

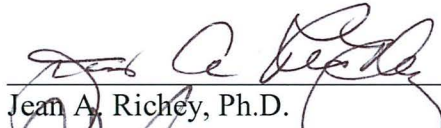
EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES' LOCUS OF CONTROL,
INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM ORIENTATION, AND UPWARD DISSENT

MESSAGE STRATEGIES

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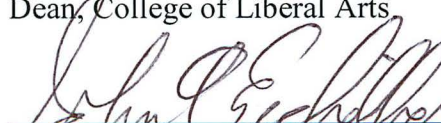


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A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty

of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2014

Abstract

This thesis investigated the relationships among individualism and collectivism, locus of control, and upward dissent. Students at a northwestern university were asked to complete a survey that measured the participants' levels of individualism and collectivism, locus of control orientation, and self-reported use of upward dissent message strategies. As predicted, internal locus of control and individualism were significant positive predictors of upward dissent. Unexpectedly, however, external locus of control and collectivism were also significant positive predictors of upward dissent. The research questions concerned the ability to predict the use of particular upward dissent message strategies. Use of each of the four strategies could be predicted from employees' locus of control and individualism and collectivism orientation.

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Acknowledgments

Free rein from your old iron fences
There's more ways than one to regain senses
Break out the stalls and live like wild horses

Kevin

Courtney

Pete and Jean

Erik and Mary

Chresten and Anne

Mads

Mom and Dad

Tak

I am also grateful to all of those who expressed superficial views. Because of them, I now know
the powers of thought.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Organizational dissent refers to the employee's method of verbally expressing contradictory opinions or disagreement over organizational policies and practices (Kassing, 1997), and can be construed "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). The role of dissent in the workplace has been investigated numerous times (e.g., Croucher et al., 2009; Goodboy, Chory, & Dunleavy, 2008; Kassing & Kava, 2013; Payne, 2007; and Shahinpoor & Matt, 2007), and is an important form of workplace communication. Employee dissent offers valuable feedback regarding discontent and unethical practices, and offers a possibility for development and innovation within the organization (Kassing, 2011a).

Dissent is one of the most important forms of workplace communication because it offers valuable feedback to the organization regarding employees' perceptions of the organization's practices and policies. To benefit from this form of feedback, an organization has to create a climate that encourages, welcomes, and tolerates upward¹ dissent (Kassing & Kava, 2013). According to Kassing, Piemonte, Goman and Mitchell (2012), dissent expression is dependent on a complex set of variables, a phenomenon that "take[s] into account individual, relational, and organizational factors" (p. 49).

The organizational dissent literature has explored casual variables such as communication patterns (Buckner, Ledbetter & Bridge, 2013), intention to leave and work engagement (Kassing et al., 2012), dissent triggering events (Kassing, 2008), locus of control (LOC) (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001), and workplace freedom of speech (Kassing, 2000a).

Much research has examined how various communication traits relate to organizational dissent (e.g., Goodboy et al., 2008; Kassing, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2008; Kassing & Armstrong 2001, 2002; Kassing & Avtgis, 1999, 2001; Kassing & DiCioccio, 2004). One area of research has been the relationship between organizational dissent and control expectancies, i.e., the individual's generalized expectancies regarding forces that determine punishments and rewards (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001). Individuals' control expectancies naturally differ, which can influence their strategy for displaying dissent. While Kassing and Avtgis (2001) showed a relationship between control expectancies and organizational dissent, they also suggested that control orientation did not only function as an isolated variable. They proposed that other personality characteristics and communication traits contribute to how an employee chooses to express dissent within an organization. Furthermore, they suggested that these personality characteristics and communication traits should be considered in combination with LOC in future dissent research (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001).

A review of the literature shows that there have been no studies on LOC expectancies and dissent expression combined with other personality traits. Thus, there is great potential to advance research on the relationship between organizational dissent, LOC, and a third personality trait such as individualism and collectivism orientation (IC orientation). The expansion of organizational dissent studies related to an individual's LOC and IC orientation is therefore a great opportunity to understand dissent expression in depth.

Scholars have argued that dissent is an important area of research, hence dissent is important for an organization's success as well as the individual employee's job satisfaction (e.g., Avtgis, Thomas-Maddox, Taylor & Patterson, 2007; Hegstrom, 1990; Redding, 1985; Stanley, 1981), yet LOC and IC orientation have not been jointly studied. Recent interest for

communication scholars has been to examine the reasons why employees communicate dissent (Kassing, 2005, 2007). The present thesis adds to the growing body of research examining upward dissent message strategies (UDMS) resulting from perceptions of LOC and IC orientation. The father of organizational communication, Charles Redding (1985), recognized the need for organizations to acknowledge and foster dissent and encouraged students to study dissent behavior in organizations. This thesis is a response to his call. It is an attempt to explore how UDMS relates to LOC and IC orientation.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Dissent

2.1.1 Defining organizational dissent. Dissent refers to the act of expressing disagreement or having a contradictory opinion about organizational practices, policies and procedures or operations (Kassing, 1998). There are three vital aspects to the definition of dissent: Dissent has to be expressed to someone, dissent has to include disagreement or different opinions, and the disagreement or different opinions must concern organizational practices, policies, and procedures or operations (Croucher, Kassing & Diers-Lawson, 2013). Dissent expression can be seen as one of the most important concerns of organizational communication scholars because of the significance of rhetorical freedom (Hegstrom, 1990). Kassing (2002) defined dissent as “a particular form of employee voice that involves the expression of disagreement or contradictory opinions about organizational practices and policies” (p. 189).

2.1.2 Types of dissent. Dissent expression is determined by whom the dissent is directed to. So far three forms of dissent have been identified and differentiated by whom receives the dissent: lateral dissent (dissent expression towards coworkers with similar rank within the organization), displaced dissent (dissent expression towards family or friends outside the organization), and upward dissent (dissent expression towards managers or supervisors) (Avtgis et al., 2007; Croucher et al., 2009; Kassing, 2000a, 2002; Kassing & DiCioccio, 2004).

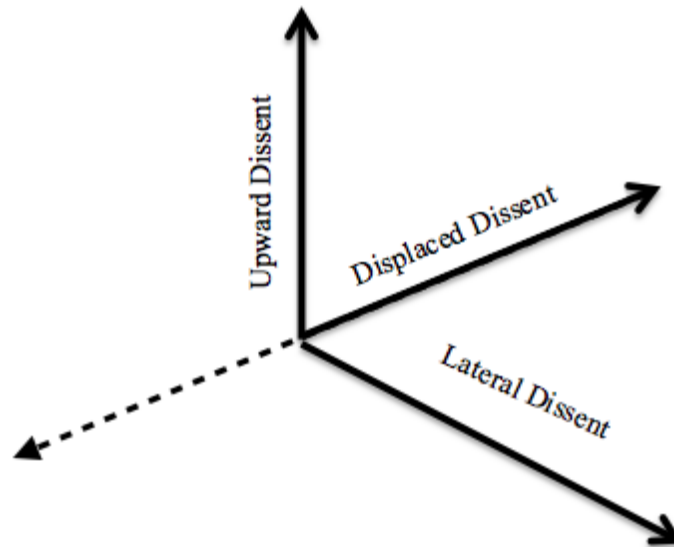


Figure 1 Illustration of the Directionality of Dissent

2.1.2.1 Lateral dissent. According to Kassing (2000a), lateral dissent “occurs when employees desire to voice their opinions, but lack sufficient avenues to express themselves to management” (Kassing, 2000a, p. 388). Lateral dissent happens when employees believe that their dissent will be perceived as adversarial, if communicated upward (Kassing, 1997).

Consequently, the dissent is expressed towards coworkers of same rank or level (Kassing, 1998).

2.1.2.2 Displaced dissent. According to Kassing (1998), displaced dissent “occurs when employees believe their [upward] dissent [...will be] perceived as adversarial and most likely will lead to some form of retaliation” (Kassing, 1998, p. 192). Consequently, the employee expresses dissent towards external organizational groups such as non-work friends and family members (Kassing, 1997). Displaced dissent therefore entails disagreeing with organizational policies and practices without confronting or challenging supervisors or managers.

2.1.2.3 Upward dissent. According to Kassing (1997), upward dissent “occurs when employees express their dissent within organizations to audiences that have the power to

influence organizational adjustment” (Kassing, 1997, p. 326). Thus, upward dissent is dissent expressed to supervisors or managers that have the ability to influence organizational policies and practices. Upward dissent occurs when employees believe that their dissent will be perceived as constructive, and when the employees believe that he or she will not be retaliated against for expressing dissent (Kassing, 1997, 1998).

2.1.2.3.1 Types of upward dissent. Kassing and Kava (2013) found that upward dissent can be measured along four dimensions: prosocial, threatening resignation, circumvention, and repetition. Upward dissent is defined as the selection of upward channels for dissent expression, meaning that the employee chooses to express dissent to whom they perceive can effectively influence organizational adjustment (Kassing & Armstrong, 2002). Kassing and Avtgis (2001) found that the employee’s control orientation influences the choice of strategy the employee uses when expressing dissent. Furthermore, Kassing and Avtgis (2001) found that the employee’s perceptions of workplace freedom of speech and their levels of organizational identification are significant for their strategies in expressing dissent messages. Kassing (2000b) found an existing significant relationship between workplace freedom of speech and employee’s levels of organizational upward dissent, thus, employees’ levels of identification and upward dissent expression differ as a function of workplace freedom of speech. Kassing and Kava (2013) found that there is a considerable variation in UDMS, which is caused by circumstances, situations, personalities, and relationships that constitutes for the environment where the UDMS occurs. These strategies offer a range of behavior that differs in terms of use and apparent proficiency (Kassing & Kava, 2013).

2.1.2.3.2 Prosocial strategy. The prosocial strategy was originally divided into two categories: direct-factual appeal that involves the dissenter supporting the upward dissent

with evidence along with first-hand knowledge, and secondly a solution-based presentation which focusses on providing a solution to the problem that the upward dissent was concerned about, rather than just complaining about it. As both strategies stem from a prosocial approach to upward dissent behavior, Kassing and Kava (2013) combined them. The prosocial strategy is perceived as the most competent one for the employee to use, and refers to a more proactive form of communication that uses a more active-constructive voice that seeks to address matters openly and constructively (Kassing & Kava, 2013).

2.1.2.3.3 Circumvention strategy. The circumvention strategy refers to an employee expressing dissent to someone with a higher status in the organization's hierarchy than the employee's immediate manager or supervisor. Circumvention is seen as risky and is therefore used less often, and most often occurs when the repetition strategy has been repeatedly ineffective over time (Kassing & Kava, 2013). Circumvention is used as a strategy when employees believe that their supervisor or manager is unresponsive, ineffective, overbearing and unfair in their treatment of the employee's dissent expression (Kassing, 2009b).

2.1.2.3.4 Threatening resignation strategy. Threatening resignation refers to an employee threatening to quit or resign because of the employee's fundamental disagreement with organizational policies and practices. Threatening resignation, like the circumvention strategy, is seen as particularly risky and is therefore used less often. As is the case with the circumvention strategy, the threatening strategy is used less frequently but its frequency increases when the prosocial and the repetition strategy are not working (Kassing & Kava, 2013). Threatening resignation is often used as a strategy in three different situations: when employees experience a challenge of their professional identity, when employees perceive an impasse with their

supervisor or manager, and when employees believe that their health and safety are at risk (Kassing, 2011a).

2.1.2.3.5 Repetition strategy. The repetition strategy refers to an employee raising a concern repeatedly on numerous different occasions in an attempt to attract attention to it. Repetition strategies are used less often than the prosocial strategies, but more often than less constructive ones such as threatening resignation (Kassing & Kava, 2013). Repetition is often used as a strategy when employees perceive that their supervisor or manager responds to their initial dissent expression with delaying tactics (Kassing, 2009a).

2.2 Upward Dissent Scale

The Upward Dissent Scale (UDS) was developed by Kassing and Kava (2013) and is an important diagnostic and heuristic tool which can assist organizations and dissent researchers in their study of dissent. In particular, the measure quantifies the amount of upward dissent occurring in the organization and measures how the dissent is expressed. As detailed above, dissent expression is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by individual, relational, and organizational variables (Kassing, 1997). The UDS captures these differences and allows the researcher to empirically examine the different phenomena, both jointly and in isolation (Kassing & Kava, 2013). The diagnostic possibilities for the organization using the UDS are extensive.

2.3 Factors Influencing Dissent Expression

Kassing (1997) argued that there are three factors that influence whether and how an employee will express dissent: individual factors, relational factors, and organizational factors.

2.3.1 Individual factors. Individual factors concern the preexisting qualities the employee brings to the organization, such as an individual's sense of power and sense of right and wrong

(Kassing & Avtgis, 1999). Kassing and Avtgis (1999) found that an individual's preexisting verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness have an influence on how the individual chooses to express dissent within the organization. In particular, they found that individuals who are more argumentative and less verbally aggressive used more upward dissent than lateral or displaced dissent. In addition, they found that individuals who were less argumentative chose to use a less aggressive strategy, such as lateral or displaced dissent. Kassing and Avtgis (2001) also examined how an individual's work LOC orientation influences dissent expression. They found that employees with an internal LOC used more upward dissent than employees with an external control, who used more lateral dissent. Their findings suggest that an employee's control orientation plays a role in what strategy the employee uses in expressing dissent (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001). An employee is more likely to use *upward* dissent strategies when he or she has a managerial position within the organization, is highly argumentative, has high-quality relationships with managers or supervisors, and believes that there is a high level of workplace freedom of speech within the organization (Kassing, 2000a, 2000b; and Kassing & Avtgis 1999). On the other hand an employee is more likely to use *lateral* dissent strategies when he or she has a non-management role, is highly verbally aggressive, has low-quality relationships with managers or supervisors, and believes that there is a low level of workplace freedom of speech within the organization (Kassing, 2000a, 2000b; and Kassing & Avtgis 1999). In addition, Kassing (1998) found that employee satisfaction, employee commitment, and employee perceptions of personal influence were positively related to upward dissent and negatively related to lateral dissent.

2.3.2 Relational factors. Relational influences are comprised of an employee's relationships with other employees within the organization. According to Kassing and Avtgis (1999)

employee relationships can influence how employees choose to express dissent. In addition the relationship an employee has with his or her manager or supervisor also determines how an individual chooses to express dissent. For an example, if an employee believes he or she has a higher quality relationship with his or her supervisor, the employee will be more willing to express upward dissent than an employee who believes he or she has a low quality relationship with his or her supervisor. Lastly, an employee who sees that his or her supervisor uses upward dissent successfully will be more willing to use upward dissent him or herself (Kassing & Avtgis, 1999).

2.3.3 Organizational factors. Kassing (2000a) argued that an employee's perceptions of workplace freedom of speech are positive related to his or her level of organizational identification and therefore his or her strategies for expressing dissent (Kassing, 2000a). Kassing found that employees who perceive more freedom of speech in their workplace will identify themselves more with the organization, than employees who perceive less workplace freedom of speech. Thus, employees who perceive more freedom of speech in their workplace will use upward dissent. The results also indicated that a significant positive relationship existed between workplace freedom of speech and employees' levels of organizational identification. Employees' identification states and dissent expression differ as a function of workplace freedom of speech. In addition, an organization that limits the opportunities of voicing opinions will result in employees choosing lateral dissent strategies (Kassing & Avtgis, 1999).

2.4 Consequences of Dissent Expression

2.4.1 Individual consequences. Expressing dissent within an organization can pose negative consequences for the employee (i.e., damage the employee's professional career or organizational status) (Kassing, 2011b). In addition, according to Kassing (1997) the employee

will always feel some fear that he or she will be retaliated against after expressing dissent. Garner (2012) found that many organizations penalize employees for expressing dissent and see dissent as unnecessary, which leads to employees remaining silent in fear of sanctions (Garner, 2012). On the other hand, expressing upward dissent can be seen as a signal and act of commitment from the employee to the organization's goals, policies and procedures. By expressing upward dissent, the employee creates and maintains impressions that support the organizational success, and can position himself or herself to receive impression management outcomes (i.e., material and social benefits, desired identities, and esteem enhancement) (Kassing & Armstrong 2002).

2.4.2 Relational consequences. Dissent expression can have negative consequences for the employee's relationships within the organization (i.e., potentially put workplace relations at risk) (Kassing, 2011b). Dissent expression can also have positive consequences for the employee. For example, Kassing and Armstrong (2002) found that employees who expressed *upward* dissent were perceived to be more satisfied and more identified with the organization, and also had a higher quality relationship with their manager or supervisor, compared to employees who expressed *lateral* dissent.

2.4.3 Organizational consequences. According to Kassing and Armstrong (2002) expressing *upward* dissent is potentially beneficial for the organization and for the individual. Benefits of *upward* dissent can likely include the identification of problems and issues before they become harmful to the organization; the potential for innovation, and increased employee job satisfaction; and organizational identification and intra organizational relational quality (Kassing, 2011a).

Whistleblowing is a subset of organizational dissent and involves reporting organizational wrongdoing either inside or outside of the organization. It is the employee's contra-dictionary opinion on the organization's standard practices, policies, and procedures. In particular, whistleblowing refers to a deliberate act of disclosure made by a person (with access to data or information of an organization concerning illegality or other wrongdoing) to an external entity that has the potential to rectify the wrongdoing (Jubb, 1999). Whistleblowing is expressing dissent. However, not all dissent is considered whistleblowing, which, therefore, can be seen as merely one form of organizational dissent expression. Whistleblowing often signals that the organization's internal mechanisms in addressing other forms of dissent have failed (Kassing, 2011a).

2.5 Individualism and Collectivism

The construct of IC orientation is concerned with how individuals fundamentally live their lives socially; whether they believe themselves to be individualistic, or more collectively as members of groups. The concept, which is an integral part of the sociologist Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, can be applied when the researcher wants to compare cultural trends between cultures, and when the researcher wants to compare individuals' social ways of thinking (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkow, 2010).

2.6 Defining Individualism and Collectivism

2.6.1 Individualism. The common, broad definition of individualism is a way of interacting where individuals are autonomous, and where everyone is expected to look after themselves and their closest family (Kim et al., 1994; Triandis, 2001). Individualism is understood as social patterns where individuals see themselves as independent of collectives and are motivated by their own preferences, rights, and needs. Priority is given to personal goals, and whether or not to

associate with others is decided in accordance with rational analyses of advantages and disadvantages (Triandis, 1995). In broad terms an individualistic culture is one where the goals and needs of the individual precede the goals and needs of the in-group (Freeman, 1997).

2.6.2 Collectivism. In contrast to individualism, collectivism is a way of interacting where individuals are group oriented, and where everyone is expected to look after one another as well as their extended family (Kim et al., 1994). In collectivistic cultures individuals are motivated by norms of the collective, and priority to the goal of the collective is given over personal goals (Triandis, 1995). In broad terms, a collectivistic culture is one where personal goals and needs are subordinate to the goals and needs of the in-groups (Freeman, 1997).

2.7 Differentiating Between Individualism and Collectivism at the Cultural and Individual Level

Individualism and collectivism manifest differently at the cultural and individual level (Realo, Allik, & Vadi, 1997). The constructs of individualism and collectivism provide a way of characterizing the broad and often diffuse concept of culture (which will be discussed later in this thesis). With the notion that there are multiple dimensions of individualism and collectivism Triandis and colleagues (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998; and Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) found that different cultures are either more horizontal (valuing equality) or more vertical (emphasizing hierarchy).

Research has measured an individual's orientation towards individualism and collectivism. For example, Singelis (1994) studied theoretical and measurement distinctions between vertical and horizontal aspects of both individualism and collectivism, and developed the Self-Construal Scale, which is a self-report measure of an individual's IC orientation.

Singelis and Brown (1995) developed a theoretical framework that linked IC orientation on a cultural level to IC orientation on an individual level. They argued that to fully understand cultural influences on communication, future researchers should examine how culture affects psychological processes on the individual level and how these processes affect communication behaviors. Singelis and Brown (1995) argued that the Self-Construal Scale is ideal for linking culture to behavior, which is one objective of the present thesis. Triandis and Gelfand (1998) developed a short version of Singelis's (1994) Self-Construal Scale, which is utilized in the present thesis.

Singelis, Bond, Sharkey and Lai (1999) studied the notion that individuals hold two different views of themselves in which members of collectivistic cultures have a stronger interdependent image of self and members of individualistic cultures have a stronger independent image. In research on the relationship between independent and interdependent self-esteem, Singelis et al. (1999) found that the independent and less interdependent self-construal predicted higher levels of self-esteem.

2.8 Contrasting Individualism and Collectivism

Ho and Chiu (1993) contrasted IC orientation along 5 dimensions: values, autonomy and conformity, responsibility, achievement, and self-reliance and interdependence (Kim et al., 1994). Their analysis showed that individualism and collectivism are multidimensional constructs, where each of the orientations embodies a constellation of component ideas. In addition, the two constructs are distinct, but vary along the same continuum (Kim et al., 1994).

2.8.1 Values. Individualism refers to the notion that individual values have precedence over collective values. In individualistic cultures every individual is unique and tends to develop to

his or her fullest potential, and each person's identity is defined by personal attributes and self-concepts (Kim et al., 1994). In contrast, collectivism refers to the notion that the group's values have precedence over individual values. In collectivistic cultures each person develops as a collective with less emphasis on individual values, and each person's identity is that of the in-group (Kim et al., 1994).

2.8.2 Autonomy and conformity. In individualistic cultures the judgments and decisions the individual makes tends to be independently made. The individual has the right to a private, free existence, and can, within limits, do whatever he or she chooses to do. Personal matters are kept strictly private, and the individual appreciates solitude (Kim et al., 1994). On the other hand, in collectivistic cultures, the collective provides group norms and demands compliance to maintain harmony. The individual's business is always the business of the collective. Personal matters are the matter of the collective and the public is encouraged to uphold justice. The individual appreciates being in the company of others (Kim et al., 1994).

2.8.3 Responsibility. In individualistic cultures the actions of the individual is solely the individual's moral and legal responsibility, which, therefore, also means that only the individual is affected (Kim et al., 1994). On the other hand, in collectivistic cultures, the actions of individuals are the moral and legal responsibility of the collective, which, therefore, also means that the collective assumes the consequences for the individual's actions (Kim et al., 1994).

2.8.4 Achievement. In individualistic cultures the individual's achievements are oftentimes independent of others. The individual's goals are frequently achieved through personal excellence or competition. On the other hand, in collectivistic cultures, the individual's

achievements are frequently dependent on the collective. The individual's goals tend to be those of the collective and are frequently achieved through conformity (Kim et al., 1994).

2.8.5 Self-reliance and interdependence. In individualistic cultures, the individual is responsible for his or her own well-being. Personal interests are what guide the individual's actions, and the individual finds security in his or her own strength. Any reward the individual might get tends to be dependent solely on the individual's performance. Policies, procedures, and laws protect the individual's rights, and the individual is largely in control of his or her own belief system (Kim et al., 1994). In contrast, in collectivistic cultures, the collective is broadly responsible for the individual's well-being, which in turn is dependent upon the well-being of the group. The collective guides individual actions and the goals of the collective takes precedence. The individual finds security in the group's solidarity and integrity. The individual shares wealth with the collective and believes that any reward is largely dependent on the collective. The collective's prerogatives precede individual rights. Policies, procedures, and laws protect and preserve the collective. The individual's religious convictions are those of others (Kim et al., 1994).

2.9 Understanding Individualism and Collectivism in Terms of the Four Kinds of Self.

Triandis (1995) described four kinds of self: horizontal individualism, horizontal collectivism, vertical individualism, and vertical collectivism (Triandis, 1995).

2.9.1 Horizontal versus vertical. Triandis & Gelfand (1998) found that individuals scoring high on the vertical dimensions tend to accept inequality and emphasize status, achievement, hierarchy, and competition. In contrast, individuals scoring high on the horizontal dimensions tend to value equality and freedom of the individual. Furthermore, Triandis (1995) argued that all

cultures have both some horizontal and some vertical individualists, and some horizontal and some vertical collectivists. However, he argued, there will always be a modal pattern in each culture with a characteristic distribution of individuals among the four types.

2.10 Consequences of Individualism and Collectivism

Few researchers have studied the consequences of individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1995). Thus, I approach the following section by examining the consequences for the individual, relational, intergroup, and group dynamics. I have chosen to examine the consequences of individualism and collectivism on topics relevant for this thesis.

2.10.1 Individual consequences. Triandis (1995) reported a positive relationship between individualism and the individual's sense of well-being. For example, he found that collectivistic countries (e.g. Japan, South Korea, and China) reported lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction than individualistic countries (e.g. USA, Australia, and United Kingdom). In addition, Triandis (1995) found that the term happiness was an individualistic concept and the term well-being was a collectivistic concept. Furthermore, he found that the individual in collectivistic countries were dependent on the collective for their well-being. In addition, Triandis (1995) found that individuals in the two kinds of cultures based their perceptions on the social environment on either individualistic or collectivistic notions (e.g. poorness is either due to the individual not being self-reliant or because of the government's incorrect policies). In terms of personality patterns, Triandis (1995) found that there were remarkable differences in the individual's personality profile based on his or her affiliation with either individualism or collectivism, and concluded that there were advantages in acculturation having a personality profile that matched a particular culture.

2.10.2 Relational consequences. Triandis (1995) found that individuals in collectivistic cultures tend to have few high intimate relationships, whereas individuals in individualistic cultures tend to have many low intimate relationships. Moreover he found that individuals in individualistic cultures tend to have many in-groups, which they enter and exit depending on individual wants and needs. In terms of conflict, Triandis (1995) found that conflict takes different forms in terms of probabilities.

Ting-Toomey and colleagues (Ting-Toomey, 1993, 1994a, 1994b; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991) reported the importance of face in collectivistic and individualistic cultures, and found that individualists are more concerned with saving their own face (self-face maintenance), whereas collectivists are more concerned with saving *both* their own face but also the face of others (other-face maintenance). Additionally, in individualistic cultures, self-face maintenance is often associated with a more dominant conflict style, whereas in collectivistic cultures, other-face maintenance is often associated with avoiding conflict (Ting-Toomey, 1993).

2.10.3. Intergroup consequences. In regards to communication patterns, collectivistic cultures tend to be high context, implicit, subjective, and normative; whereas communication in individualistic cultures tends to be more confrontational, informal, direct, and participative. In terms of intergroup conflict, individualistic cultures tend to focus on the end product and the communication emphasizes content, not context. In contrast, collectivistic cultures focus on the whole picture, and the communication emphasizes context more so than content (Triandis 1995).

2.10.4. Group dynamic consequences. IC orientation has also been linked to work group behavior (Erez and Early, 1993; and Erez, 1994). According to Erez and Early (1993), an individual's culture must be considered in order to predict whether or not a managerial behavior

is likely to be effective. Triandis (1995) argued that various diverse social behaviors can be explained by culture. In order to understand the often diffuse notion of culture, this thesis sought to describe the concept.

2.11 Defining Culture

Both personal characteristics and the environment influence an individual's UDMS. One's dissent expression is also likely influenced by one's environment such as culture. Spiro's (1951) view on culture suggests that an individual is driven not by 'culture' per se, but by his or her cognitive dispositions, which determines how an individual views himself or herself and others, and therefore how he or she perceives the surrounding world. Culture therefore becomes something that guides individual and collective behavior.

According to DeCaro (2013) culture can be described in three ways: as norms, beliefs and values. Cultural norms refer to the expectations and rules of behavior of the collective regarding what is proper or improper behavior in a situation (DeCaro, 2013). Beliefs include ones accepting of ideas and principles with or without evidence or verification by experience. Values, or value systems, refer to the individual's central generalized evaluations of right and wrong, which are used to judge the behavior of others and oneself. Values are a learned trait and a key part of the individual's life script (DeCaro, 2013). A culture's values and value system determines norms, which again determines the socially shared expectation of appropriate behavior. Therefore, beliefs, values and norms guide individual's social practices, and can be considered as a large portion of the individual's culture (DeCaro, 2013).

2.12 Culture as Determinant of Individualism and Collectivism

According to Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002), culture is a determinant for one's degree of IC orientation. Even though this thesis is not decidedly research with a focus on culture, the construct still has to be taken into consideration to understand variation in IC orientation.

IC orientation seems to play an important role in how the individual defines himself or herself (Triandis, 2001). For example, research by Triandis (2011) suggests that culture is a source of variation in the individualistic and collectivistic constructs. In particular, Triandis (1995) argued that one's IC orientation is influenced by two specific cultural syndromes: "cultural tightness versus looseness, and cultural complexity versus simplicity" (p. 52). Individualism is seen as a consequence of a loosely structured society and a high level of cultural complexity, whereas collectivism is seen as a consequence of a tightly structured society with a high level of cultural simplicity (i.e., one's culture influences one's beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and behaviors).

There are different kinds of social behaviors in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Such differences are most clear when individuals from a collectivistic culture (i.e., Japan) interact with people from an individualistic culture (i.e., USA) (Triandis, 1995). However, culture can be seen as more than just a determinant of IC orientation, and is in this thesis theorized to have an effect on an individual's LOC, as explained in the following.

2.13 Locus of Control

Locus of control is originated from personality psychology, and refers to the individuals beliefs in whether or not they can control events that affects their lives (Rotter, 1966).

2.14 Defining Locus of Control

Rotter (1966) defined LOC as:

...the degree to which the individual perceives that reward follows from, or is contingent upon his [or her] own behavior or attributes versus the degree to which he [or she] feels the reward is controlled by forces outside of him [or her] self and may occur independently of his [or her] own actions. (p. 1)

Generally speaking, individuals with an external LOC believe that outside parameters such as chance, luck, and powerful others control their lives, whereas those with an internal LOC believe their personal effort and ability determine the course of their lives. Important to note is that the two orientations are not dichotomous; individuals in general possess both internal and external viewpoints but in different degrees (Rotter, 1966).

2.14.1 Internal LOC. Internal LOC refers to the individual's perception that a happening is contingent upon his or her own behavior (Rotter, 1966). These individuals believe that they have a substantial influence over their lives and that their actions influence their outcomes. Typically these individuals believe that they are in control of their future, and that outcomes are directly related to their effort (McCarty & Shrum, 2001). Thus, an individual who holds an internal LOC orientation tends to look to themselves for direction (Spector, 1982).

2.14.2 External LOC. In contrast, external LOC refers to the individual's perception that the happening of an event is caused by luck, chance, fate, or powerful others (Rotter, 1966). These individuals believe that they are relatively powerless and have little or no influence over their outcomes (McCarty & Shrum, 2001). Thus, individuals who hold an external LOC orientation

tend to look to others for direction, and therefore tend to be more compliant followers (Spector, 1982).

2.15 Determinants of LOC

Levenson (1973a, 1973b, and 1974) found that individuals who were brought up in a more punishing and controlling-type environment had greater expectations of control by Powerful Others, while individuals who were brought up in a more unpredictable environment had stronger Chance subscale control orientations. In addition, Yamaguchi & Wiseman (2003) found that individuals with a more internal LOC orientation usually took the initiative in dealing with their encounters, which may increase their likelihood of attaining positive outcomes. In contrast, individuals with a more external LOC orientation tended to interact passively rather than actively.

LOC orientation can also be an indicator of an individual's political orientation. For example, Levenson and Miller (1976) found that liberals' expectancies of control by powerful others were positively related with increased activism, while there was a negative relationship for conservatives. Furthermore, LOC orientation can tell us about the individual's economical background (Levenson & Miller, 1976). Levenson and Miller (1976) also found that black students had stronger perceptions than whites that they were controlled by powerful others.

2.15.1 Culture as determinant for LOC. Research suggests that culture is also a determinant of LOC. For example, Cheng, Cheung, Chio, and Chan (2013) found that the cultural dimension of individualism and collectivism explained differences in LOC orientation. Moreover, Riordan (1981) found significant differences in LOC among different ethnic groups in South Africa. Similarly, Rieger and Blignaut (1996) found that there was a significant positive

correlation between an individual's individualism orientation and the individual's internal LOC. Unexpectedly, however, researchers did not find any significant correlation between an individual's collectivism orientation and the individual's external LOC (Rieger & Blignaut, 1996; Le Roux, Schmidt, & Schepers, 1997).

2.16 Consequences of LOC

Spector (1982) argued that LOC had a direct and powerful effect on organizations. He found that individuals with an internal LOC attempted to exert more control than those with an external LOC. Spector found this pattern manifested in many areas such as work-flow, task accomplishments, relationships with supervisors, goal settings, working conditions, etc. For example, Anderson and Schneier (1978) found that individuals with an internal LOC were more likely to emerge as group leaders than did those with an external LOC. Furthermore, they found that individuals with an internal LOC exhibited performance better in groups, than those with an external LOC.

Researchers have also studied the relationship between LOC and attributions. For example, LOC was found to affect communication patterns and strategies (e.g., Black, 1990; and Walton, 1990). Garcia and Levenson (1975) found that students from low-income families scored higher on the Chance scale than wealthier students. Mayer and Sutton (1996) found that an individual's information seeking is associated with the individual's LOC. They found that individuals with an internal LOC are more likely to seek out information because they believe that they are in charge of their own destiny. In contrast, individuals with an external LOC are less likely to seek out information because they believe that the act would not make a difference. In addition, research by Liebert & Liebert (1998) suggests that one's LOC effects academic achievement. In particular, Liebert and Liebert (1998) found that individuals with an internal

LOC were higher achievers compared to individuals with an external LOC, and that individuals with internal LOC also had higher achievement motivation than an individual with external LOC.

In regards to social influence, Ritchie and Phares (1969) found that individuals with an internal LOC were relatively uninfluenced by individuals who were perceived to be influential or knowledgeable, whereas individuals with an external LOC were more easily influenced by more prestigious others. In addition, Mayer and Sutton (1996) found that individuals with an internal LOC had more trust in their own decisions. In contrast, individuals with an external LOC were found to be less trusting of their own decisions, which could explain why individual's with an external LOC exercise more conformity (Mayer & Sutton, 1996). Research also suggests that LOC is linked to an individual's membership of social class. For example, Liebert and Liebert (1998) found that the more internal one's LOC, the higher one's social class tended to be. In contrast, the more external one's LOC, the lower one's social class tended to be.

According to Spector (1982) LOC "is an important variable for the explanation of human behavior in organizations" (p. 482). For example, Anderson and Schneider (1978) found that leaders were more likely to hold an internal LOC than non-leaders. In addition, they found that an internal LOC was associated with task-oriented and instrumental styles of leadership, whereas an external LOC was associated with a more socio-emotional style of leadership. In regards to job involvement and work satisfaction, employees with an internal LOC reported higher job involvement and work satisfaction than did employees with an external LOC (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001).

Spector (1982) further theorized that the nature of a job determines whether an individual with an internal LOC or external LOC would be best suited for a job. For example, he reasoned that individuals with an internal LOC would be expected to perform better in jobs requiring complex information processing, complex learning, initiative, independence of action, and high motivation. On the other hand, individuals with an external LOC would be expected to perform better in jobs requiring simple task performance, and full compliance. However, in today's organizations, both compliance and complex task performance are often required of the individual, which may lead to role conflict (e.g. the military, where both the internal's skills and the external's compliance is necessities). Spector (1982) suggested that future organizations develop a way to manage both sorts of individuals in complex jobs in order to allow the individual some level of personal control while also achieving the organization's goals and objectives.

2.17 Hypotheses and Research Questions

Building upon the work of Kassing and Avtgis (2001), who examined the relationship between LOC and the directionality of dissent behavior (i.e., Upward, Lateral, and Displaced), this thesis focused on the relationship between LOC and employees use of UDMS (Prosocial, Threatening Resignation, Circumvention, and Repetition).

2.17.1 Hypotheses. Figure 1 below summarizes how an individual's LOC orientation and IC orientation plays a role for the individual's UDMS. The model makes four major claims: Linking internal LOC and individualism as positive correlated with UDMS, and linking external LOC and collectivism as negative correlated with UDMS.

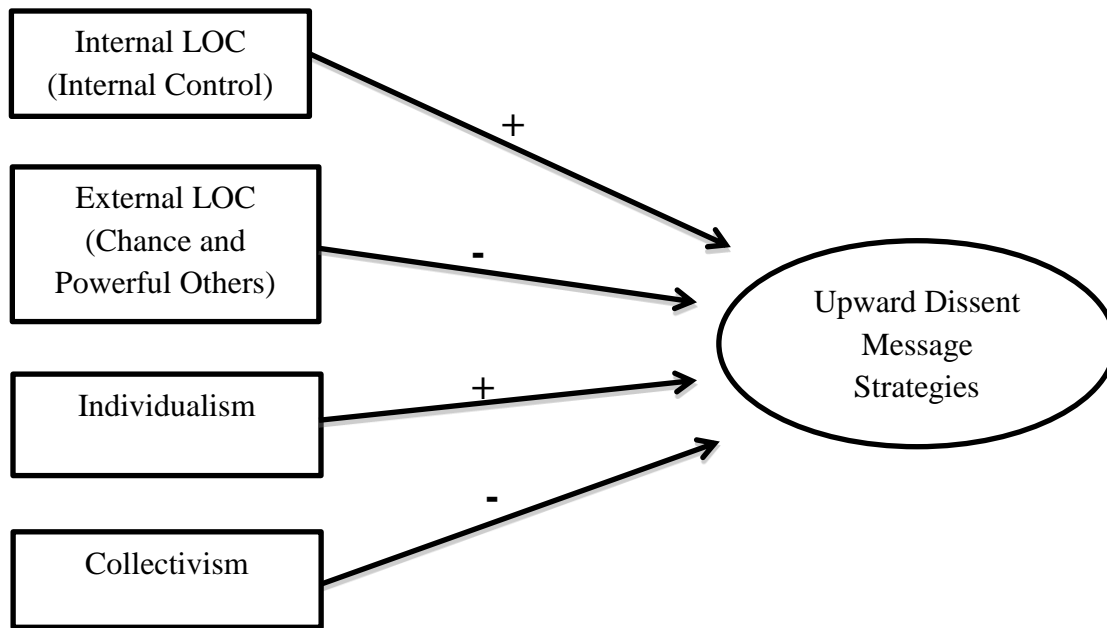


Figure 2 Illustration of the Hypothesized Relationship Between an Individual’s LOC Orientation, IC Orientation, and UDMS.

2.17.2 Linking internal LOC to use of upward dissent. Following the model shown in Figure 2, I theorized that individuals with an internal LOC will be more prone to exercise upward dissent. Consistent with my position, researchers have discovered that employees are more likely to express dissent in the upward direction when have an internal LOC (Kassing & Avtgis 2001), and have a high level of personal influence (Kassing, 1998). These findings suggest that there is a positive relationship between an employees’ internal LOC and his or her use of upward dissent. Thus, I advance the following hypothesis:

H1: An employee’s internal LOC is a significant positive predictor of his or her use of upward dissent.

2.17.3 Linking external LOC to use of upward dissent. Researchers have discovered that employees will choose avenues other than upward dissent strategies (i.e., lateral or displaced dissent), when they perceive that they possess poorer quality relationships with their supervisor (Kassing, 1998), and when they perceive that their organization has a low tolerance for employee feedback (Kassing, 2000a). Paradoxically, employees engaged in more lateral dissent when they perceived that their organization provided large amounts of information on how the decision processes are conducted in the organization (Goodboy et al., 2009). These findings, considered jointly, suggest the likelihood of a negative relationship between an employee's external LOC and the employee's use of upward dissent. Thus, I advance the following hypothesis:

H2: An employee's external LOC is a significant negative predictor of his or her use of upward dissent.

2.17.4 Linking individualism to use of upward dissent. Hornsey, Jetten, McAuliffe, and Hogg (2006) found that dissent is positively evaluated in groups that hold individualistic norms because these groups promote diversity and differences within the group. Moreover, they found that individualistic behavior within a group with individualist norms was seen to promote and produce social change, conflict resolution, innovation, and creativity (Hornsey et. al., 2006). They also claimed that individualism emphasizes independence and autonomy from groups, and values individual freedom and expression. In sum, in individualistic cultures, standing out and being different is frequently seen as a sign of character and courage (Hornsey et. al., 2006, and Hofstede et al., 2010). This suggests the likelihood of a positive relationship between the individual's individualism orientation and use of upward dissent. Thus, I advance the following hypothesis:

H3: An employee's individualism is a significant positive predictor of his or her use of upward dissent.

2.17.5 Linking collectivism to use of upward dissent. Researchers have found that dissent was negatively evaluated in groups that hold collectivist norms (Hornsey et. al., 2006, and Hofstede et al., 2010). The collectivistic nature emphasizes relationships, the maintenance of harmony, “sticking with” the group even though it is at the expense of personal costs, avoiding conflict, and saving face (Hornsey et. al., 2006; and Hofstede et al., 2010). In addition, individuals in collectivistic cultures expect unequal power distribution, and are unlikely to disagree with the decisions of managers or supervisors (Moody, Bebensee, & Carter, 2008). These findings suggest the likelihood of a negative relationship between the individual's collectivism orientation and use of upward dissent. Thus, I advance the following hypothesis:

H5: An employee's collectivism is a significant negative predictor of his or her use of upward dissent.

2.17.6 Research question. In addition to examining whether an individual's internal LOC, external LOC, individualistic orientation, and collectivistic orientation are significant predictors of upward dissent in general, I sought to determine whether these four variables were significant predictors of each of the four UDMS categories measured by the UDS (Kassing & Kava, 2013): Prosocial, Threatening Resignation, Circumvention, and Repetition. I chose to advance the following four research questions:

RQ1: Can an employee's use of the Prosocial UDMS be predicted from the employee's LOC and IC orientation?

RQ2: Can an employee's use of the Threatening Resignation UDMS be predicted from the employee's LOC and IC orientation?

RQ3: Can an employee's use of the Circumvention UDMS be predicted from the employee's LOC and IC orientation?

RQ4: Can an employee's use of the Repetition UDMS be predicted from the employee's LOC and IC orientation?

Chapter 3 Research Methodologies

3.1 Research Methods

3.1.1 Participants. The sample consisted of 256 students, both undergraduate and graduate, from a Northwestern university. Of the 256 students, 148 were female, 107 were male, and 1 did not report their biological sex. All participants were at least 18 years old, and ranged from 18-54 years of age ($M=21.47$, $SD=5.20$). The students described themselves as: White, non-Hispanic (71.1%); Alaska Native (5.1%); Multi-Racial (9.8%); Hispanic (4.3%); Black/African-American (3.1%); Asian (2.7%); American Indian (0.8%); Other (2.0%); and 3 (1.2%) did not report their race. The students reported they worked in the following occupations: Service Occupations (29.3%); Sales and Related Occupations (23.4%); Office and Administrative Support Occupations (18.8%); Professional and Related Occupations (13.3%); Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (3.5%); Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (3.1%); Management, Business, and Financial Occupations (2.7%); Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (2.7%); Construction and Extraction Occupations (2.3%); and 2 (0.8%) did not report their occupation. The surveys were administered in late fall of 2013 and early spring of 2014.

3.1.2 Procedures. Instructors of various undergraduate and graduate classes were contacted and asked to set aside 20-25 minutes of the class period for their students to voluntarily complete a paper and pencil survey. Some instructors gave extra credit for completing the questionnaire, whereas others did not. The questionnaire contained three separate sections: a section for those who were non-employed, a section for those who were employed, and a section for manager or supervisors. The questionnaire responses were manually entered into an SPSS data file and statistically analyzed. Relevant for the present thesis was the section for employed students.

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire booklet was comprised of several survey instruments and a set of demographic questions pertaining to age, race, biological sex, and occupational group (if applicable). Those respondents who classified themselves as employees were instructed to complete the 20-item version of the UDS (Kassing & Kava, 2013), the 16-item short version of Singelis's (1994) Self-Construal Scale (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998), the 9-item Brief LOC Scale (BLOC) (Sapp & Harrod, 1993), and other instruments not relevant to this particular thesis.

3.2.1 Upward dissent scale. The 20-item UDS (Kassing & Kava, 2013) measures how employees express dissent towards managers or supervisors. The measure uses a 9-point Likert-type format that ranges from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (9). The scale measures employee dissent along four dimensions; Prosocial (e.g., "I gather evidence to support my concern"), Threatening Resignation (e.g., "I say I'll quit if the organization doesn't do something about the problem"), Circumvention (e.g., "I talk to someone higher up in the organization than my direct supervisor"), and Repetition (e.g., "I bring up my concern numerous times") (Kassing & Kava, 2013, p. 56). Evidence for the reliability of the measure has been found in previous research (e.g., Kassing & Kava, 2013). In particular, Kassing and Kava (2013) found Cronbach's alpha values of .92 for the Prosocial subscale, .93 for the Threatening Resignation subscale, .82 for the Circumvention subscale, and .90 for the Repetition subscale (Kassing & Kava, 2013). A participant's scores on the entire UDMS and UDMS subscales were calculated by averaging the items within each scale or subscale.

3.2.2 IC orientation scale. The 16-item short version of Singelis's (1994) Self-Construal Scale (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) measures an individual's IC orientation. The measure uses a 9-point Likert-type format that ranges from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (9). The scale

measures individual IC orientation along four dimensions; Horizontal Individualism (e.g., “I’d rather depend on myself than others”), Vertical Individualism (e.g., “It is important that I do my job better than others”), Horizontal Collectivism (e.g., “If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud”), and Vertical Collectivism (e.g., “Parents and children must stay together as much as possible”) (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998, p. 120). Evidence for reliability of the measure has been found in previous research (e.g., Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Triandis and Gelfand’s (1998) found reliability coefficients ranging from .40-.68 for the Horizontal Individualism subscale, .45-.59 for the Vertical Individualism subscale, .49-.67 for the Horizontal Collectivism scale, and .45-.61 for the Vertical Collectivism subscale. In my data analysis, I averaged the Vertical Individualism and Horizontal Individualism items to yield mean Individualism scores. Similarly, I averaged the Vertical Collectivism and Horizontal Collectivism items to yield mean Collectivism scores.

3.2.3 LOC scale. Utilized in the present thesis was Sapp and Harrod’s (1993) shortened version of Levenson’s (1973a) original scale, which they named as the Brief LOC scale (or BLOC). Sapp and Harrod (1993) analyzed responses from 129 undergraduates, and found high reliability and construct validity for the condensed scale. The 9-item BLOC measures an individual’s control orientation, using a 9-point Likert-type format that ranges from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (9). The BLOC measures expectations of Internality (I) (i.e., the extent to which individuals believe that they have control over their own lives), Powerful Others (P) (i.e., the extent to which individuals believe that other people control their lives), and Chance (C) (i.e., the extent to which individuals believe that chance has an effect on their life outcomes). Example items from the three subscales are as follows: Internal Control (e.g., “My life is determined by my own actions”) (p. 542), Chance (e.g., “To a great extent, my life is controlled

by accidental happenings”) (p. 542), and Powerful Others (e.g., “People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests where they conflict with those of strong pressure groups”) (p. 542). Evidence for the BLOC’s reliability has been found in previous research (e.g., Sapp & Harrod, 1993). In the 1993 study, Sapp and Harrod found reliability coefficients of .58 for the Internal subscale, .65 for the Chance subscale, and .72 for the Powerful Others subscale

In the present study, Internal Control was measured using two of the three original items. One item was deleted (i.e., “I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life”) (Sapp & Harrod, 1993, p. 542), because its inclusion dramatically decreased the reliability of the Internal Control subscale. External Control was measured using the items from both the Chance and Powerful Others subscale. One item in the Powerful Others subscale was adapted (i.e., the word family was inserted in order to increase the scope of phenomena to which the scale applies). In addition, adding the word family made the item relate better to the Individualism and Collectivism scale, which also deals with the family concept. Participant’s Internal Control scale was determined by averaging the two remaining items in the subscale. Similarly, I averaged the Chance and Powerful Others items to yield mean External Control scores.

3.3 Statistical Analysis

Participant responses from the questionnaire booklet were analyzed using multiple regression. Multiple regression was chosen because I wanted to study the relationships between one criterion variable (upward dissent) and two predictor variables (LOC and IC orientation). Multiple regression was also used in order to determine whether upward dissent could be predicted from knowledge of an employee’s personal characteristics (Allison, 1999).

Chapter 4 Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1, which can be found in the appendices, presents a correlation matrix as well as means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha values for the variables analyzed.

4.2 Multiple Regression

Multiple regression was used to analyze the data. For the first regression analysis, the criterion variable was UDMS. A total of four predictors were entered: Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism. The model was statistically significant $F(4, 241) = 11.42, p < .001$, and explained 15.6% of the total variance in UDMS ($R^2 = .16$). H1 and H3 were supported. Specifically, Internal LOC was a significant positive predictor of UDMS ($\beta = .14, p = .038$), and Individualism was a significant positive predictor of UDMS ($\beta = .12, p = .044$). However, H2 and H4 were not supported. Unexpectedly, External LOC was a significant *positive* predictor of UDMS ($\beta = .30, p < .001$), and Collectivism was found to be a significant *positive* predictor of UDMS ($\beta = .23, p < .001$).

For the second regression analysis, the criterion variable was the Prosocial Strategy. Again, a total of four predictors were entered: Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism. Once again, the model was statistically significant $F(4, 241) = 10.76, p < .001$, and explained 15.1% of the total variance in use of the Prosocial Strategy ($R^2 = .15$). Although the model enabled prediction of the Prosocial Strategy, not all of an employee's personal characteristics were predictive in the manner anticipated. With regard to LOC orientation Internal LOC was a significant positive predictor of the Prosocial Strategy ($\beta = .22, p = .001$), but External LOC was not a significant predictor of the Prosocial Strategy ($\beta = .07, p = .277$).

Regarding IC orientation Individualism was a significant positive predictor of the use of Prosocial Strategy ($\beta = .15, p = .014$). However, Collectivism was a significant *positive* predictor of the use of Prosocial Strategy ($\beta = .23, p < .001$).

The third regression analysis had the Threatening Resignation Strategy as the criterion variable. The same four predictors were entered (Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism). The model was statistically significant $F(4, 241) = 9.16, p < .001$, and explained 13.2% of the total variance in the use of the Threatening Resignation Strategy ($R^2 = .13$). Although the model enabled prediction of the Threatening Resignation Strategy, not all of an employee's personal characteristics were predictive in the manner anticipated. Specifically, Internal LOC was a significant *negative* predictor of Threatening Resignation ($\beta = -.10, p = .456$), whereas External LOC was a significant *positive* predictor of Threatening Resignation ($\beta = .30, p < .001$). Individualism was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .10, p = .120$), and Collectivism was a significant *positive* predictor of Threatening Resignation ($\beta = .17, p = .006$).

For the fourth regression analysis, Circumvention was the criterion variable. Again, a total of four predictors were entered: Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism. The model was statistically significant $F(4, 241) = 4.93, p = .001$, and explained 7.6% of the total variance in the use of the Circumvention Strategy ($R^2 = .08$). Although the model enabled prediction of the Circumvention Strategy, not all of the employee's personal characteristics were predictive in the expected manner. Specifically, Internal LOC was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .11, p = .111$), whereas External LOC was a significant *positive* predictor of Circumvention ($\beta = .27; p < .001$). Individualism was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .01, p = .888$), and Collectivism was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .10, p = .123$).

The last regression analysis had the Repetition Strategy as the criterion variable. A total of four predictors were entered: Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism. The model showed to be statistically significant $F(4, 241) = 7.81, p < .001$. The model explained 11.5% of the total variance ($R^2 = .12$). All employee characteristics were significant positive predictors. Internal LOC was a significant positive predictor of Repetition ($\beta = .19, p = .006$), and External LOC was also a significant positive predictor of Repetition ($\beta = .18, p = .005$). Individualism was a significant positive predictor of Repetition ($\beta = .12, p = .048$), and Collectivism was a significant positive predictor of Repetition ($\beta = .19, p = .003$).

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Importance of Study

Sufficient communication, such as dissent, among the members of an organization is a necessity for effective organizational management. Dissent provides feedback regarding employee discontent, and offers the organization a possibility and an opportunity for improvement and innovation. However, the organization needs to be able to identify and tolerate the different UDMS. The present thesis has examined different employee characteristics that influence their use of UDMS. The present thesis builds on the research of Kassing and Kava (2013), and promotes the Upward Dissent Scale as an important diagnostic and heuristic tool.

5.2 Study Objectives

Prior to this thesis, no communication research has examined possible relationships among IC orientation, LOC and UDMS. The present thesis was designed to explore such relationships. To test for such relationships, participants were asked to complete a survey that measured IC orientation, LOC, and UDMS. The data were subjected to multiple regression analysis.

5.3 Hypotheses and Research Questions

I reasoned that those with a more internal LOC would be more prone to communicate their disagreement about organizational practices and policies with their manager or supervisor, because they believe that they can actively control their life outcomes. Thus, an employee's internal LOC was hypothesized to be positively related to overall use of upward dissent.

In contrast, I reasoned that those with a more external LOC would not express to their manager or supervisor their disagreement over organizational policies and practices because they believe that they are relatively powerless and have little influence over their life outcomes. Thus, an employee's external LOC was hypothesized to be negative related to upward dissent.

Furthermore, I reasoned that those with an individualistic orientation would willingly express their disagreement with organizational policies and practices to their manager or supervisor, because they prioritize their own rights and needs, and they believe that their own goals takes precedence over those of the organization. Thus, an employee's individualistic orientation was hypothesized to be positively related to upward dissent.

In contrast, I reasoned that those with a collectivistic orientation would not express upward dissent because they believe that their personal goals are subordinate to the goals of the group, in this case, the organization. Thus, an employee's collectivistic orientation was hypothesized to be negative related to upward dissent

Lastly, I reasoned that employees' use of various UDMS categories would differ depending on their LOC and IC orientation. The research questions concerned the ability to predict the use of particular UDMS. Use of each of the four strategies could be predicted from employees' locus of control and individualism and collectivism orientation.

5.4 Findings

The four predictors (Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism), were all positive predictors of an employee's overall use of UDMS. Thus, H1 and H3 were supported, whereas H2 and H4 were not because I originally hypothesized that External LOC and Collectivism would be *negative* predictors of UDMS.

In regards to the four research questions, the results indicated that the various strategies (Prosocial, Threatening Resignation, Circumvention, and Repetition) could be predicted from an employee's LOC and IC orientation.

5.5 Reformulation of Model

Figure 3 below summarizes how I believe an individual's LOC orientation and IC orientation play a role in the individual's UDMS. The revised model holds that External LOC and Collectivism are also positively correlated with UDMS, thus all four predictors in the model are designated as positive predictors of UDMS.

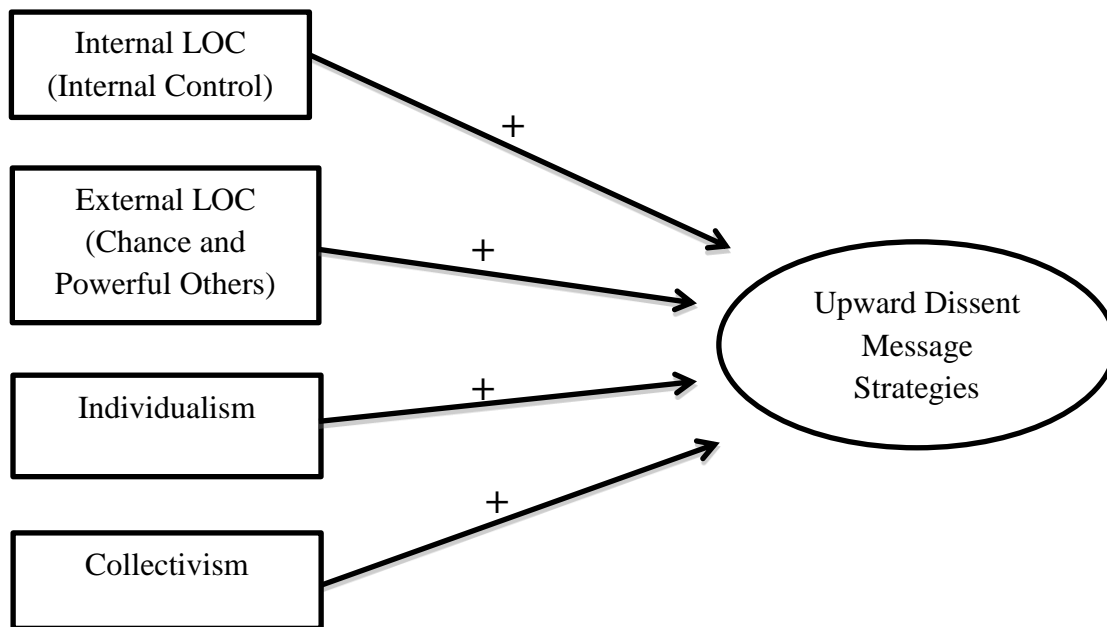


Figure 3 Illustration of the Analyzed Relationships Between an Individual's LOC Orientation, IC Orientation, and UDMS.

5.5.1 Explaining the positive relationship between External LOC and UDMS.

Understanding an individual's identity perspective can be a possible explanation of the positive relationship between external control and UDMS. According to Scott (2007), the individual's

membership in the organization creates an important social identity for the employee. However, the identification can be fragmented, meaning that the individual identifies him or herself to varying extents with organizations, professions, and personal roles, and shifts the individual's identity dependent on other individuals, the base of communication, and the activities in which the individual participates (Scott 2007). An explanation for the positive relationship between external control and UDMS could be that the individual has an external control orientation outside of the organization, but when he or she is in the organization, the individual identifies with someone who expresses upward dissent (Kassing, 2011a). In addition, if the employee is highly identified with the organization, and takes pride therein, that employee might express dissent when he or she experiences shortcomings, regardless of control expectancies. That is, identity threats can cause the employee to express dissent regardless of control expectations. Furthermore, a study by Kassing (2011a) showed that the employee will express dissent if the employee perceives he or she has ethical obligations to protect the public, regardless of cognitive processes (Kassing, 2011a).

Another explanation offers the notion that the two orientations (internal and external) are not dichotomous. As Rotter (1966) argued, individuals possess both internal and external orientations in different degrees. So the individual could be external in some instances of life, which he or she reported in the survey. However, when it came to his or her externality within the organization, the findings of his or her upward dissent strategies assessment support the notion that the individual also possesses internal viewpoints. Recall that the sample was taken from a northwestern university in the US, where free speech is considered both a right and a tradition. The findings suggest that individuals exercise free speech in the form of upward dissent. Individuals who are socialized in free speech cultures such as the US will have the desire

to say something in matters that affect them, which means, that at times, even individuals with an external LOC may express upward dissent (Kassing, 2011a).

A third explanation concerns the perceptions of those with external LOC. Individuals with an external LOC believe that they themselves cannot change their circumstances, but they believe that powerful others can. That perception, in itself, can make an employee more likely to express dissent to someone higher in the chain of command, so that that person can ultimately change his or her circumstances.

5.5.2 Explaining the positive relationship between Collectivism and UDMS.

Understanding an organization as a culture can be a possible explanation of the positive relationship between collectivism and UDMS. Like cultures, organizations have values, norms, belief systems, stories, rites, rituals, and ceremonies that are captured through everyday communication (Kassing, 2011a). Although it would be easy to view these cultural elements as mere semantics, it can be argued that they have an important cultural function. They explain that “organizational life is accomplished communicatively” (Pacanowsky & O’Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, p. 121). Through everyday communication, employees perform the culture of their organization, and the communication therefore becomes both a structure and a process. From this perspective, upward dissent communication can be a positive part of the organizational culture, and can be a behavior that an employee is expected to exhibit. If the organizational culture expects and embraces dissent in the belief that it is best for the organization, then expressing dissent will be understood as an act that is best for the collective. Collectivistic individuals are group oriented and are expected to look after one another. However, goals of the collective, in this case the organization, can take precedence over that of the individual. If the organization has realized the benefits of upward dissent expression (i.e., potential identification of problems early

on, potential for innovation and increased job satisfaction, and organizational identification and intraorganizational relational quality (Kassing, 2011a), the organization may nurture and foster upward dissent expression, and getting employees to express upward dissent would be an organizational goal in itself. Therefore, an explanation as to why my study yielded a positive correlation between collectivism and UDMS could be that the positive association was the result of study participants working in organizations that have affirmed the many benefits of upward dissent.

I hypothesized that collectivistic individuals would not express upward dissent readily, because dissent undermines the collective's harmony and loyalty. My results, however, could also reflect a demographic shift happening in collectivistic cultures. For example, Zhang, Chiu, and Wei (2009) found that younger Chinese employees in the banking industry more readily expressed dissent than the older employees. Zhang et al. reasoned that younger Chinese people are more individualistic. However, it can also be argued that the younger generation is being raised to speak up in order to protect the welfare of the group, i.e., the community, rather than to remain silent to preserve harmony (Zhang et. al., 2009). Therefore, expressing upward dissent could be understood as protecting the collective.

An additional explanation for the positive association between UDMS and both external LOC and collectivism, concerns impression management. Impression management deals with how the individual attempts to control the impression that others form of him or her (Kassing, 2011a). In an organization where the environment embraces dissent expression, an employee might seek to create an impression consistent with this expectation. In short, regardless of IC orientation and external or internal control orientation, all employees will most likely exercise

some form of impression management, which, if the organization encourages dissent, may show up in the form of upward dissent expression.

5.6 Methodological Limitations of Study

5.6.1 Limitations of sample. The present thesis was limited by its sample, which only consisted of students at a Northwestern university. The results therefore only reflect individuals from a Northwestern point of view, and may not be completely applicable to other populations. However, I still argue that the results of this thesis are applicable to the population from which the sample was drawn.

5.6.2 Limitations of organizational dissent literature. The line of research of organizational dissent behavior has been limited in two fundamental ways. First, there is an emphasis on self-reported dissent. Second, there is a lack of research on how others respond to dissenting employees. So, while dissent is an interactive communication process, our understanding so far has been one-sided, and has been consisting of self-report data. Some scholars (e.g., Croucher et al., 2009; and Garner, 2009) have pointed out that the Organizational Dissent Scale (ODS) developed by Kassing (1998) has potential limitations due to its self-report measure format. Self-report measures in general have been criticized for not being fully reliable indicators of one's communication behavior, especially when compared with other-report measures (e.g., Oetzel, 1998).

The most notable problem with self-report measures is the social desirability bias (e.g., Fisher, 1993; and Lakey & Canary, 2002), which refers to individuals answering survey questions in particular ways to make themselves look better. Such biased self-reporting can lead

to three effects: spurious correlations between variables, suppressor variables, and moderator variables that condition the relationships between variables (Croucher et al., 2013).

So far, in the dissent literature, there has been a lack of focus on self-report measures as a limitation, and only two studies using the ODS have identified this as a constraint. One solution offered is to incorporate more direct observation and other measures (Croucher et al., 2013). The validity of self-construal scales will be reviewed later in this discussion section. Important for this thesis is to realize that the ODS and also the UDS, (Kassing & Kava, 2013) are trait-like variables that measure general tendencies rather than actual dissent expression associated with specific incidents (Croucher et al., 2013). Dissent expression in the present thesis will therefore be viewed as an interactive phenomenon that highlights the communicative nature of organizational dissent.

5.6.3 Process Perspective. The present thesis defined dissent expression as an interactive phenomenon. It is also important to understand dissent expression from a process perspective. Most research has operationalized dissent as a sole event, and examined the variables that influenced such an event, such as workplace freedom of speech (Kassing, 2000a), aggressive communication (Kassing & Avtgis, 1999), or coping strategies (Kassing, 2011a). However, dissent expression can be seen as a continuous process which is affected by the individual's previous history and experiences. So, if the focus is on dissent as a continuous stream of action, rather than a one-time event, the research itself might be able to detect patterns of dissent behavior (Garner, 2013). In short, it is important to note that dissent is not only a single event, but an interaction, a process, based on multiple parameters. However, a detailed discussion of these vulnerabilities is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the impact hereof is noted.

5.6.4 Limitation of self-construal scales. Some scholars (e.g., Croucher et al., 2009; Garner, 2009; Oetzel, 1998; Levine et al., 2003a; and Levine et al., 2003b) have pointed out the fact that self-construal scales seem to lack validity, and that the evidence for predicting cultural differences from self-construal scales is “weak, inconsistent, or nonexistent” (Levine et al., 2003a). In addition, Levine et al. (2003b) argued that “[...] self-report scales purporting to measure interdependent and independent self-construals as two orthogonal [i.e., unrelated] constructs lack validity” (Levine et al., 2003b).

Other scholars, however, have defended the use of self-construal scales. For example, according to Gudykunst and Lee (2003), there is extended evidence of the validity of Singelis’s (1994) scale. Numerous studies, consistent with above conceptualization of self-construal have used Singelis’s (1994) scale to study high-context communication (Singelis & Brown, 1995), embarrassability (Singelis et al., 1999), relatedness (Gorski & Young, 2002), and group identification (Sato & Cameron, 1999). In addition, Gudykunst & Lee (2003) summarized the evidence for the construct validity of self-construal scales across approximately 50 studies that used Singelis’s (1994) and Gudykunst et al., (1996) scales, which are the most commonly used self-report measures, and concluded that the scales are valid measures of self-construal. Scholars have also defended the use of LOC scales. For example, Halpert and Hill (2011) found little social desirability bias in Levenson’s (1973a) scale.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should focus more on what sort of UDMS employees choose to use and why. Understanding this will give the organization an important tool to recognize and foster dissent. I suggest developing a new scale that measures what the employee thinks is most important when expressing dissent (i.e., “*My relationship with my supervisor is important for my*

decision in giving interorganizational feedback”). In addition, it is also important to understand how the dissent is received by the organization, as this may affect what strategy an employee uses. Lastly, I suggest conducting a mixed methods study, where the qualitative methods can shed light on an employee’s own story about his or her dissent behavior and any possible emergent themes. Incorporating more direct observation or other measures could offer a solution to the aforementioned limitations of self-report measures.

5.8 Concluding Thoughts

The present thesis has developed a clearer understanding of an employee’s dissent behavior. In this ever-changing world with its diverse individuals, it is of crucial importance for the organization to constantly develop and refine organizational policies and practices to recognize and embrace dissent behavior, so that the organization can develop to its fullest. Dissent expression enhances the performance level of the employee and thereby the bottom line of the company. For the organization to effectively manage and foster upward dissent behavior, it is crucial to understand the different strategies an employee use and the antecedents thereof.

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¹ Kassing referred in his early work to dissent expressed to managers or supervisors as articulated dissent, and dissent expressed to co-workers of the same rank or level as latent dissent (i.e., Kassing & Avtgis, 1999, 2001; Kassing, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b). Kassing and Armstrong (2002) replaced this earlier terminology of articulated and latent dissent with what they believed to be a more accurate and precise terminology that better describes the channels of dissent expression that employees choose to use. Kassing and Armstrong (2002) referred from then on to dissent expressed to managers or supervisors as upward dissent, and dissent expressed to co-workers of same rank or level as lateral dissent (i.e., Kassing, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a; Kassing & Kava 2013). Consistent with Kassing and for purposes of clarification I have chosen to refer to dissent expressed to managers or supervisors as upward dissent, and dissent expressed to co-workers of the same rank as lateral dissent throughout this thesis.

Appendix A

Intercorrelations and Regression Models

Table 1

Intercorrelations of Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, Collectivism, and Upward Dissent Message Strategies.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Internal LOC	--								
2. External LOC	-.32**	--							
3. Individualism	.23**	.01	--						
4. Collectivism	.23**	.13*	.01	--					
5. Upward Dissent	.12	.23**	.16*	.23**	--				
6. Prosocial Strategy	.28**	-.23	.20**	.27**	.55**	--			
7. Threatening Strategy	-.14*	.31**	.08	.11	.68**	.05	--		
8. Circumvention Strategy	.05	.23**	.04	.09	.79**	.25**	.47**	--	
9. Repetition Strategy	.20**	.10	.17**	.21**	.76**	.43**	.30**	.40**	--
10. Means	7.64	3.25	6.09	7.13	4.48	7.01	2.47	3.60	4.85
11. Standard Deviations	1.27	1.42	1.17	1.13	1.38	1.47	2.02	2.23	2.09
12. Cronbach's Alpha	.62	.75	.70	.78	.91	.85	.94	.89	.92

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2

Regression Model of Upward Dissent Message Strategies onto Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism

Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
	.40***	.16***			
1. Internal LOC			.15	.07	.14**
2. External LOC			.30	.06	.30***
3. Individualism			.15	.07	.12*
4. Collectivism			.28	.08	.23***

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001

Table 3

Regression Model of the Prosocial Strategy onto Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism

Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
	.39***	.15***			
1. Internal LOC			.25	.08	.22**
2. External LOC			.07	.07	.07
3. Individualism			.19	.08	.15*
4. Collectivism			.30	.08	.23***

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001

Table 4

Regression Model of the Threatening Resignation Strategy onto Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism

Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
	.36***	.13***			
1. Internal LOC			-.16	.11	-.10
2. External LOC			.42	.09	.30***
3. Individualism			.17	.11	.10
4. Collectivism			.31	.11	.17*

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001

Table 5

Regression Model of the Circumvention Strategy onto Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism

Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
	.28***	.08***			
1. Internal LOC			.19	.12	.11
2. External LOC			.43	.10	.27***
3. Individualism			.02	.12	.01
4. Collectivism			.20	.13	.10

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001

Table 6

Regression Model of the Repetition Strategy onto Internal LOC, External LOC, Individualism, and Collectivism

Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>
	.34***	.10***			
1. Internal LOC			.31	.11	.19**
2. External LOC			.27	.10	.18**
3. Individualism			.22	.11	.12*
4. Collectivism			.34	.12	.19**

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001

Appendix B

Research Exemption Letter



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Institutional Review Board

909 N Koyukuk Dr. Suite 212, P.O. Box 757270, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7270

November 6, 2013

To: Kevin Sager, B.S., M.S. Ed., Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

From: University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB

Re: [534590-1] Understanding antecedents and consequences of communication behavior
across nonspecific and organizational contexts

Thank you for submitting the New Project referenced below. The submission was handled by Exempt Review. The Office of Research Integrity has determined that the proposed research qualifies for exemption from the requirements of 45 CFR 46. This exemption does not waive the researchers' responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

Title:	Understanding antecedents and consequences of communication behavior across nonspecific and organizational contexts
Received:	November 3, 2013
Exemption Category:	7
Effective Date:	November 6, 2013

This action is included on the November 6, 2013 IRB Agenda.

Prior to making substantive changes to the scope of research, research tools, or personnel involved on the project, please contact the Office of Research Integrity to determine whether or not additional review is required. Additional review is not required for small editorial changes to improve the clarity or readability of the research tools or other documents.