al., 1995; Wagner, 1995; Wasti, 2003). Unfortunately, there is very little research that examines the cross-cultural generality of the features of voice and the role of cultural values in predicting voice behaviors in different cultural settings (eg. Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Lee & Jablin, 1992; Price et. al., 2001). Given these gaps, the purpose of this study is to examine the generalizability of a model to apply to workers in one Asian country, Korea, which has different characteristics to the western, especially the U.S. culture. Specifically, this paper will examine how the exit-voice model works in the non-western cultural setting, especially Asian country.

In sum, the main question in this proposed study is as follows: “If culture makes a difference in the application of existing voice related model in the non-western cultural setting to elaborate the characteristics of employees’ response to their dissatisfactory situation at work? For instance, some factor valid in the western culture may not influence as much in the non western culture?” “If so, how: what type of variation is in other culture?” To answer the above questions, this study will examine the effects of culture on the individual employees’ voice behaviors: this paper will start with literature review, mainly to (1) overview the main construct of employees’ voice so far, from the Hirschman’s exit-voice model to the recent modification or alternatives of Hirschman’s model. Then, this study will spend effort to (2) explain why this study suggests that a culture matters in employees’ response to dissatisfaction with discussion on the basics of employment relations systems in non-western culture, mainly Asian culture. To do so, this study will use Kozan’s (1997) three cultural models of conflict management in that the commonality
between voice behaviors and conflict management behaviors provides grounds to apply this model to explain voice behavior in the non-western culture with strong theoretical framework. Last, this study will propose several testable propositions to (3) determine the extent to which the predictions in the previous model must be modified in an Asian employment system.

1. Literature review

Construct of employees’ response to dissatisfaction

Hirschman’s exit-voice model

How employees respond their dissatisfaction at work? The initial academic approach to answer that question started with Hirshman (1970)’s Exit-Voice model. His work started with questioning how people respond to their deteriorating situation, in general, in various areas such as business firms, public services, and other organizations. To answer that question, he brought two options, exit and voice, with the example of the product market, saying

“… in absolute or comparative deterioration of the quality of the product or service provides… (1) some customers stop buying the firm’s products or some members leave the organization: that is the exit option….. (2) the firms ‘customers or the organization’s members express their dissatisfaction directly to management or to some other authority to which management is subordinate or through general protest addressed to anyone who cares to listen: that is the voice option (p.4)”
With these main two options of exit and voice, he mentioned that both of them are equally important in same magnitude, but the actual choice of people vary and show specific favor, depends on the conditions they are surrounded. In this point, he introduced a concept of “loyalty,” addressed that the existence of loyalty provides the conditions encouraging voice rather than exit, asserting that “the likelihood of voice increases with the degree of loyalty. A member with a considerable attachment to a product or organization will often search for ways to make himself influential…” In this line, he suggested that voice and loyalty are not independent.

First of all, unquestionably the foremost contribution of this model is that his model has been recognized as the start to explore academically a set of people’s responses to dissatisfaction. Second, in this process, he attempted to integrate main concepts from different disciplines as a good example of interdisciplinary work to overcome the limitation of sight of one specific domain: Using his discipline of economics he illustrated the first option, exit, which belongs to the “economics realm (p. 15)” or “market force (p. 18)”: it means, dissatisfied people leave as the customer who is dissatisfied with the product of one firm, shifts to another product in the market to keep their welfare or position. Then, pointing out the shortcomings of the economists’ approach, he brought the concept of ‘voice’ from “politics realm (p. 15)” or “non-market force (p. 18)”, describing it as “political action par excellence simply rather than the opposite of exit (p. 16)”. Overall, integrating two disciplines (economics and politics)’s way of analyzing peoples response to deteriorating situation; he tried to lead more complete understanding of this type of social processes. Third, rather than simply listing several possible options of people’s choice responding to dissatisfaction, he put more efforts to explain the dynamics surrounding this
choice: the comparative analysis of these two options, their interplay, and conditions affecting the dynamics of these two options. For instance, he illustrated that people choose one option between exit and voice, based on their consideration of the benefits and costs of each option, with given condition such as market condition (for instance, if the market they involve is monopolistic or elastic).

Rusbult et al (1982)’s EVLN model

Interestingly, initial work to expand Hirschman’s exit-voice model came from studies of behavior in romantic relationships (Rusbult & Zembrodt, 1983; Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982). In the process of evolving Hirschman's (1970) model, Rusbult and colleges (1982) added another option: neglect, which refers to allowing conditions to deteriorate through reduced interest or effort, chronic lateness or absences, using company time for personal business, or increased error rate. They differentiated neglect from loyalty, the latter had an expectation of recovery in the future: rather, the individual with neglect accept that recovery is not going to happen (Rusbult et al., 1982; Withey and Cooper, 1989). Even though they adopted this concept, neglect, with the example of romantic relationships, their work was recognized as further development of Hirschman’s exit-voice model, referred to as the EVLN model.

As well as adding another category, neglect, they developed further explanation on the construct of these four classes of responses, suggesting that these four types of responses would differ from each other with two evaluative dimensions: constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity. According to their explanation, exit and voice are to be active, loyalty and neglect are
passive responses to dissatisfaction and voice and loyalty are considered to be constructive responses, whereas exit and neglect were destructive.

Since so-called EVLN model was developed, some of the following studies attempted to validate the exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect typology in organizational settings, with a wide range of methodologies—multidimensional scaling (Farrell, 1983), cross-sectional survey research (Farrell & Rusbult, 1985), secondary analysis of extant data sets (Rusbult & Lowery, 1985), simulation and laboratory experimentation (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988), and panel research (Farrell, Rusbult, Lin, & Berntahl, 1990). Overall, through the following evolution of the framework and empirical works, EVLN model has long been one of the most influential works of a set of categories for exploring how people respond to dissatisfaction.

Variation on construct

As shown in the case of Rusbult and colleges (1982)’s study from romantic relationships, since initially Hirschman’s model did not intend to focus on specific situation of deterioration, rather, try to develop more broadly applicable in various domains such as business firms, political parties, public services, it had been applied in various areas such as political scientists, sociologist, and social-psychologists, labor economists and management researchers, to analyze specific phenomena in their fields. Subsequently, growing number of works focused specifically on one part of EVLN model, and especially voice. Inevitably, in this process, the studies on definitions and measures of voice have flourished, depending on the purpose of the
investigations in their domain (Landau, 2009), rather than further exploring the comprehensive construct, as Hirschman’s initial question. For instance, OCB researcher apply it to analyze employees’ speaking up behaviors as a specific type of non extra-role behavior (Frese et al., 1999; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Van Dyne et al., 1995; Withey and Cooper, 1989; Zhou and George, 2001); labor economist uses the exit-voice model to explain the impact of union on employees turnover, interpreting unions as the institutions of collective voice in the job market (Addison and Belfied, 2004; Batt, et al., 2002; Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Freeman, 1976; Freeman, 1980a; Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Lewin and Mitchell, 1992; Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1996; Miller and Mulvey, 1991; Wilson and Peel, 1991).

Further, some of them developed variation of definition of voice, even outside of the EVLN framework (Avery and Quinones, 2002; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Van Dyne et. al., 1995, 2003; Van Dyne and LePine, 1998; Zhou and George, 2001). For instance, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) defined voice as “promotive behavior that emphasizes expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than criticize” (p. 109). In addition, several voice-like terms used to explain voice with other ways(Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Howell and Higgins, 1990; Morrison and Phelps, 1999; Parker, 1993, Van Dyne et. al., 2003), such as ‘Civic Virtue’ (Graham, 1991; Organ, 1988; Robinson, 1996; Robinson and Morrison, 1995), ‘Advocacy Participation’ (Van Dyne et al., 1994), and ‘Constructive Suggestions’ (George and Brief, 1992; Zhou and George, 2001; and Frese et al., 1999), and so on. Commonly, these terms refer to verbal expression of ideas, information, and opinions with the positive motive of making cooperative contributions to the organization (Van Dyne, et al., 2003). Unfortunately, there is lack of consistent findings from previous empirical literature on measuring and predicting voice,
because voice is a multi-dimensional construct and yet empirical research has focused on more general forms of voice as a unitary concept (Lind et al., 1990).

In addition, in the following voice studies, many researchers agreed that voice itself is much more complex with multi-dimensionality, and voice can vary, and they suggested that the concept of voice needed to expand to include the variety of ways by which an employee could voice discontent among different voice methods (Budd, 2004; Dowding et. al., 2000; Julie B. Olson-Buchanan and Wendy R. Boswell, 2002; Landau, 2009; Lewin and Mitchell, 1992; Millward et al., 2002; Van Dyne, et al., 2003; Zhou and George, 2001). For instance, pointing out the multi-dimensionality of voice phenomena, Van Dyne et. al. (2003) proposed that voice and silence behaviors vary, depends on how they are categorized, based on three different types of motives: 1) disengaged motive, based on resignation, characterized as feeling unable to make a difference, 2) self-protective motive, based on fear, characterized as feeling afraid and personally at risk, and 3) other-oriented motive, based on cooperation, characterized as feeling cooperative and altruistic. Accordingly, they categorized voice as three categories: 1) ProSocial voice, which refers “expressing work-related ideas, information, or opinion based on cooperative motives, focusing on benefiting others (p. 1371)”, 2) Defensive voice, which refers “expressing work-related ideas, information or opinions –based on fear- with the goal of protecting the self (p.1372),” and acquiescent voice, which refers “expression of work-related ideas, information, or opinion –based on feeling of resignation”.

While, Liu et al. (2010) distinguished two types of voice depends on the target: 1) speaking out, which means voice behavior toward peers and 2) speaking up, which means voice toward the
supervisor. Lewin and Mitchell (1992) categorized voice into two folds: 1) mandated voice such as co-determination and legislation and 2) voluntary voice such as collective bargaining and grievance procedures. Millward et al. (2002) distinguished voice of three different channel: 1) via trade union membership, recognition and representation, 2) via indirect or representative participation such as joint consultation, and 3) direct employee involvement. Dowding et al. (2000) made a distinction between two forms of voice called ‘individual voice,’ defined as “actions where the intention of the individual in acting is to bring about the desired effect solely through that action (p. 473)” and ‘collective voice,’ defined as “actions where the intention of the individual in acting is to contribute to the desired effect through that action (p 473).” Similarly, Budd (2004) suggested that voice has collective and individual components, illustrating that collective voice is best understood as unionization and collective bargaining and individual voice is understood as the direct relationship between a particular employee and an employer.

In sum, as far as the construct is concerned, since Hirschman’s exit-voice model, a variety of discipline bought his initial model to explain the related phenomenon in their fields. Especially, in the workplace setting, subsequent studies followed his construct, 1) by adding other options such as neglect, 2) by focusing on one options in the model, especially voice behavior, suggesting that voice itself varies and has multi-dimensionality with introduction of categorization of voice behavior, and even 3) by suggesting new conceptualization of voice, beyond Hirschman’s initial definition. Despite of them, there are similarities across diverse conceptualization of voice behaviors. According to Liu et. al., (2010), voice behavior has three inherent characteristics: discretionary, challenge-oriented, and potentially risky. First, they suggested that voice behavior is discretionary, which means, it is not required by organizations
or management, or outlined in one's job description (Van Dyne et al., 1995). Second, voice
behavior is challenge-oriented, which means, it aims to change the status quo and make
constructive changes (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Van Dyne et al.,
1995). Finally, voice behavior is potentially risky, since it may (1) be associated with discomfort
(Milliken et al., 2003); (2) gain a negative public image or label (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995;
Milliken et al., 2003); or (3) damage the relationship with others and thus destroy social capital
(Adler & Kwon, 2002). For that reason, when there is high risk, employees are more likely to
remain silent than to voice their thoughts (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). In
addition, they suggested that employees usually engage in a calculated and deliberate decision-
making process before speaking, which helps them evaluate the cost-benefit of voice behavior
(Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton et al., 1998; Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

Culture and employees’ response to dissatisfaction

In a large volume of previous studies, the various cultural dimensions have been suggested to
influence work-related psychological and behavioral phenomena (Bontempo and Rivero, 1992;
Unfortunately, there are very little studies in voice literature examining how culture affects
employees’ responses to dissatisfaction as well as comparative research that examines the cross-
cultural generality of the features of voice and the role of cultural values in predicting voice
behaviors in different cultural settings.
Some research examined how culture affects individuals’ voice behavior and they used ‘power distance’, which is one of Hofstede’s (1980) four dimensional frameworks for cultural differences (collectivism-individualism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity-femininity): power distance refers to the extent to which the less powerful members in an organization expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1980). In work contexts, employees with higher PD orientations believe that supervisors should have a large amount of power over them and employees with lower PD orientations believe that all people should be relatively equal and that employees have the right to speak up with their ideas and opinions (Hofstede, 1980). Since, employees in low power distance cultures are more likely than employees in high power cultures to believe that they should have some input into the decision-making process and in high power distance cultures employees are less likely to engage in extra-role behaviors (Costigan et al., 2006) and may be afraid to disagree with their superiors (Landau, 2009), PD will have implications for employee willingness to voice (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009): individuals with a high power distance orientation are unlikely to believe that they have anything important to say, and even if they do have an idea, they will not believe that it is their responsibility to speak up (Landau, 2009). Commonly, their findings supported that high power distance has negative relationships with voice (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009; Landau, 2009; Xu Huang, Van de Vliert, & Van der Vegt, 2007).

Price and colleagues (2001) examined the relationship between the value of voice and the magnitude of voice, that is, voice which spans different phases of the decision-making process,
with samples from U.K., Mexico, Netherlands, and the U.S. They found similar shapes across four countries: direct, monotonic, and nonlinear. They, however, used undergraduate students who are 21 years old or younger, rather than real employees. Despite the fact that many of their subjects had some part-time work experience, it is questionable if they are exposed to real cultural context in their workplace, such as unionization or relationship with supervisors. Botero and Van Dyne (2009) examined the effects of Leader Member Exchange (LMX) and culture, particularly ‘power distance (PD),’ as a predictor of employees’ voice behavior in the U.S. and Colombia. In this study, Botero and Van Dyne that not all pattern of voice outcomes are similar in two countries: for instance, it showed that both in the U.S. and Colombia, LMX and PD predicted voice but, contrary to the findings in the U.S., in Colombia, the interaction between LMX and PD did not predict voice, implying possible new explanations for voice, especially in the different cultural settings. Interestingly, they suggested a comparative study using the Asian culture for future research.

The only research on exit-voice using Asian countries, is Lee and Jablin’s study (1992) examining the generalizability of the theory of exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect, using samples from Korea, the US, and Japan. This study supported the applicability of the theory to Korean workers. They demonstrated that with respect to exit-voice, Korea and the U.S. are more similar than Korea and Japan. However, they also used student sample in the U.S. who were not employed. Thus, it is possible that these respondents were not representative of Korean workers employed in Korean firms in Korea. These students may not be subject to their native culture.
In sum, previous employees' voice literature dealing with culture has common limitations: first, they did not provide solid theoretical ground how or why culture matter in employees’ voice behaviors: they used one specific dimension of culture and tested it as one of predictors of employees’ voice behaviors. In methodology, they mostly used student sample studying in the U.S. with lack of work experience in their culture, simply based on their nationality. For that reason, it is questionable if they can represent employees in their cultures who are heavily influenced by real work setting in their culture.

2. Model

To explain, how culture can affect employees’ response to dissatisfaction at work, I use the three models of conflict management used across cultures developed by Kozan (1997). Even though it is developed in the area of ‘conflict,’ defined as “the process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his (Thomas, 1976, p. 891),” and ‘conflict management,’ means ‘approaches to managing conflicts (Thomas, 1976)’ area, it is reasonable to bring insight from this model in that there are commonalities between conflict management and employees response to dissatisfaction in several reason.

First of all, both concepts are mainly about the ways how people cognate and behave in their workplace. Conflict management involves how people handle their conflict at work and response to dissatisfaction deals with how people react to deteriorating situation at work. Second, in particular, they both deal with how people react to what are unfavorable or negative situation
they confront. It derives from the commonality in the negative nature of conflict and dissatisfaction at work, they are situation that people want to improve or change the status quo. In reality, these two concepts can be overlapped: for instance, if they are suffering problem with someone at work, in one part, it may be the conflict, and at the same time an unsatisfactory situation that must be changed. Third, individual’s conflict management behavior shares characteristics of voice behaviors in many aspects: the similarities across diverse conceptualization of voice behaviors are 1) discretionary, 2) challenge-oriented, and 3) potentially risky (Liu et al., 2010), as mentioned detailed in the literature review. As with voice behavior, conflict management behavior is also not required by organizations and out of their job description, and it also aims to change the status quo and make constructive challenges, and it can be also risky to the person in that it may be uncomfortable to the person and cause negative public image or label, and even damage the relationships with others.

Considering these common nature of employees’ conflict management behaviors and response to dissatisfaction at work, it is reasonable to believe that if there are certain frame of beliefs, thought, or reasoning embedded in the person, which affects individual’s behaviors, it can affect both conflict management and response to dissatisfaction of the person. In particular, considering that culture influence a variety of work-related psychological and behavioral phenomena (Bontempo and Rivero, 1992; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Suh, et al., 1998; Triandis, et al., 1995; Wagner, 1995; Wasti, 2003), Kozan’s framing of how culture affects people’s conflict management may give us plausible insight to analyze how culture affects people’s response to their dissatisfaction as well.
Kozan (1997)’s three models of conflict resolution across cultures

Kozan (1997) provided theoretical framework to analyze how culture affect conflict management, by differentiating three models across cultures: a direct confrontational model, a regulative model, and a harmony model. The table 1 summarizes the key features of each model.

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<th>Harmony model</th>
<th>Confrontational model</th>
<th>Regulative model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antecedent conditions</strong></td>
<td>Low competitiveness due to observance of mutual obligations</td>
<td>Highly competitive work environment due to individualistic goal</td>
<td>Low competitiveness due to extensive rules of procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thoughts</strong></td>
<td>Holistic definition of conflict in particularistic terms</td>
<td>Analytical definition of conflict, in terms of sub-issues</td>
<td>Analytical definition of conflict in terms of universalistic principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotions</strong></td>
<td>Suppression of negative emotions</td>
<td>Expression of negative emotions</td>
<td>Expression of negative emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviors</strong></td>
<td>Avoidance and accommodation</td>
<td>Confrontation and compromise</td>
<td>Avoidance or forcing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome criteria</strong></td>
<td>Face-saving concern</td>
<td>Due process concerns</td>
<td>Due process concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-managerial third parties</strong></td>
<td>Infrequent, planned, non-intrusive</td>
<td>Formal appeal systems, adjective</td>
<td>Restructuring or laissez-Faire</td>
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<td><strong>Managerial intervention</strong></td>
<td>Mediatorial</td>
<td>Facilitational or autocratic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third-party emphasis</strong></td>
<td>Harmony, shame</td>
<td>Reason, fairness (equity)</td>
<td>Reason, general principles (equality)</td>
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Source: Kozan (1997)

In the harmony model, potential conflict is handled by various non-confrontational means, to maintain group harmony, and mostly found in associative or collectivistic culture such as Asian countries. This cultural context stresses harmony within the group and highly valued consensus or absence of conflict. Therefore, this context emphasizes interdependence and harmony. With
respect to conflict management, it emphasizes normative reasoning rather than an individual means/ends analysis, reflecting social expectations and appropriateness of an act. In addition, the harmony model involves rules restricting the display of negative emotions during conflicts. Considering these thoughts and emotions, the harmony model stresses cooperative behavior: accommodating and avoiding, rather than competing and assertiveness, especially in terms of face-maintenance concerns (both self-face and other-face concern). In harmony model, third parties frequently play significant role in conflicts because 1) disputes are seen as a problem of the collectivity rather than a problem of two parties alone, 2) they concern face-giving, especially communicating negative feelings, which leads indirect face-negotiation strategies, and 3) they define conflicts in their broader context to let third party deal realistically with the divergent claims at issue. In judging effectiveness of resolution, the concern face-saving such as protecting one’s pride, status and honor, along with distributive justice, with long-time frame.

In confrontational model, conflict management is governed by norms of fair play, mutual concessions and compromise and most likely to be found in individualistic and low uncertainty avoidance culture, such as the English-speaking countries. These cultures emphasize the individual and aggressive pursuit of one’s goals. This view stresses pragmatic reasoning in conflict management with empirically observable facts. In addition, this model does not discourage negative emotions. Reflecting these thoughts and emotions, the confrontational model typically involves confrontation and compromise with a problem-solving approach. As for third parties, in the confrontational model, less crucial role than in the harmony model and managers are likely to play a frequent third party role, especially more autocratic (inquisitorial or motivational) role when resolution becomes crucial for performance. As for conflict resolution,
fairness of process is an important criteria as well as fairness of outcome, in terms of short-term consequences.

In regulatory model, conflict management is aided by universalistic principles and rules with bureaucratic arrangements with characteristics of abstractive, co-subjective, or high uncertainty avoidance and individualism culture. This model is likely to be found in continental European countries. This model emphasizes the role of organizational structure such as bureaucratic rules to control competition and conflict. They also value co-subjective thinking and bureaucracies through written rules and policies. With this view, in the conflict management, they stress general principles or codified rules rather than specific situation of conflict and concern pragmatic reasoning with empirically observable facts. In addition, this model is designed to leave the emotions out of conflict management. In the regulative model, people stress either avoidance or authoritative command and negotiation style is more rigid since concessions may be viewed as deviations from principle. As for third parties, in the regulatory model, with the tendency of high uncertainty avoidance, people rely on bureaucratic means such as hierarchical referral or formal appeal mechanisms. As a result, this model highly stresses procedural justice in the resolution with detailed written procedures outlining due process in case of dispute, in terms of short-term consequence, dealing with the immediate situation only.

Subsequent studies support his categorization of model (Gerald et. al., 2007): for instance, individuals in individualistic nations, which endorse a direct confrontational model, prefer to resolve conflicts using their own expertise and training (Smith et al. 1998), prefer forcing
conflict resolution styles (Holt & DeVore 2005), and tend to focus on integrating interests (Tinsley 1998, 2001). Germany is consistent with a regulative model, in part due to values for explicit contracting (Tinsley 1998, 2001). By contrast, individuals in collectivistic cultures which involves in a harmony model, prefer styles of avoidance and withdrawal (Holt & DeVore 2005, Ohbuchi et al. 1999). For instance, Firedman, et. al. (2006) showed that the Chinese tend to avoid conflict because they are concerned that direct conflict will hurt the relationship with the other party. In addition, the Chinese are more sensitive to hierarchy than Americans, and avoiding is heightened more when the other party is of higher status.

In sum, Kozan (1997)’s three conflict management model provides a holistic approach to studying conflict management across cultures to illustrate the whole process of conflict management and how the characteristics of each component make sense in certain style of conflict management. Interestingly, the components described for reasoning of each style of conflict management provides plausible clues how each component can affect employees’ response to dissatisfaction at work. For instance, key characteristics of the harmony model can explain their response to dissatisfaction: their tendency of face-maintenance concern and avoiding can be realized in response to dissatisfaction through their tendency to hesitate to express their negative opinion to other, which discourages voicing. The following is to suggest the testable proposition, using the case of employees’ response to dissatisfaction, with the harmony model from Kozan (1997)’s three models.
Models of cultural values in Confucian culture

Originally, Confucianism is a philosophy of human nature that regards "proper" human relationships as the basis of society, guided by four basic principles: *jen* (humanism), *i* (faithfulness), *yi* (propriety), and *chih* (wisdom or a liberal education) (Lee and Jablin, 1992; Yum, 1988). It urges individuals to adapt the collectivity, to control their own emotions, to avoid confusion, competition and conflict, and to maintain inner harmony (Kirkbride et. al., 1991). Besides, it advocates filial piety; reverence for ancestors; honesty; loyalty to family, friends and organizations; respect for the hierarchy of occupational ranking; deference to elders; and harmony and equality in one's relationships with others. In particular, harmony is the most important virtue in the Confucian origin (Kim & Kim, 1989). In the industrial society, these principles of the Confucian culture were transformed into work place setting, which values discipline, hard work, and dedication to duty, loyalty, responsibility, and sincerity and sacrifice, sacrificing for the sake of the company and the nation: the individual was expected to owe a supreme allegiance to the company’s interest and identify completely with the goals of the company with complete subordination to their supervisors. This value system of superior-subordination relationship was vital for a smooth operation of the industrial bureaucracy which was the chosen instrument of cooperation and control in the society (Kim and Park, 2003).

- Harmony and collectivism
The Confucian culture values the notion of harmony between man and nature, between man and Heaven, and between man and man (Kirkbride et. al., 1991) This high emphasis on the value of harmony extended that the stress is not so much upon individual and his/her interest but on the maintenance of collectivity and the continuation of harmonious relationships of members within it, which contrasted with the characteristics of greater individualism and egocentrism. In the Confucian culture a direct approach to conflict is discouraged because it would be seen as inappropriate and inconsistent with harmony. That is, they concern that overt conflict disrupt harmony to the point that it would be hurt (Friedman et. al., 2006). Besides, another characteristic of role-appropriates behaviors in the Confucian culture values the virtue of adjusting oneself to the stable social structure such as relationships, organizations, and institutions. Overall, it suggests that the value of harmony and collectivism will be likely to lead the avoidance of conflict and to the seeking of harmonious and collectivity maintaining compromises (Kirkbride et. al., 1991)

- Face-saving

In Confucian culture, face-saving norm is regarded as a means for fostering harmony (Moore, 1967). “Face,” refers to the respect, pride, and dignity of an individual as a consequence of his or her position in society, (Tse, et. al., 1988) and the face-saving norm regulates responsibilities and interpersonal relationships in the society, valuing the maintenance of hierarchies. In decision making process, it leads to lack subordinates’ lack of involvement: a subordinate is expected to obey, sometimes without question and a question – or worse, a difference of opinion- may bring about loss of face of superiors. Therefore, in Confucian culture, especially in conflict situations,
people consider that aggressive behavior from either party can damage the face of each other and it is shameful to disturb group or interpersonal harmony. Accordingly, in conflict situations, confrontations are regarded as face-threatening (Friedman et al., 2006) and people are normally hesitant about engaging in such behavior, (Kirkbride et al., 1991).

- Conflict-avoiding

Researchers found this value influences employees’ behaviors, especially, in conflict situation at work: the Confucian value of harmony suggests that integrating and avoiding behaviors in handling conflict are likely to be encouraged in forms, while forcing, often a confrontational approach, would be discouraged (Dyer and Song, 1997; Jun and Muto, 1995). For instance, researchers showed that Chinese are more likely to involve moral discipline and conflict avoidance, which defined as ‘refusing bother over recognition of a conflict and engagement in any active action toward its resolution (Ohbuchi and Takahashi, 1994, p. 1994),’ than the U.S. respondents (Chiu and Kosinski, 1994). Other study also suggested that Chinese culture promotes an indirect and avoiding style of handling conflicts (Bond and Wang, 1983). Tang and Korkbride (1986) also found that the Chinese are higher on the avoiding style than British respondents. Similarly, Trubisky, Ting-Toomey and Lin (1991) found that Taiwanese participants rely on an indirect avoiding style more than U.S participants. Morris et al. (1998) also found that Chinese participants rely more on an avoiding style in conflict management. Dyer and Song (1997) also found that in conflict-handling behaviors, Japanese respondents are less likely to engage in forcing behaviors than the U.S. respondents, which supported the strong influence of Confucian value. Kirkbride et al., (1991) also found that the Chinese are likely to
prefer compromising and avoiding to handle conflicts at work. Further, in their empirical study, Friedman et. al. (2006) suggested that the Chinese highly prefer to avoid conflict, because they expect that direct conflict will hurt the relationship with other party with greater concern for the other party among Chinese and a more direct approach will be interpreted as aggression threatening the relationship.

While Japanese organizations mimic the household common in Japanese traditional society, Chinese organizations maintain low levels of conflict by patterning themselves along the family structure. They are heavily dependent on others through mutual obligations, members of a group or organization have an interest in fulfilling their roles and maintaining harmony. In this context, "social and moral values precede personal and competence values, thus suggesting the drives toward conformity commonly noted in Chinese behavior" (Redding et al., 1994, p. 671). Avoidance of public conflict is, therefore, strong in Chinese organizations.

In sum, Kozan (1997)’s three cultural conflict management model provides holistic theoretical reasoning how culture can be realized in conflict situations. Even though this study is aimed at examining the effect of culture on employees response to dissatisfaction at work, the commonality between conflict management behavior and response to dissatisfaction, such as nature of study on the organizational cognition and behaviors, especially in the unfavorable or negative situation they confront and intend to change the status quo, leading behaviors that are 1) discretionary, 2) challenge-oriented, and 3) potentially risky.
In particular, this study is intended to the effect of non-Western culture, on a western employment relations construct – the exit-voice model. I attempt to apply the harmony model among three Kozan (1997) cultural models to one of non-Western culture, here Confucian culture. Interestingly, reviewing the Kozan (1997)’s harmony model and Confucian culture, there are overlapped value: emphasis on harmony, face-maintenance, suppression of explicit negative emotion, avoiding challenging behaviors which lead favor of avoiding or indirect way of expression, not to hurt harmony and relationships at work. These common values provides insight to answer mainly two questions that intended to test in this study: 1) if there are certain type of preference of employees’ response to dissatisfaction among exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect options, 2) if predictors supported in the previous studies have similar effects on these response choice in the non-Western culture.

Proposition 1: As a response to dissatisfaction at work, employees in the Confucian culture will be more likely to show harmony style of response, which is characterized as high value of harmony, suppression of negative emotions, conflict avoiding and accommodating behaviors, emphasizing face-saving concern.

Proposition 2: In the Confucian culture, some predictors of employees’ response to dissatisfaction will not have as significant relationship with their choice, was supported in the previous empirical study with the sample of the Western, mostly U.S. sample: for instance, despite of high job dissatisfaction will not lead high voice behaviors that are supported in the previous empirical study with the sample of the Western.
Proposition 3: As far as voice behavior is concerned, employees in the Confucian culture will have different likelihood of certain type of voice behaviors to that in the U.S.: for instance, compared to the U.S. employees, Korean employees will be less likely to voice to supervisors which was shown most likely in the U.S. sample.

3. Discussion

The key purpose of this paper is to examine if culture can make difference of operation of EVLN model. Specifically, using the Confucian culture which was not much tested in the previous voice-related studies, this study attempts to argue that, in other culture than the western culture which was dominantly used in the voice studies, employees may respond to their dissatisfaction at work in different ways. To do so, I reviewed the key features of voice literature, especially focusing on the main concepts, constructs, and predictors. After that, I introduced Kozan (1997)’s cultural three model of conflict management with rationales that despite of difference of research area, Kozan (1997)’ model can be useful theoretical guide for understanding variation of employees voice behavior across culture because of the commonality of employees conflict management behaviors and responses to dissatisfaction at work such as the nature of these behaviors at work leading behaviors that are 1) discretionary, 2) challenge-oriented, and 3) potentially risky.

Based on this application, I proposed that 1) in the Confucian culture, employees will prefer harmony model as a response to dissatisfaction such as loyalty and neglect; 2) as far as predictors
of these choices, some predictors will not have as significant relationship with their choice, as
does in the Western culture: for instance, high job dissatisfaction will not lead high voice
behaviors in the Confucian culture which was supported in the previous empirical study with the
sample of the Western, mostly U.S. sample; and 3) even in the explicit expression of their
dissatisfaction such as voice, compared to western employees, employees in the Confucian
culture will prefer indirect ways such as asking for the collective representative such as unions.

In conclusion, this study is to provide an answer to the question, “Does culture matter in
employees’ response to dissatisfaction at work?” with empirical evidence. By exploring not fully
investigated value, culture in this study, I attempt to present a new way of looking at employees’
voice-related behaviors. I hope that, by providing improved comprehensiveness and significant
parsimony in the employees’ voice literature, this study will help stimulate future research in the
employees’ voice literature.
References


