

CROSS CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF HUMOR ON ORGANIZATIONAL  
DISSENT IN THE US, KOREA, JAPAN, AND CHINA

Master's Thesis  
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<p>Abstract: Surveys were used to explore the extent to which organizational dissent and humor differed between the United States, Japan, China, and Korea, and the influence of humor on organizational dissent in those nations. Results revealed nationality has significant differences effects on articulated dissent, latent dissent, and humor. Humor is positively correlated with latent dissent (<math>r = .20, p &lt; .01</math>) among the entire sample, but not significantly correlated with articulated dissent (<math>r = .02</math>). Humor was positively correlated with both articulated dissent, and latent dissent in the Korea, the Japanese sample and the US sample. In the Chinese sample, humor was non-significantly correlated with articulated dissent and latent dissent.</p>	
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As reputation is an organizational asset and capital, having a good reputation helps organizations develop and resolve crisis when it happens. To be specific, companies with a good reputation have more supportive behaviors by different kinds of stakeholders. Besides, when a crisis happens, companies with good reputations can resolve a crisis easier than competitors with worse reputation because it is regarded as a goodwill 'piggy bank' with trust already developed among stakeholders. Moreover, renowned companies can extend their brand more easily (Wessel, 2016). Therefore, in an increasingly competitive business world, a company needs to develop and manage a good reputation to have success.

Organizational reputation refers to a collective assessment of an organization's past actions and future prospects that describe its overall ability and appeal to all of its key constituents or stakeholders when compared to rivals (Bromley, 2002). Key constituents include consumers, employees, investors, and the general public. Therefore, building and managing stakeholders' evaluations plays an important role in a company's reputation. Among stakeholders, employees play an important role in the overall positioning of corporate reputation (Cravens & Oliver, 2006). Therefore, employees' high degree of satisfaction with their organizations contributes to a company's reputation, while their dissatisfaction damages reputation.

Unfortunately, no matter how well institutions are devised and organized, they are due to experience failures of meeting expectations of different stakeholders in general when they deviate from efficient, rational, law-abiding, virtuous, or otherwise functional behavior (Hirschman, 1970). Besides, organizations subtly control employees in light of personality and aptitude testing, autonomous work arrangements, training manuals designed to foster employee input, and organizational identification (Kassing, 2000). Those dysfunctional misbehaviors and/or control will generate stakeholders' disagreement and resistance (Hirschman, 1970). It requires managers to understand and manage employees' decisions to say something or not about organizations when

employees face dissatisfying circumstances at work, which helps resolve threats to an organization's reputation.

When employees decide to voice their disagreement, a particular form of the voice is dissent (Gorden, 1988). When dissent happens in organizations, it is named organizational dissent. Kassing (1998) defined organizational dissent as the expression of disagreement or contradictory opinions concerning organizational policies and practices. In the past 20 years, a considerable body of research has explored organizational dissent linked to a variety of traits and behaviors in the context of the United State (Croucher et al., 2014).

In the U S, an individualistic culture, employees are more likely to express their dissent compared with collectivistic nations (eg. China, Korea, and Japan) (Croucher et al., 2009). As most research on organizational dissent is done in the US, it is practical to expand research on dissent from that context. However, results from that context cannot be directly applied to other cultural contexts, because cultural differences lead people think and behave differently. Excellent examples would be the three Eastern Asia nations of China, Korea, and Japan. As one of the busiest working places in the world, employees have restless working pressure from family expectations, personal career ambitions, fierce peers competition, powerful managers, Therefore, they tend to be more dissatisfied with their organizations. On the other hand, the three Confucius heritage places appreciate harmonious relationship with others, which limits employees to express their disagreements. They might use indirect way, like humor, to deliver their negative feelings towards the organizations, as studies have found that humor has been used as a strategy in conflicts to convey or enforce social norms, express contradictory opinions or deliver criticism in an indirect and polite manner, because it helps both parties to thaw tense atmospheres, facilitate positive assessment and hostility, save face, and maintain social norms (Bippus, 2003; Wanda, Vernard, & Christopher, 2000).

As humor provides an indirect and safe way to dissent, it can be used to express dissenting

messages in organizations (Taylor & Bain, 2003). Sollitto and Myers (2015) showed a positive relationship between humorous messages and dissent messages. However, that research line is not about how an individual's humor orientation relates to their tendency to dissent in different cultures. And there is few research on the relationship between humor orientation and organizational dissent.

Today with continued globalization, understanding dissent and humor in international settings is imperative to the success of companies' reputation and success. This study aims at investigating whether nationality influences organizational and humor in the US, China, Japan, and Korea, which can help managers to be sensitive to employees' expression of dissent, especially when employees use indirect ways, like humor, to show their negative opinions on the organizations. Hence, managers can understand, predict, and manage employees' interpretations of their organizations.

This thesis consists of two parts: the first part is a monograph, consisting of an introduction, a review of dissent and culture, and reflections of the writing procedure. The second part is an article, which explores differences in the relationship between organizational dissent and humor in the United States, China, Japan, and Korea. There are six parts in the article. They are introduction, literature reviews on organizational dissent and humor, theories comprised of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Confucianism moral ethics, methods, results and analysis as well as discussion. The following section is introduction of dissent and culture as well as culture's influence on dissent.

## **2. DISSENT AND CULTURE**

### **2.1 Dissent**

Dissent originated from the Latin word, *dissentire*, *dis* meaning apart and *sentire* meaning to feel (Morris, 1969). Thus, dissent means "feeling apart" (Kassing, 1997). Redhead (2014) defined it as an unwillingness to cooperate with an established source of authority, which can be social, cultural, or governmental. It results from the activity of critical thinking, or thinking for oneself and questioning accepted notions of authority, truth, and meaning (Redhead, 2014).

The definitions of dissent reflect several elements. Dissent results from dissatisfaction with

current conditions and advocating changes of the present situation. It requires public protest. Besides, it involves issues of legal, moral or legitimate principles or personal advantage motives. Moreover, it needs to be expressed to someone (Croucher, Kassing, & Diers-Lawson, 2013; Garner, Kinsky, Duta & Danker, 2012; Kassing, 1997). Therefore, general complaints can't be recognized as dissent if they don't meet those elements. For example, in families, when children complain to their friends they are dissatisfied with parents' demand on their dressing, wording etc, this is not dissent, because it has no relation to legal, moral or legitimate principles. In educational institutes, though some students dislike lectures where only instructors talk, they still go there without letting others know their disagreement. This is not dissent, either, because it's not expressed.

Dissent happens in a lot of contexts. When dissent happens in business companies, it is named organizational dissent. It refers to the expression of disagreement or contradictory opinions concerning organizational policies and practices. What needs to be mentioned is that dissent does not necessarily imply conflicts (Kassing, 1997).

Dissent is regarded as "a moral obligation, a political right, an enlightened management practice, a minor inconvenience, or a punishable violation of loyalty" (Sprague & Ruud, 1988, p. 190). It is an important form of workplace communication, because employees can give valuable feedback to organizations regarding employee discontent, and unethical practices. Thus, dissent provides organizations opportunities for improvement and innovation (Kassing & Kava, 2013). However, not all organizations are ready to recognize and respond to employee dissent, one reason is that managers fail to recognize and respond to employees' upward dissent because of misunderstanding or incapability of catching dissent (Kassing, 2002). Also some managers haven't realized the importance of dissent, which hinders organizations from developing a high degree of freedom of speech where employees are more likely to dissent. Managers' failure in understanding and using dissent correctly make organizations lose their chances to benefit from dissent, which is indicated by a distinguished organizational communicate scholar Charles Redding (1985). He gave



suggestions to both managers and subordinates to make dissent beneficial. He thought managers should create a high degree of freedom of speech in workplaces by using their decisive influence, to have wise decisions and honor the integrity of human spirit. For subordinates, they must be aware of what kind of problems they are facing or potential problems they will face. Also they should know what communication options they can use (Redding, 1985).

Scholars realized those problems; they have focused on employees' reactions to dissatisfying circumstances at work. One of the earliest theories of how employees may deal with that choice is Hirschman's (1970) Exit-Voice-Loyalty. Hirschman argued employees have two choices when addressing workplace frustrations — they could leave the organization or they could voice their frustrations (Garner, 2009). Exit involves escaping dissatisfactory conditions by leaving the organization, whereas voice involves attempting to change dissatisfactory conditions from within the organization (Kassing, 1997).

Hirschman (1970) considered loyalty to be a moderating variable that influenced which behavior employees and customers would choose, reasoning more loyal employees would be more likely to stay and voice, whereas less loyal employees would be more likely to exit (Kassing, 1997). Farrell (1983) challenged the idea that voice and loyalty were the only options, because some employees may choose to reduce the amount of effort in the organization, putting in enough effort to avoid serious sanctions or termination, but also “dragging their feet”, which can impede organizational success. He labeled such behavior “neglect” (Farrell, 1983). Other scholars have questioned whether loyal employees always give voice to frustrations. Boroff and Lewin (1997) found loyalty often means “suffering in silence” (p. 60), a situation in which employees choose to live with the status quo, neither voicing dissent nor exiting the organization (Boroff & Lewin 1997). Therefore, there are three characteristics of dissent, voice, neglect, and exit. Some researchers have suggested these characteristics are not mutually exclusive. That is to say, employees might combine voice, exit, and neglect in response to dissatisfaction rather than depending on only one of those

choices in isolation (Gossett & Kilker, 2006; Kassing, 1997). These scholars saw elements of organizational dissent in exit and neglect, as well as voice.

Following this research, Kassing identified three types of dissent based on channel and audience selection (Croucher, 2009; Kassing 1997, 1998). He first proposed a dissent model in 1997. At that time, organizational dissent consisted of three types, articulated, antagonistic, and displaced, which respectively referred to how employees express dissent directly, aggressively, and passively (Kassing, 1997). One year later, Kassing (1998) replaced antagonistic dissent with latent dissent. Articulated dissent refers to open and direct communication to influential organizational members (managers, supervisors or corporate officers). When employees believe their disagreements will be perceived as constructive without retaliation, they will use articulated dissent. Five strategies of upward dissent used by employees are identified, direct-factual appeal, solution presentation, repetition, circumvention, and threatening resignation (Kassing & Kava, 2013).

*Direct-factual appeal* involves supporting one's dissent claim with evidence and firsthand knowledge of organizational practices and procedures. *Solution presentation* entails providing a solution to the concern that motivates one to express disagreement in the first place—that is, packaging one's dissent with a solution to the perceived problem, rather than just a complaint about it. *Repetition* necessitates raising a concern repeatedly over time on different occasions in order to draw attention to it. Going around one's immediate supervisor or boss to express dissent to someone higher in the chain of command constitutes *circumvention*. And threatening to quit or resign in light of an issue that one strongly disagrees about is *threatening resignation*. (Kassing & Kava, 2013, p. 47)

In employees' perception, those strategies' competence is different. The most competent upward dissent strategy is solution presentation, followed by direct-factual appeal, repetition, and circumvention. The least competent upward dissent strategy is threatening resignation (Kassing, 2005).

Articulated dissent occurs when employees express their opinions directly to organizational members who has influential power in the organization, like management and supervisors. The employees believe they will be perceived as constructive with no retaliation. Latent dissent involves communicating opinions to ineffective audiences within the organization (eg. coworkers with similar rank) rather than superiors with organizational power. It occurs when employees believe they will be perceived as adversarial, but also feel they are protected from retaliation to some extent, because they have some organizational leverage, like familial relation, expertise, or special status with priority. Displaced dissent involves expressing criticism to ineffectual external audiences (eg. nonworking friends, family, strangers, and nonsignificant others). (Goodboy, 2008; Kassing, 1997). It occurs when employees feel vulnerable about being perceived as adversarial and experience high retaliation (Kassing, 1997). Employees will join in collective action to avoid individual retaliation because of anonymity. For example, employees may sign petitions or participate in strikes.

Prior research has shown individual factors, organizational factors and relational factors influence employees to choose dissent strategy. For individual factors, argumentativeness (Croucher et al., 2009) and OBSE (Payne, 2007) are positively related to organizational dissent, while burnout syndrome (Avtgis et al., 2007) is negatively related to dissent intention. Internal locus of control and individualism significant positively related to upward dissent (Ingwar, 2014; Kassing & Avtgis, 2001).

As for organizational factors, workplace freedom and perceived justice were among the primary factors considered by employees when contemplating dissent (Garner, 2009; Goodboy et al., 2008; Kassing, 1997, 2002). Workplace freedom of speech is negatively related to dissent intention, because workplace freedom of speech can contribute to creating a climate that values employees' feedback and thus fosters employees who are more satisfied with their jobs and report greater organizational commitment and identification (Gorden & Infante, 1991). Kassing and

McDowell (2008) suggested employees express less latent and displaced dissent when they perceive a higher level of fairness in organizations. Goodboy et al. (2008) found employees' perceptions of distributive and interpersonal justice negatively predict latent dissent, while perceptions of informational justice positively predict latent dissent. There are other organizational factors that have received attention. One factor is organizational climate, which can influence dissent (Patterson et al., 2005). Currently, there is no published research conforming to this idea. Another factor is economic issues. Croucher et al. (2014) found economic issues discouraged dissent when employees perceived dissent might do harm to his/her job.

The expression of organizational dissent has also been related to relational factors consisting of employees' relationship with their supervisors, and with colleagues. Kassing (2000) examined how subordinates' perceptions of superior-subordinate relationship quality (LMX) related to their strategies for expressing dissent. Results indicated subordinates who perceived having high-quality relationships with their supervisors reported using significantly more articulated dissent than subordinates who perceived having low-quality relationships with their supervisors. Conversely, subordinates who perceived having low-quality relationships with their supervisors reported using significantly more latent dissent than subordinates who perceived having high-quality relationships with their supervisors. Subsequent research provided considerable support for that conclusion (Avtgis et al., 2007). Those research found employees who report high levels of isolation from fellow workers report low levels of articulated dissent and avoid using latent dissent. Displaced dissent did not significantly contribute to these results.

## **2.2 Culture**

Essentialists use a fixed and homogenous approach to see culture. They regard culture as a concrete social phenomenon that represents the essential character of a particular nation from essentialist view (Holliday, 2000, p.38). Hofstede is probably the most famous scholar who supported that view. He regarded culture is a static entity, which can be touched, seen, experienced,

and learned. Based on that, he divided the world into cultural bubbles according to dimensions of culture (Holliday, 2000). Later on, the perspective of putting communication at the center has been accepted increasingly. For example Aldridge (2004) defined culture:

the shared system of symbolic knowledge and patterns of behaviors, derived from speech communication, that human individuals carry on to provide predictable internal and external psychological stability so as to prevent chaos among human individuals.

Hofstede (1980) identified four dimensions of cultural variance in his early works: Power distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV) / Collectivism (CDV), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), and Masculinity (MAS) / Feminism (FEM). In his later works, Long Term Orientation (LTO) / Short Term Orientation (STO) and Indulgence and Restraint (IND) were added (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede & Minkov, M., 2010; Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

Among the six dimensions, two dimensions are pertinent to organizational dissent: IDV/CDV and PDI (Croucher et al., 2009, 2014). One dimension is collectivism/individualism, the former emphasizes group-based values such as loyalty, harmony, cooperation, unity, conformity, and the unquestioning acceptance of norms, attitudes, and values in an organization as its most important values (Park, Rehg, & Lee, 2005). According to Confucius, harmonious relationships are the basis of social integration and stability. Therefore, individuals should respect and follow tradition and social hierarchy (rules, status, and authorities) to avoid conflicts with others (Zhang et al., 2005), and politeness is empathized, which shapes “people’s attitude toward life and serves as standards and rules for social interaction” (Zhang et al., 2005, p.108).

Those ideas influence people’s behaviors. For example, many people in a collectivistic society think conflicting with others in organizations is undesirable and thus they should avoid conflicts in dealing with personal relationships (Hofstede, 1991). Even if they have to express disagreement, they often use an indirect and polite communication style. Unlike collectivism, individualists stress characteristics like detachment, distance, and self-reliance (Hofstede, 1980).

Individuals in this kind of culture are more likely to use a direct communicative style.

The other culture dimension influencing organizational dissent is power distance. Hofstede (1997) defined power distance as the extent “to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (p. 28). In high power distance structures, leaders are influential and unchallenged. “Employees are seen as frequently afraid of disagreeing with their bosses” (Hofstede, 2010, p. 61) and exhibit a strong sense of loyalty to organizational power structures (Croucher, 2009; Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Wardrope, 2007). While in low power distance structures, the emotional distance between people is relatively small: subordinates will rather easily approach and contradict their bosses.

These different characteristics of collectivism and power distance influence organizational dissent and individualism/collectivism can also attribute to differences in dissent. Croucher et al. (2009) found individuals in more collectivistic and higher power distance countries (India) are less likely to dissent than those who are in individualistic and lower power distance countries (the US). The US has been identified as an individualistic and low-power distance country; to the contrary, Japan, China, and Korea (East Asia) are identified as collectivistic and high-power distance (Suzuki & Rancer, 1994).

Although East Asia nations are identified as collectivistic cultures, they have their specific characteristics. Triandis (1990, 1995) argued there are many kinds of individualism and collectivism. He divided collectivism/individualism into four categories, horizontal individualism (HI), vertical individualism (VI), horizontal collectivism (HC), and vertical collectivism (VC) based on horizontal and vertical social relationships. Horizontal patterns assume oneself is more or less like every other self. By contrast, vertical patterns consist of hierarchies, and one self is different from other selves. Zhang et al. (2005) investigated endorsements of traditional Confucian values in four East Asian cultural contexts (i.e., China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan). Results indicated participants in China provided the highest ratings for interpersonal harmony and relational

hierarchy among the four cultures, which demonstrated that although East Asian countries are traditionally collectivistic and are influenced by Confucianism, “they should not be treated as a single cultural entity, because each developed its own unique Confucian characteristics (p. 113).

Therefore, individuals in the US and three significant Confucian heritage nations (China, Japan, and Korea) might have different propensities for dissent and humor. When considering the different collectivistic cultures, individuals in the three Eastern Asia countries might be different in expressing organizational dissent. This research investigates whether nationality and different collectivism influence organizational dissent and humor.

In the following section, I will reflect on doing this research, including the writing process and what I have learned from this research experience. After the reflections part is a research article on exploring the relationship between organizational dissent and humor in the US, Korea, Japan and China.

### **3. REFLECTIONS**

I think my study is in a systematic and progressive way. I would say a good planning and reflection of the previous work are really important. In the whole process, my supervisor Professor Stephen Croucher always gave me guidance, like detailed feedback after every draft of my thesis.

I started to write literature on organizational dissent from the first semester as a course paper. During the same semester, I started to study Statistics. Later on, I extended organizational dissent to whistleblowing, from which came the study of dissent. Writing reviews on whistleblowing helped me to understand the research history of dissent. And I wrote humor and theory part at the same period. In the following period, I started to work on research methods and instruments. I used surveys to collect data, and SPSS to enter data. After that, I wrote an introduction of broader topics related to my study, dissent and culture. In the last period, data is analyzed. Some results go against to the prediction. The nonsignificant relation between organizational dissent and humor in Chinese sample helped me to understand the deep influence of

Confucianism moral value on Chinese people's organizational behavior. The close correlation between organizational dissent and humor in Japanese and the US sample instead of similar results among Japanese and the other two East Asian samples increased understanding of cultural transformation.

When it comes to what I have learned from this study, I think what means most to me are values I have learned in this study. I learned to be practical and be comfortable with being imperfect. I used to try to approach being perfect, so at first I had wasted lots of time in my first draft of literature review and collecting data. In writing literature review for the first time, I tried to include all research lines of organizational dissent, so I broadened my thesis' field. The first draft of literature included messages of dissent and dissent out of organizational context.

After finishing literature review, I began to collect data. I asked my Chinese friend who studies Chinese language to check the Chinese survey to make it as clear, easy and formal as possible, because the first dozens of respondents gave lots of negative feedbacks on the survey. They thought completing the survey is time-consuming, because the survey was too long and they didn't like to fill in blanks. And some doubted reliability because the survey is a self-report one. Then I asked my supervisor was it possible to have some changes in the survey. I misunderstood his response as yes. So I made a few minor changes to the wording of the survey and changed a few blanks to choices before I went on sending surveys. Unfortunately, I was told that all surveys I collected after the changes can't be used because all surveys need to be the exactly the same in different countries. Therefore, everything came back to the first survey and began to collect surveys from the beginning.

To conclude, writing my thesis was very meaningful for me. I learned a lot on doing research. The experience of using theories to make predictions and using empirical results to check the predications, and the process of communicating with my supervisor both are helpful for me. Moreover, I learned the principle to keep surveys the same. And skills of SPSS are quite useful in



quantitative study. This study experience would be rewarding for my future.

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**RESEARCH ARTICLE****Cross cultural analysis of the influence of humor on organizational dissent in the US, Korea, Japan, and China**

Hui Chen, & Stephen M. Croucher

**Abstract**

Surveys are used to explore the extent to which organizational dissent and humor would differ between the US, Japan, China, and Korea, and the influence of humor on organizational dissent in those nations. Results revealed nationality has significant differences effects on articulated dissent, latent dissent, and humor. Humor is positively correlated with latent dissent among the entire sample, but not significantly correlated with articulated dissent. Humor is positively correlated with both articulated dissent and latent dissent in the Korea, the Japanese sample and the US sample. In the Chinese sample, humor was non-significantly correlated with articulated dissent and latent dissent.

Keywords: Nationality; Organizational Dissent; humor

**Introduction**

As employees face dissatisfying circumstances at work, they must decide whether to say something or not. Organizational dissent refers to the expression of disagreement or contradictory opinions concerning organizational policies and practices (Kassing, 1998). It is regarded as “a moral obligation, a political right, an enlightened management practice, a minor inconvenience, or a punishable violation of loyalty” (Sprague & Ruud, 1988, p. 190). It is an important form of workplace communication, because employees can give valuable feedback to organizations regarding employee discontent, and unethical practices. Thus, dissent provides organizations opportunities for improvement and innovation. However, not all organizations are ready to recognize and respond to employees’ dissent, one reason is that managers fail to

recognize and respond to employees' upward dissent because of misunderstanding or incapability of responding to those who dissent (Kassing, 2002).

In the past 20 years, a considerable body of research has explored organizational dissent linked to a variety of traits and behaviors in the context of the United States (Croucher, Parrott, Zeng, & Gomez, 2014; Kassing, 2011). However, results from that context cannot be directly applied to other contexts, especially cultures where people think and behave differently, like China, Korea, and Japan. In these three nations, avoiding conflicts and building harmonious relationships with others are appreciated, which discourages employees to express their disagreements directly. They might use humor to express their dissent. Studies have found that humor is as a strategy in conflicts to convey or enforce social norms, express contradictory opinions, or deliver criticism in an indirect and polite manner, because it helps both parties to thaw tense atmospheres, reduce regression, facilitate positive assessment and hostility, save face, and maintain social norms (Bippus, 2003; Wanda, Vernard, & Christopher, 2000).

As the US, Korea, Japan, and China are among the busiest and most successful economic entities in the world, employees in those nations have more intense working lives, and they are more likely to have discontent. Therefore, understanding dissent and humor in those five nations is imperative. This study aims to investigate dissent and humor differences in the US, Korea, Japan, and China, and the influence of humor on organizational dissent in those nations. And the study helps managers understand, predict, and manage employees' opinions on their organizations, which contributes to good reputation, and success of the organizations.

### **National Comparisons of Power Distance and Individualism/Collectivism**

Hofstede (1980) identified four dimensions of cultural variance in his early works: Power distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV) / Collectivism (CDV), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), and Masculinity (MAS) / Feminism (FEM). In his later works, Long Term Orientation (LTO) / Short Term Orientation (STO) were added (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Among the five

dimensions, two dimensions are pertinent to organizational dissent: IDV/CDV and PDI (Croucher et al., 2009, 2014). One dimension is collectivism/individualism, the former emphasizes group-based values such as loyalty, harmony, cooperation, unity, conformity, and the unquestioning acceptance of norms, attitudes, and values in an organization as its most important values (Park, Rehg, & Lee, 2005). According to Confucius, harmonious relationships are the basis to social integration and stability. He promoted three cardinal guides and five constant virtues (Sangang Wuchang) as fundamentals in harmonious societies. The three cardinal guides refer to rulers guide subjects, fathers guide sons, and husbands guide wives. The five constant virtues refer to humaneness, righteousness, politeness, wisdom, and integrity. Therefore, individuals should respect and follow tradition and social hierarchy (rules, status, and authorities) to avoid conflicts with others (Zhang, Lin, Nonaka, & Beom, 2005), and politeness is empathized, which shapes “people’s attitude toward life and served as standards and rules for social interaction” (Zhang et al., 2005, p.108).

Those ideas influence people’s behaviors. For example, many people in a collectivistic society think conflicting with others in organizations is undesirable and thus they should avoid conflicts in dealing with personal relations (Hofstede, 1991). Even if they have to express disagreement, they often use an indirect and polite communication style. Unlike collectivism, individualists have characteristics like detachment, distance, and self-reliance (Hofstede, 1980). Individuals in this kind of culture are more likely to use a direct communicative style.

The other cultural dimension influencing organizational dissent is power distance. Hofstede (1997) defined power distance as the extent “to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (p. 28). In high power distance structures, leaders are typically more influential and unchallenged. “Employees are seen as frequently afraid of disagreeing with their bosses” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 61) and exhibit a strong sense of loyalty to organizational



power structures (Croucher et al., 2009; Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Wardrope, 2007), while subordinates are more likely to contradict their bosses in low power distance structures. These different characteristics of collectivism/collectivism and power distance attribute to differences in dissent. Croucher et al. (2009) found individuals in more collectivistic and higher power distance countries (India) are less likely to dissent than individualistic and lower power distance countries (the US). The US has been identified as an individualistic and low-power distance country; on the contrary, Japan, China, and Korea (East Asian) are identified as collectivistic and high-power distance (Suzuki & Rancer, 1994).

Although East Asian nations are identified as collectivistic cultures, they have their unique characteristics. There are many kinds of individualism and collectivism (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990; Triandis, Chan, Bhawuk, Iwao, & Sinha, 1995). Triandis and colleagues divided collectivism/individualism into four categories, horizontal individualism (HI), vertical individualism (VI), horizontal collectivism (HC), and vertical collectivism (VC) based on horizontal and vertical social relationships. Horizontal patterns assume oneself is more or less like every other self. By contrast, vertical patterns consist of hierarchies, and one self is different from other selves. Zhang et al. (2005) investigated endorsements of traditional Confucian values in four East Asian cultural contexts (i.e., China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan). Results indicated participants in China provided the highest ratings for interpersonal harmony and relational hierarchy among the four cultures. It demonstrated that although East Asian countries are traditionally collectivistic and are influenced by Confucianism, “they should not be treated as a single cultural entity, because each nation developed its own unique Confucian characteristics under the influence of globalization” (p. 113).

### **Organizational Dissent**

Hirschman (1970) argued employees have two choices when addressing workplace frustrations—they can leave the organization or they can voice their frustrations. This argument

is the foundation of Hirschman's exit-voice-loyalty concept (Garner, 2009). Exit involves escaping dissatisfactory conditions by leaving the organization, whereas voice involves attempting to change dissatisfactory conditions from within the organization (Kassing, 1997, p. 319). Hirschman (1970) considered loyalty to be a moderating variable that influenced which behavior employees and customers would choose, reasoning more loyal employees would be more likely to stay and attempt to change dissatisfactory organizational conditions, whereas less loyal employees would be more likely to exit (Kassing, 1997).

Farrell (1983) also challenged the idea that voice and loyalty were the only options. Some employees may choose to reduce the amount of effort in the organization, putting in enough effort to avoid serious sanctions or termination, but also "dragging their feet", which can impede organizational success. He labeled such behavior "neglect". Other scholars have questioned whether loyal employees always give voice to frustrations. Boroff and Lewin (1997) found loyalty often means "suffering in silence" (p. 60), a situation in which employees choose to live with the status quo, neither voicing dissent nor exiting the organization (Boroff & Lewin 1997). Therefore, there are three characteristics of dissent, voice, neglect, and exit. Some researchers have suggested these characteristics are not mutually exclusive. That is to say, employees might combine voice, exit, and neglect in response to dissatisfaction rather than depending on only one of those choices in isolation (Gossett & Kilker, 2006; Kassing, 1997). These authors saw elements of organizational dissent in exit and neglect as well as voice.

Based on this research, Kassing first proposed the dissent model in 1997. At that time, organizational dissent consisted of three types, articulated, antagonistic, and displaced, which respectively referred to how employees express dissent directly, aggressively, and passively (Kassing, 1997). One year later, Kassing (1998) replaced antagonistic dissent with latent dissent. He identified three types of dissent based on channel and audience selection (Croucher et al., 2009; Kassing 1997, 1998). Articulated dissent refers to open and direct communication to

influential organizational members. Latent dissent involves communicating opinions to ineffective audiences (i.e., coworkers) rather than superiors with organizational power. Displaced dissent involves expressing criticism to external audiences (i.e., friends, family, and insignificant others) (Goodboy, Chory, & Dunleavy, 2008).

Dissent features three aspects. It must be expressed, and it involves the discussion of disagreement or contradictory opinions. Furthermore, it must be about organizational practices, policies or operations (Kassing, 1997). The proposed model incorporates four elements: (a) triggering agent; (b) strategy selection influences; (c) strategy selection; and (d) expressed dissent. The dissent process begins with a triggering agent. Dissent occurs when a triggering agent exceeds an individual's tolerance for dissent. There are three stages in the model (Kassing, 1997). See Figure 1 for a depiction of Kassing's (1997) employee dissent model.

FIGURE 1: Kassing's employee dissent model (Kassing, 1997).



## **Stages of Organizational Dissent**

The first stage is a triggering agent; triggering agents may concern a variety of issues. Early works concentrated on whistleblowing, which refers to present or former organizational members reporting illegal, unethical, or illegitimate activities under the control of organizational leaders to those who are willing and able to take action, like governments and media (Keenan & McClain, 1992). Those works deal with issues of principles. Later works evolved to include personal advantage dissent and more mundane and common means of dissent, for example, boat rocking (Kassing, 2007). Then triggering agents of dissent may hinge upon ethical concerns, issue import, or harm/risk to self and others (Kassing, 1997). When triggering agents exceed employees' toleration for dissent, they will feel the need to speak their contradictory opinions or disagreement. A typology of triggers based on issues of principles and personal advantages were identified (Kassing, 2002), which included dissent about employee treatment, organizational change, decision making, inefficiency, roles/responsibilities, resources, ethics, performance evaluations, and harm prevention.

The second stage dissent strategy selection is influenced by a number of organizational, individual, and relational factors. Scholars have investigated how those factors may influence employees' decision to express dissent. Besides, employees' assessment of how their expression of dissent will be perceived and how likely retaliation will be also impacts the decision to express dissent (Kassing, 1997), because expressing dissent has a potential risk of retaliation. Scholars have noted employees have a relatively clear sense of how dissent will be characterized in their organizations in general (Sprague & Ruud, 1988). Therefore, employees must assess the degree to which their dissent will be characterized as constructive or adversarial (Kassing, 1997). Moreover, dissent expressions are also motivated and constrained by goals. Research has found getting advice and information are primary goals, and the most common secondary goals

reported are identity and conversation management. Research has also suggested that employees may often express dissent for sense making reasons rather than accomplishing organizational change (Garner, 2009).

Concerns of organizational, individual, relational factors, assessments of dissent and goals influence employees to choose dissent strategies. Research has identified five specific strategies for upward dissent: direct factual appeal (using facts and experiences to support one's position), repetition (repeating dissent until the audience is amenable), solution presentation (providing a solution as part of dissent), circumvention (going to a supervisor's head), and threatening resignation (letting the audience know that one would quit if the matter is not resolved) (Kassing, 2002). For dissent, there are 11 types of dissent messages (Garner 2012). Garner (2012) explored how dissenters perceived the effectiveness and appropriateness of dissent messages by measuring the content of the 11 dissent messages. Results indicated messages of Solution Presentation, Direct-Factual Appeal, Coalitions, and Inspiration were more frequently used to express dissent, while messages of Pressure and Exchange were less frequently employed.

The last stage is expressed dissent. Kassing's (1997, 1998) initial expressed dissent categories included articulated, antagonistic, and displaced dissent. However, scholars have adopted upward and lateral dissent to describe expressed dissent (Kassing, 2002, 2011). Specifically, upward dissent describes dissent directed to an employees' superior, and lateral dissent refers to expressions of dissatisfaction or contradictory opinions expressed to coworkers (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001).

### **Differences in Expressing Organizational Dissent**

Cases of expressing dissent can be hard to predict. The decision to express dissent is complex. It is reasonable to expect people will vary in the ways they express dissent (Kassing, 1997). However, an emerging body of scholarship has highlighted an intricate relationship

between individual, organizational, and relational aspects of organizational dissent (Kassing, 1997), particularly various individual differences. Organizational members' argumentativeness (verbal aggressiveness), burnout syndrome, organizational based self-esteem (OBSE), organizational tenure, locus of control, workplace freedom, and perceived justice contribute to differences in dissent. Among them, communication structures are among the primary factors considered by employees when contemplating dissent (Garner, 2009; Goodboy et al., 2008; Kassing, 1997, 2002). Argumentativeness and workplace freedom of speech have also drawn attention (Croucher et al., 2009, 2014), while locus of control has drawn little attention.

As for individual factors, previous findings show argumentativeness (Croucher et al., 2009) and OBSE (Payne, 2007) are positively related to organizational dissent, while burnout syndrome (Avtgis, Thomas-Maddox, Taylor, & Patterson, 2007) is negatively related to dissent intention. Employees who report high levels of organizational burnout syndrome, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of failure, report low levels of articulated dissent and avoid using latent dissent (Avtgis et al., 2007). Moreover, there is identified finding on the influence of tenure on organizational dissent. Individuals with longer tenure in an organization are generally more likely to express articulated dissent (Kassing & Armstrong, 2001). In later research, Croucher (2009) found organizational tenure did not have a main effect on the relationship between organizational dissent and argumentativeness, which extended the understanding of how organizational tenure influences organizational dissent. Currently, only two papers on the relationship between locus of control and organizational dissent have been published. Kassing and Avtgis (2001) found employees reporting internal control orientation used significantly more articulated dissent than either moderate or external control oriented employees, while employees reporting external control orientation used significantly more latent dissent than employees reporting either moderate or external control orientations did. Ingwar (2014) also found internal locus of control and individualism significant positively related to upward

dissent, while he found external locus of control and collectivism were significant positive predictors of upward dissent, which contradicted Kassing's findings.

There have been large amounts of work on organizational dissent in the US, while there are a few published papers studying organizational dissent in non-US contexts, or international settings. Croucher et al. (2009) surveyed individuals in the US and India to study the relationship between organizational dissent and argumentativeness. Contrary to previous research, argumentativeness and the three types of organizational dissent were not positively correlated. And individuals' organizational tenure did not influence the relationship between organizational dissent and argumentativeness.

Croucher et al. (2014) surveyed individuals in Finland, France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom, to confirm the relationship between organizational dissent and workplace freedom of speech, and to explore differences in organizational dissent and workplace freedom of speech between the five nations. Results revealed workplace freedom of speech is not always positively correlated with dissent because employment legislations and economic pressures on organizations influence organizational dissent. The study showed workplace freedom of speech is positively correlated with dissent in France and Germany, while there was a negative relationship in the United Kingdom because it has a relatively low Employment Protection Legislation (EPL), which limited employees to voice opinions. In Finland, there was a negative relationship between workplace freedom of speech and articulated dissent and a positive relationship with latent dissent. Results in Spain were nonsignificant. In Spain, the low dissent and workplace freedom of speech could be attributed to its economic crisis (Croucher, et al., 2014).

As the decision to express dissent is influenced by individual, organizational, and relational factors, it is hard to predict dissent in different culture. The following question is posed to investigate the difference in dissent in the US, Japan, China, and Korea:

*RQ1*: To what extent will organizational dissent differ between the US, Japan, China, and Korea?

## **Humor**

Humor is inextricably interwoven with life from the start of our existence. Humor is “defined as intentional verbal and nonverbal messages which elicit laughter, chuckling, and other forms of spontaneous behavior taken to mean pleasure, delight, and/or surprise in the targeted receiver” (Booth–Butterfield, S., & Booth–Butterfield, M., 1991, p. 206). Researchers have divided humor into three categories, the biological, the psychological, and the cross-cultural. First, one possesses the capacity of a sense of humor biologically though every human possesses this character differently, one will become more humorous than another as one gets older and learns more to develop his/her sense of humor in life. Second, humor is psychological. People have different interpretation of other’s actions as humorous, funny, or offensive, depending on perceived intention of a speaker (Ojha & Holmes, 2010). Humor can change the dynamics of situational experiences. That is, we can use humor to feel superior to another person or feel superior as compared to a previous moment (Freud, 1960). Third, humor is a phenomenon present in all cultures, including organizations (Chapman & Foot, 1976; Kreps, Herndon, & Arneson, 1993, Ojha & Holmes, 2010, p. 281).

As humor is a part of everyday life, it is typical to see the communicative phenomenon of humor within organizations (Ojha & Holmes, 2010). In an organizational context, humor “consists of amusing communications that produce positive emotions and cognitions in the individual, group, or organization” (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006, p. 59). It is used strategically to serve various kinds of functions at work. Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003) developed a measure of four humor styles: self-enhancing, affiliative, aggressive, and self-defeating, depending on different purposes of using humor. Self-Enhancing humor is used for coping with stress. Affiliative humor is used to enhance social interaction, like funny stories.



Individuals who employ aggressive humor often aim to manipulate others by means of an implied threat, while people use mild aggressive humor to communicate a forceful reprimanding message but with a humorous and positive tone. People who utilize self-defeating humor are to amuse and seek acceptance from others by reducing their status level and make themselves more approachable (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006).

Humor can also serve the function of expressing disagreement and conflict without negative affect since the message is delivered in a playful manner (Martin et al., 2003). In the process of using humor to express disagreement, people attempt to control the impressions others form of them when considering potential benefits and harms of those disagreement (Kassing & Armstrong, 2002). As expressing dissent has a potential risk of retaliation, individuals will assess how their expression of dissent will be perceived and how likely retaliation will be. This assessment impacts the decision to express dissent (Kassing, 1997).

Martin and Sullivan (2013) found there was effect of nationality on humor generation/use in social situations. Though the UK, the US, and Australians are all identified as individualistic cultures, they value humor differently and they have different tendency towards using humor. UK participants held significantly more negative views of humorous people than did Australians and also reported using humor in social situations significantly less often than did US Americans. Thus, individuals in the US and the three East Asian countries might be different in expressing organizational humor. Therefore, to better understand the expression of humor, the following question is proposed:

*RQ2: To what extent will humor differ between the US, Japan, China, and Korea?*

As humor provides an indirect and safe way to dissent, it can be used to express dissenting messages in organizations (Taylor & Bain, 2003). Sollitto and Myers (2015) showed a positive relationship between humorous messages and dissent messages. However, that research line is not about how an individual's humor orientation relates to their tendency to dissent in different cultures.

Considering how disagreements are more appreciated in individualistic cultures (i.e., the US) than in collectivist cultures (i.e., Korea, Japan and China), individuals in the US and the three East Asian nations might have different propensities for humor. Though the three East Asian cultures all are influenced by Confucianism, they developed their own features influenced by globalization and cultural changes (Zhang et al., 2005). Thus, the following research question investigates whether nationality and different forms of collectivism influence organizational dissent and humor.

*RQ3:* To what extent are humor and organizational dissent related in the US, Japan, China, and Korea?

## Method

### Participants and Procedures

In total, 1023 people participated in the study: China ( $n = 408$ ), Korea ( $n = 165$ ), Japan ( $n = 150$ ), and the United States ( $n = 300$ ). See Table 1 for demographics by nation. Data were mostly collected through standardized self-administered questionnaires. Participants were recruited through social networks who distributed links to the online survey and/or a paper version of the survey to colleagues at various corporations in each nation. As a snowball sampling is used, many of respondents sent out surveys to their colleges or friends. Each participant was currently employed.

**Table 1**

Demographics of Participates by Nation

Variable	Range	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		<u>China</u>		
Sex				
Male		175		
Female		220		
Missing		13		
Age	18-57		27.27	7.20

Tenure		377	1.50	1.50
		<u>Korea</u>		
Sex				
Male		97		
Female		68		
Age	18-57		28.30	9.80
Tenure		165	2.07	1.64
		<u>Japan</u>		
Sex				
Male		79		
Female		71		
Age	18-57		29.28	8.43
Tenure		150	2.10	1.75
		US		
Sex				
Male		146		
Female		154		
Age	18-69		30.21	9.87
Tenure		300	1.83	1.77

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### **Instruments**

The survey consists of demographic questions, a measure of organizational dissent and humor orientation. Surveys were originally prepared in English. They were then translated into Chinese, Korean, and Japanese by native bilingual speakers of each language. Surveys were then back-translated into English to check for accuracy. Inter-coder reliability of all translations were checked for accuracy using Cohen's Kappa. The kappas for each translation are: .86 for Chinese, .80 for Korean, and .83 for Japanese. See Table 2 for the means, standard deviations, and correlations among all study variables.

### **Organizational Dissent Scale**

The 18-item organizational dissent scale is adapted from the 24-item organizational dissent scale (Kassing, 1998), which assesses how individuals express contradictory opinions and disagreements about organizational policies, practices or operations verbally. Kassing's (1998) scale measures three types of dissent: articulated, displaced, and latent dissent. However, displaced dissent is excluded in this study because this study focused solely on dissent expressed within the organization. Therefore, this scale included only 18 of the original 24 items. All items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree* (Kassing, 1998). Sample items include "I do not question management," and "I join in when other employees complain about organizational changes" (Kassing, 1998). The scale was reliable in each nation. For articulated dissent: China ( $\alpha = .79$ ), Japan ( $\alpha = .75$ ), Korea ( $\alpha = .77$ ), and US ( $\alpha = .89$ ), and for latent dissent: China ( $\alpha = .76$ ), Japan ( $\alpha = .72$ ), Korea ( $\alpha = .75$ ), and US ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

**Table 2**

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations Associated with Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)
<u>Entire Sample</u>					
(1) Articulated Dissent	2.77	.44	—		
(2) Latent Dissent	2.58	.43	.28**	—	
(3) Humor	2.96	.33	.02	.20**	—
<u>China</u>					
(1) Articulated Dissent	2.67 <sub>abc</sub>	.51	—		
(2) Latent Dissent	2.52 <sub>d</sub>	.53	.10	—	
(3) Humor	2.94 <sub>ef</sub>	.38	-.10	.01	—
<u>Korea</u>					
(1) Articulated Dissent	2.77 <sub>a</sub>	.37	—		
(2) Latent Dissent	2.59	.32	.50**	—	
(3) Humor	3.04 <sub>egi</sub>	.24	.05*	.42**	—

Japan

(1) Articulated Dissent	2.85 <sub>b</sub>	.43	—		
(2) Latent Dissent	2.61	.41	.49**	—	
(3) Humor	2.86 <sub>fgh</sub>	.31	.22**	.47**	—
<u>US</u>					
(1) Articulated Dissent	2.82 <sub>c</sub>	.35	—		
(2) Latent Dissent	2.64 <sub>d</sub>	.33	.51**	—	
(3) Humor	2.98 <sub>hi</sub>	.31		.20**	.46**

*Note:* Subscripts signify significant differences based on Tukey's post-hoc analysis ( $p < .05$ ).

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Humor Orientation Scale**

The humor orientation scale (Booth-Butterfield, S., & Booth-Butterfield, M., 1991) measures an individual's orientation or tendency to use humor successfully in a list of social situations. The scale items mainly ask one question: Do you use humor regularly and effectively in your communication from perspectives of respondents and their friends? To be specific, all items are respondents' perception of their humor and their friends' ideas as to what extent they use humor regularly and successfully. The approach measures a person's and his/her friends' sense of what variations are perceived or labeled as humorous. All items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from (1) *strongly agree* to (5) *strongly disagrees*. Sample items include "I regularly tell jokes and funny stories when I am with a group" "People don't seem to pay close attention when I tell a joke" (Booth-Butterfield, S., & Booth-Butterfield, M., 1991). The scale was reliable in each nation: China ( $\alpha = .82$ ), Japan ( $\alpha = .79$ ), Korea ( $\alpha = .80$ ), and US ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

Participants were also asked a series of demographic questions, such as sex, age, organizational tenure, and they were asked to choose the type of organization in which they

work (state-owned enterprises, private owned enterprises, or foreign-invested enterprises). These three identified organizational forms, in China in particular, are classified on the basis of forms of ownership, which might influence organizational dissent patterns.

## Results and Analysis

### Research Question 1 and 2

*RQ1* asked the extent to which dissent would differ between the US, Japan, China, and Korea, while *RQ2* asked the extent to which humor would differ between these four nations. A MANCOVA was conducted to explore the extent of group differences. In this case, the fixed factor was nation, the dependent variables were articulated dissent, latent dissent, and humor, and the covariate was organizational tenure. Tenure was added as a covariate as tenure has been shown in numerous studies to significantly influence an individual's willingness to express voice in an organization (Kassing & Armstrong, 2001). Regarding the covariate tenure, it did not have a significant effect on the dependent variables,  $F(3, 974) = 1.15, p = .33$ . Using Pillai's trace, there was however a significant effect of nation on articulated dissent, latent dissent, and humor,  $V = .06, F(9, 2928) = 6.92, p < .001$ . Separate univariate ANOVAs on the outcome variables revealed significant differences effects of national group on articulated dissent,  $F(3, 976) = 9.68, p < .0001$ , on latent dissent,  $F(3, 976) = 5.19, p < .001$ , and on humor,  $F(3, 976) = 8.86, p < .001$ .

### Research Question 3

To test the research question, Pearson correlations were conducted. The results (Table 2) reveal humor is positively correlated with latent dissent ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ) among the entire sample, but not significantly correlated with articulated dissent ( $r = .02$ ). In the Korea sample, humor is positively correlated with articulated dissent ( $r = .05, p < .05$ ) and positively correlated with latent dissent ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ). In the Japanese sample, humor is positively correlated with articulated dissent ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ) and positively correlated with latent dissent ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ). In the US sample, humor is also positively correlated with articulated dissent ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ).

01) and positively correlated with latent dissent ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ). In the Chinese sample, humor was non-significantly correlated with articulated dissent ( $r = -.10$ ) and latent dissent ( $r = .01$ ).

## **Discussion**

### **Contributions and Implications**

The purpose of this study in the US and three East Asia nations was fourfold. First, this study aims to explore the correlation between organizational dissent and humor orientation in international setting. Previous study showed a positive relationship between humorous messages and dissent messages (Sollitto & Myers, 2015), but not about how an individual's humor orientation relates to their tendency to dissent in different cultures. This study represented an exploratory attempt to establish a link between them. The findings revealed various relationships between them. For the entire sample, the results reveal humor is positively correlated with latent dissent, but not significantly correlated with articulated dissent. For each sample, both articulated and latent dissent are positively related to humor in the US, the Korean, and the Japanese sample, while in Chinese sample, humor was non-significantly correlated with articulated dissent and latent dissent. The inconsistency could be explained by different cultural attitudes towards humor. Though Chinese people are endowed with a deep-seated humor (Wells, 1971), they seem to deliberately de-emphasize humor in life because humor is typically expressed in a very latent, constrained, and suppressed manner, which is coupled with Confucian social ethics theory, including conservatism and "decorum" (Nevo et al., 2001). The only exception is in art and literature where humor is given free reign (Zhang, 2005; Nevo et al., 2001). One interesting finding is that humor is correlated highest with both articulated and latent dissent in the Japanese sample, which is much closer to the correlation rates in American sample than the rest East Asian nations. It doesn't make sense based on the rationale that the three nations should share more behaviors because of closeness of geographical positions and culture (all are identified collectivistic culture). Possible explanations

could be Japan is influenced mostly by American culture among the three East Asian nations, as Japan was the earliest to start industrialization among them. This finding extended our understanding on Hofstede's cultural dimensions. There should be no strict division between collectivistic culture and individualistic culture, because there are some cultures upholding both characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic culture. As there are identified collectivistic countries have been undergoing fundamental transformations of both economy and culture, like Japan, which resembles more individualistic country, like the US, than identified collectivistic country, China and Korea, in terms of the correlation between humor and organizational dissent orientation.

Second and third, this study explored differences in organizational dissent and workplace freedom between the four nations. MANCOVA analyses reveal nationality to have a significant effect on organizational dissent (articulated and latent) and humor. The last but not the least, the study extends the understanding of tenure's influence on dissent (articulated and latent dissent). There is consensus on tenure's significant influence on organizational dissent (Kassing & Armstrong, 2001). In this study, it reveals that tenure has no significant influence on dissent.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

A limitation of the study could be sample selection. In this study, the Chinese sample doesn't help understand the relationship between humor and dissent, because humor is used in a latent and suppressed way (Xu, 2004). In a future study, whether people in some nations use humor widely or not should be taken into consideration before exploring its relation with other variables. Moreover, future research should consider the potential influence of subculture and cultural transformation on organizational dissent and humor.

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