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Wong, Yun Leng *Conformity in the Workplace: The Relationship between Facades of Conformity, Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion, and Intention to Leave*

Abstract

This study examines how facades of conformity (FOC) influence employees' job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave employment in a collectivist culture. When employees create FOC, it negatively affected their job satisfaction level. Positive relationships were found between employees creating FOC and emotional exhaustion of employees, employees' intention to leave, and collectivism. Additionally, emotional exhaustion of employees mediated the relationship between the degree of creating FOC and employee intentions to leave. However, collectivism did not moderate the relationship between creating FOC and emotional exhaustion and the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employees' intention to leave. Considering that facade creation will have detrimental effects on employees and organization, it is essential for managers to address these issues.

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Table of Contents

Abstract2

List of Tables6

Chapter I: Literature Review7

 Facades of Conformity.....9

 Job Satisfaction11

 Emotional Exhaustion.....12

 Intention to Leave13

 Collectivism14

 Hypotheses16

Chapter II: Methodology.....18

 Participants.....18

 Measures18

 Data Collection Procedures.....20

Chapter III: Results21

Chapter IV: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation25

 Limitations28

 Future Research29

 Conclusions.....30

References31

Appendix A: Facades of Conformity Scale38

Appendix B: Job Satisfaction Scale39

Appendix C: Emotional Exhaustion Scale.....40

Appendix D: Turnover Intention Scale.....	41
Appendix E: Individualism-collectivism Scale	42

List of Tables

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson's Correlations among Study Variables	22
Table 2: Linear Regression of Employee Intention to Leave with Predictor Variables	23
Table 3: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model of Emotional Exhaustion.....	24
Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model of Turnover Intention.....	24

Chapter I: Literature Review

Modern organizations have recognized the value of teamwork, and regularly expect employees to work effectively within groups. However, working in a team can be challenging for employees and managers, as it involves dealing with individual differences. Each employee can have different interaction styles, skills, strengths, and weaknesses, which led them to respond differently in situations. Moreover, the workplace is becoming more diverse. It is essential for organizations to find ways to deal with diversities for their employees to perform effectively in a group. Organizations need to facilitate equality and promote a supportive environment (Roberts, 2005) so that their employees are committed to the organization (Phillips, Williams, & Kirkman, 2016). If employees are not committed to the organization or dissatisfied with their work environment, they are more likely to separate from the organization.

Although teamwork is usually beneficial to organizational goals, employees may experience pressure to conform to organizational norms to work effectively and survive in the organization. Humans are naturally motivated to build social bonds with people and being excluded can cause them to experience negative psychological and physiological effects (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). To avoid exclusion at work, people may feel obligated to conform their behavior to others in order to be accepted (Hewlin, 2009). Aiello, Pratto, and Pierro (2013) claimed that advancement in an organization is dependent on employees' work capability, as well as their ability to gain influence and power over others. Typically, employees with lower power chose to conform to employees with higher power to fulfill their need to belong and their desire for social acceptance. Additionally, people with lower power are more likely to conform to people of higher power because they believed that agreement is rewarded while disagreement is usually punished. This effect was supported by Carol, Carlucci, Eaton and Wright (2013), who

observed that participants with higher power role are more resistant to social influence than people with lower power role.

Conformity is the tendency to align your attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with others due to social pressure (Wren, 2013). One can see this common scenario in work meetings, where employees may believe that they should not voice different opinions for fear of displeasing others, mockery, and exclusion from the group. Employees also perceived speaking up about issues in organizations with their superiors as “risky and often futile” (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003, p. 1466). As a result, people typically choose to conform to the majority to create a sense of team even when they do not wish to do so.

Under some circumstances, conformity may be beneficial in creating unity (Bond & Smith, 1996) and to gain acceptance within organizations (Hewlin, 2003). However, conformity may also have drawbacks for an organization. As examples, conformity can discourage individuals from speaking out, which impedes creativity and innovation (Milliken et al., 2003), organizational learning (Shanock et al., 2013), organizational change and development (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), and overall functioning of an organization (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Ménard & Brunet, 2011).

Behaviors related to conformity can occur in many forms; however, the focus of this thesis will be on facades of conformity (FOC). The concept of creating FOC was introduced by Hewlin (2003), who derived the idea from a larger body of literature on conformity theories (Hewlin, 2009). Generally, the different forms of conformity in an organizational context imply that employees are required to react positively and suppress negative emotions in the workplace (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006). Over time, employees learn to adjust their behaviors in the way that the organization desires. Most organizations expect their employees to only express

positive emotions and suppress their negative emotions, even while under duress. As an example, employees in the collections industry are required to use “a grimace and raised voice command” when collecting money from debtors even though they might feel sympathy for the debtors (Hochschild, 1983, p.137). Similarly, employees who are exposed to intense sales pressure in the banking industry were forced to break the organizational rules and engage in unethical behaviors to meet their sales quota. Some employees alleged that they were forced to persuade customers to make unnecessary purchase or commitments from the bank so that the employees could meet their sales quota and prevent being terminated from their employment (Corkery & Cowley, 2016).

Employees having to suppress their true emotions and act in ways that contradict their own personal values at work will be examined through the empirical lens of conformity research. In response to this problem, this study seeks to examine how creating FOC affects employees’ job satisfaction, well-being, and their intention to leave the organization. Understanding the reasons employees create FOC, and the effects of FOC on job satisfaction, will provide important insights for organizations to overcome their potential negative effects. Lastly, this study will examine how employees FOC are influenced by cultural factors that emphasize conformity within an Asian context.

Facades of Conformity

Facades of conformity are similar to, but different from, other constructs of conformity. When a person must act contrary to their own values in order to be accepted in the workplace, the person has engaged in “creating facades of conformity” (Hewlin, 2009, p. 727). Hewlin (2003) defined FOC as “the suppression of personal values in conjunction with the pretense of embracing organizational values that are not held by the individual” (Hewlin, 2003, p. 639) to

survive in an organization. Stormer and Devine (2008) further claimed that FOC are highly affected by the internal psychological factor of perceived risk to their livelihood, such as job insecurity, where Hewlin, Kim, and Song (2016) found that there was a positive relationship between FOC and perceived job insecurity. This was also supported by a study from the impression management literature by Huang, Zhao, Niu, Ashford, and Lee (2013). They found that employees who feel insecure about their jobs are more likely to engage in impression management towards their managers with intentions of improving their position in the organization (Hewlin et al., 2016). Phillips and colleagues (2016) also found that minority (i.e. age, sex, and race) employees viewed creating FOC as a social mobility strategy for them to “overcome the liability of being different” from the majority and to advance in the organization (p. 114).

Many researchers have shown that people change their behaviors to fit the norms of their workplace, in order to be accepted by their co-workers and managers (Hewlin, 2003). Humans are inherently social, motivated to interact, yearn for a sense of belonging, and desire to maintain social approval (Snyder, 1974; Knapton, Back, & Back, 2015). Therefore, individuals are motivated to join social groups to maintain relationships with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). However, if people feel that they are being excluded from a group, they might start to respond contrary to their own personal values in order to fit in with that group (Hewlin et al., 2016), which researchers define as inauthentic acting (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Shanock et al., 2013).

Previous studies have mainly focused on employees engaging in inauthentic acting in customer service settings (e.g. Grandey, 2003; Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009). However, Shanock and colleagues (2013) suggested that there are many other jobs that require

employees to outwardly express positive emotions at all times regardless of circumstances. For instance, Hu and Shi (2015) found that inauthentic acting was used not only for customers or clients, but also for co-workers and managers in the organization. Snyder (1974) stated that employees were commonly required to express themselves in accordance with the situation and respond positively regardless of their state of minds. Therefore, employees believed that inauthentic acting was necessary to survive and succeed within the organization (Stormer & Devine, 2008), to secure a position and achieve higher status within the organization (Knapton et al., 2015), to navigate work life effectively (Hewlin, 2003), to maintain social and interpersonal functioning (Snyder, 1974), and to strengthen their professional image (Sharma, 2015). In addition, work environments that do not encourage employees to express their ideas and opinions were found to increase the likelihood that employees would create FOC (Hewlin, 2009).

Job Satisfaction

Lower job satisfaction is a natural consequence for employees asked to behave in ways that are contrary to their personal values. Spector (2006) defined job satisfaction as the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs. Noordin and Jusoff (2010) stated that employees' job satisfaction generally depended on whether their needs in the organization were being met. Findings from previous studies generally showed that the more employees engage in inauthentic acting, the lower their job satisfaction (e.g. Glasø & Einarsen, 2008; Grandey, 2003; & Fisher, 2000). For instance, Glasø and Einarsen (2008) found that faking emotions at work can lead to a reduction in job satisfaction and an increase in health issues. Fisher (2000) also suggested that employees with higher levels of job satisfaction tend to perceive themselves to be a good fit for their jobs. Thus, they are more likely to display positive moods and emotions in the workplace and less likely to engage in inauthentic acting, and vice versa. Grandey (2003) also found that

when employees in customer service settings feel that their actions at work align with their own values, they have a higher level of job satisfaction and are likely to display their true self. Lastly, Shanock and colleagues (2013) found that employees who fake emotions generally report lower effectiveness in meetings, which ultimately affected employee job satisfaction. Although Philips and colleagues (2016) found that there was no relationship between employees creating FOC and job satisfaction, the researcher believes that employee satisfaction can be affected when they are exposed to prolonged suppression of personal values.

Emotional Exhaustion

Employees are likely to experience fatigue and depletion of mental resources when they are required to consciously suppress their actual emotions (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Maslach and Jackson (1981) defined emotional exhaustion as a situation where a person is emotionally drained and exhausted by the excessive amount of stress they experience, and it is one of the main elements of job burnout. In a study by Siegall and McDonald (2004), lack of congruence between personal and organizational values was found to reduce employees' job satisfaction, while increasing both emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave the company. Diestel and Schmidt (2012) stated that jobs that required employees to engage in inauthentic acting at work were found to affect employees' volitional self-control, such that the more employees engage in inauthentic acting, the higher the level of volitional self-control depletion. This had caused employees to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion. A meta-analysis study conducted by Hülshager and Schewe (2011) revealed that employees who expressed emotions that contradict with their true emotions are consistently found to be positively associated with emotional exhaustion in customer service setting.

This suppression of emotions is typical for employees who create FOC, thus leading researchers to discover that FOC and emotional exhaustion are positively correlated and that emotional exhaustion mediated employee intentions to stay in the organization (Hewlin, 2009). Similar results were found from the study by Sharma (2015) on the impact of FOC on self-monitoring and emotional exhaustion. This was also supported by Phillips and colleagues (2016), where they found that employees displaying actions that are not aligned with their own values and beliefs, experience negative emotions and tensions. This in turn caused them to experience physical fatigue, and psychologically and emotionally drained. Employees who are exposed to prolonged emotional exhaustion will then be more inclined to remove themselves from the discomfort, as indicated by their intention to leave (Moore, 2000).

Intention to Leave

Considering that creating FOC negatively impacts employee well-being, it is believed that creating FOC can affect employee intentions to stay with or leave an organization. Hewlin (2009) found that the more an employee engaged in creating FOC, the more likely it became that an employee would leave their employment. This effect has been observed in the financial industry, in which bank tellers often must fake their emotions, which in turn tends to increase their intention to leave their job (Chau et al., 2009). Chau and colleagues (2009) believed that employees who experienced long periods of alternating between their genuine emotions and fake emotions at work experienced increased job stress, which in turn made them more likely to leave the organization.

Besides increasing job stress, the frustration experienced by the employees from engaging in FOC often lead employees to leave an organization (Shanock et al., 2013). Similarly, Hewlin and colleagues (2016) noted that the more effort employees put into inauthentic acting to

better fit in their workplace, the more stress they experience. This increasing job stress greatly reduces an employee commitment to their employer and tends to lead to increased intentions to leave an organization.

Collectivism

Employees who feel the need to create FOC risk increased job stress and dissatisfaction, which in turn can lead to greater intention to leave an organization. However, the cultural norms in Eastern and Western countries may play a role in affecting employees' behavior in creating FOC. Employees from collectivistic cultures such as Eastern countries emphasize cooperation and encourage shared interest among the groups to which they belong; whereas individualistic cultures such as Western countries emphasize personal interests rather than the interests of others (Wagner & Moch, 1986). Harmonious relationships are emphasized in collectivistic cultures. A meta-analysis conducted by Bond and Smith (1996) on conformity studies concluded that individuals in collectivistic cultures focused on harmonious relationships; therefore, they are more likely to conform to others to prevent disharmony in the group. Indeed, maintenance of social harmony and "preservation of mutual face" is a fundamental priority for individuals within collectivistic cultures (Hook, Worthington Jr., & Utsey, 2009, p. 838).

Seeing that individuals within collectivists' societies are more likely to be concerned with the group interests, it stands to reason that they are also more likely to engage in creating FOC to maintain group harmony than individualists. Additionally, the relationship between emotional exhaustion and intention to leave was found to be negatively moderated by collectivism (Hewlin, 2009). That is, employees within a collectivist society are more likely to stay in an organization even when experiencing high level of emotional exhaustion. This finding aligns with observations by Hofstede (1980), in which he stated that employees in collectivistic cultures tend

to be more loyal to the organization that they are employed by, compared to employees within individualistic cultures.

The current study focuses specifically on the country of Malaysia, which is a multiracial country and was classified as a collectivistic culture by Hofstede (2018). Despite a variety of cultures and ethnicities in Malaysia, people from all cultures shared similarities in power distance and collectivism (Rashid, Anantharaman, & Raveendaran; Lim as cited in Ansari, Ahmad, & Aafaqi, 2004). Kennedy (2002) noted that Malaysians emphasize “collective well-being and display a strong humane orientation” (p. 15). Malaysians also have “preference for relationships and preference for hierarchy” (Abdullah as cited in Ansari et al., 2004, p. 114). Tajaddini and Mujtaba (2009) revealed that Malaysian leaders in business environments tend to focus on building relationships between people rather than performing tasks. In addition, Kennedy (2002) noted that the Malaysian culture does not promote assertive behaviors and confrontational behaviors. This was supported by Ansari and colleagues (2004), who suggest that the social norms in Malaysia tend to discourage individuals of lower status from challenging individuals of higher status in any circumstances. This observation would suggest that individuals with lower status are likely to engage in FOC by suppressing their thoughts and personal values.

Taking into account that the cultural norms within a collectivist society are likely to shape employees to engage in creating FOC, the negative impact of creating FOC on employees’ well-being and high levels of intention to leave can negatively impact the operating performance of an organization. This study seeks to understand the effects of the creation of FOC on employees in Malaysian businesses. Specifically, this study will examine how FOC influence job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave on employees within a collectivist

culture. While previous studies have supported the observation that FOC reduce job satisfaction (Grandey, 2003; Glasø & Einarsen, 2008; Shanock et al., 2013), increase emotional exhaustion (Siegall & McDonald, 2004; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Diestel & Schmidt, 2012), and employees' intention to leave a company (Chau et al., 2009; Hewlin, 2009; Shanock et al., 2013; Hewlin et al., 2016), the majority of studies were conducted on participants that are non western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) countries (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) and have not considered the role of culture on the detriment of FOC on employees within collectivist cultures. Therefore, by incorporating the role of culture in this study will extend existing knowledge in this research area.

Hypotheses

Based on the above literatures, the researcher proposes the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: There will be a negative correlation between creating FOC and employee job satisfaction such that the more an employee engaged in creating FOC, the lower the level of job satisfaction will be experienced by the employee.
- Hypothesis 2a: There will be a positive correlation between creating FOC and emotional exhaustion of employees such that the more an employee engaged in creating FOC, the greater the likelihood that the employee will experience emotional exhaustion.
- Hypothesis 2b: Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between the degree of creating FOC and employee intentions to leave such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee experience higher level of emotional exhaustion.
- Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive correlation between creating FOC and employees' intention to leave the organization such that the more an employee

engaged in creating FOC, the greater the likelihood that the employee will leave the organization.

- Hypothesis 4a: There will be a positive correlation between collectivism and creating FOC such that higher collectivism increases the degree to which an employee will create FOC.
- Hypothesis 4b: Collectivism will moderate the relationship between creating FOC and emotional exhaustion such that the relationship will be weaker when collectivism is high.
- Hypothesis 4c: Collectivism will moderate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employees' intention to leave such that the relationship will be weaker when collectivism is high.

Chapter II: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between facades of conformity on employee job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave in the Malaysian organizational context. A cross-sectional study was conducted on a sample of participants who are currently working in any organizations in Malaysia.

Participants

The sample consisted of 218 participants (109 males, 106 females, 1 who preferred not to disclose their gender identity, and 2 who did not respond to the question) working in Malaysia via convenience sampling. There were a wide age range of participants in the study, with the most participants in the age range of 25 to 34 (78.4%). There were 11 participants (5%) from the age group of 18 to 24, 18 participants (8.3%) from 35 to 44 years old, 7 participants (3.2%) from 45 to 54 years old, 7 participants (3.2%) from 55 years and above, and 2 participants (0.9%) did not disclose their age. Participants in this study held a variety of workplace positions; including: non-executive level (4.1%), fresh/entry level (7.3%), junior executive (26.1%), senior executive (29.4%), manager (15.1%), senior manager (4.1%), management level (6%), and 6.9% of the participants who did not disclose their position level.

Measures

As this was a partial replication study of Hewlin (2009), parts of the measures used in the original study, along with one additional construct, job satisfaction, were adapted for this study.

Facades of conformity. Facades of conformity was measured using a six-item scale (Cronbach's alpha = .58) developed by Hewlin (2003). An example of an item in this measure is "I suppress personal values that are different from those of the organization." Respondents are

required to rate items on a 5-point scale in which 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. (see Appendix A).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using Macdonald and MacIntyre's (1997) 10-item generic job satisfaction scale (Cronbach's alpha = .86). An example of an item in this measure is "I receive recognition for a job well done." Respondents are required to rate items on a 5-point scale in which 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *don't know*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. (see Appendix B).

Emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was measured using Maslach and Jackson's (1981) nine-item emotional exhaustion subscale (Cronbach's alpha = .87) of Maslach Burnout Inventory. An example of an item in this measure is "I feel emotionally drained from my work." Respondents are required to rate items on a 5-point scale in which 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. (see Appendix C).

Turnover intention. Turnover intention was measured using Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth's (1978) three-item turnover intention scale (Cronbach's alpha = .86). An example of an item in this measure is "I often think about quitting my present job." Respondents are required to rate items on a 5-point scale in which 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. (see Appendix D).

Collectivism. Collectivism was measured using Wagner and Moch's (1986) eight-item individualism-collectivism scale (Cronbach's alpha = .48). An example of an item in this measure is "I prefer to work with others in my work group rather than work alone." Respondents are required to rate items on a 5-point scale in which 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. (see Appendix E).

Data Collection Procedures

An online survey was created using the online survey software, Qualtrics. Participants were recruited by the researcher via snowball sampling through links provided on social network services (e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp) and emails to potential participants who were currently working in Malaysia. Participants were also asked to pass along the survey link to other participants who met the survey criteria. The first section of the survey contained an informed consent form, detailing the purpose of the study, risks and benefits associated to the study, time commitment, confidentiality issues, and participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time point. The total time to complete the survey was 15 minutes and a thank you note and a debriefing were included in the last section of the survey. At the end of the one-month survey period, the survey was closed and all data was exported into IBM SPSS Statistics version 22 for analysis. In the first step, the survey data was exported from Qualtrics survey software to Statistical Analysis Software Package (SPSS). Next, the data was prepared for analysis by identifying missing data, outliers, and possible errors in the data set. Finally, all reverse scored items were recoded. For instance, items 2 and 3 from the Individualism-collectivism Scale were reverse coded.

Chapter III: Results

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations among the study variables. As shown in this table, FOC was negatively correlated with employee job satisfaction, $r = -.15, p = .033$, such that the more an employee engaged in creating FOC, the lower the level of job satisfaction will be experienced by the employee, which is consistent with Hypothesis 1. The results also showed that FOC was positively correlated with emotional exhaustion of employees ($r = .24, p < .001$), employees' intention to leave the organization ($r = .17, p = .012$), and collectivism ($r = .15, p = .031$); such that the more an employee engaged in creating FOC, the greater the likelihood that the employee will experience emotional exhaustion and to leave the organization, and higher collectivism will increase the degree to which an employee creates FOC, which were consistent with Hypotheses 2a, 3, and 4a. However, the results showed that the number of years at their current employment was only positively correlated with employees' job satisfaction level, $r = .28, p < .001$, such that the longer the employees had worked for the organization, the higher the level of job satisfaction felt by the employees.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson's Correlations among Study Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Facades of Conformity	3.23	.62						
2. Job Satisfaction	3.49	.70	-.15*					
3. Emotional Exhaustion	2.91	.75	.24**	-.38**				
4. Turnover Intention	2.78	1.09	.17*	-.55**	.50**			
5. Collectivism	3.65	.52	.15*	.19**	-.10	-.15*		
6. Years at current place of employment	3.67	4.26	-.04	.28**	-.03	-.09	.06	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Subsequently, the researcher conducted two steps to examine if emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between the degree of creating FOC and employee intentions to leave (Hypothesis 2b). Firstly, a simple linear regression was used to test if FOC significantly predicted employee intentions to leave. The results indicated that FOC explained 2.9% of variance in employee intentions to leave, $R = .17$, $F(1, 215) = 6.49$, $p = .012$). Further, FOC significantly predicted employee intentions to leave ($\beta = .17$, $p = .012$). Secondly, a linear regression was used to test if emotional exhaustion is a mediator between the degree of creating FOC and employee intentions to leave. When FOC and emotional exhaustion were included as the independent variables, the beta changed from significant to insignificant. This explained that emotional exhaustion ($R = .50$, $F(2, 214) = 36.44$, $p < .001$) mediated the relationship between the degree of creating FOC and employee intentions to leave ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$), such that the relationship would be stronger when an employee experienced higher level of emotional exhaustion. See Table 2.

Table 2

Linear Regression of Employee Intention to Leave with Predictor Variables

	B	SE(B)	β	<i>p</i>
1. Facades of Conformity	.10	.11	.06	.371
2. Emotional Exhaustion	.70	.09	.49	< .001***

*** $p < .001$ level.

Next, hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the hypotheses that collectivism would moderate the relationship between creating FOC and emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 4b), and the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employee intention to leave (Hypothesis 4c) such that the relationship would be weaker when collectivism is high. In the first step of hierarchical multiple regression, two predictors (FOC and collectivism) were entered. The results indicated that emotional exhaustion explained 7.5% of the variance and the model was statistically significant ($F(2, 214) = 8.68; p < .001$). In the second step, the total variance explained by the model remained the same at 7.5% ($F(3, 213) = 5.76; p = .001$). Therefore, collectivism as a moderating variable did not explain additional variance in employee emotional exhaustion (R^2 change = 0; $F(1, 213) = .007; p = .935$). Hence, Hypothesis 4b was not supported. A second hierarchical multiple regression was conducted using the same procedure. Two predictors (emotional exhaustion and collectivism) were entered. The results indicated that employee intention to leave explained 26.2% of the variance and the model was statistically significant ($F(2, 214) = 37.95; p < .001$). In the second step, the total variance explained by the model was 26.5% ($F(3, 213) = 25.62; p < .001$). Therefore, collectivism as a moderating variable again did not explain much variance in employee intention to leave (R^2 change = .003; $F(1, 213) = .96; p = .327$). Hence, Hypothesis 4c was not supported. See Table 3 and 4.

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model of Emotional Exhaustion

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>
	<i>Change</i>						
Model 1	.27	.08***					
FOC				.32	.08	.26***	3.89
Collectivism				-.20	.10	-.14*	-2.04
Model 2	.27	.08***	0				
FOC				.32	.08	.26***	3.87
Collectivism				-.20	.10	-.14*	-2.04
FOC*Collectivism				-.004	.05	-.005	-.08

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

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model of Turnover Intention

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>
	<i>Change</i>						
Model 1	.51	.26***					
Emotional Exhaustion				.71	.09	.49***	8.32
Collectivism				-.22	.12	-.10	-1.75
Model 2	.51	.26***	.003				
Emotional Exhaustion				.72	.09	.50***	8.38
Collectivism				-.21	.12	-.10	-1.69
Emotional Exhaustion*Collectivism				-.06	.06	-.06	-.98

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

Chapter IV: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between FOC on employee job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave in the Malaysian organizational context. This study was a partial replication of Hewlin's (2009) study on FOC using parts of the measures adapted from the original study, along with a new construct, job satisfaction, in a different context.

First, the result of this study showed a negative correlation between creating FOC and employee job satisfaction. This result was aligned with previous studies conducted by Glasø and Einarsen (2008), Grandey (2003), and Fisher (2000). They concluded that employees showed a lower job satisfaction when they were required to fake their emotions at work and engage in inauthentic acting. However, Philips and colleagues (2016) found that there is no relationship between employees creating FOC and job satisfaction.

Next, similar to the findings from Hewlin's (2009) study, the results showed that there was a positive correlation between creating FOC and emotional exhaustion of employees. According to Hülshager and Schewe (2011) and Phillips et al. (2016), employees who are required to consciously suppress their actual emotions, own values, and beliefs, were consistently found to have experienced fatigue and depletion of mental resources. Similar conclusions were also found by Diestel and Schmidt (2012), that the more employees engaged in inauthentic acting, the higher the level of volitional self-control depletion, which then led employees to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion. In the current study, the researcher also found that emotional exhaustion mediated the relationship between the degree of creating FOC and employee intentions to leave. This result was consistent with the study conducted by Hewlin (2009).

Results from the current study indicated that there was a positive correlation between creating FOC and employees' intention to leave the organization. This was supported by studies conducted by Moore (2000) and Siegall and McDonald (2004). Both studies stated that prolonged exposure to emotional exhaustion (Moore, 2000) and the lack of congruence between personal and organizational values (Siegall & McDonald, 2004) increased the likelihood of employee's intention to leave the organization.

Subsequently, results from the current study indicated that there was also a positive correlation between collectivism and creating FOC. This can be explained by the collectivistic cultural norms in Malaysia (Hofstede, 2018), the "collective well-being and display a strong humane orientation" (Kennedy, 2002) of Malaysians, and their emphasis on cooperation and shared interest among the groups to which they belong. Furthermore, the result of the current study was also supported by a meta-analysis study conducted by Bond and Smith (1996). They found that individuals in collectivistic cultures were focused on harmonious relationships, thus, they are more likely to conform to others to prevent disharmony in the group (Bond & Smith, 1996).

However, although it was hypothesized that collectivism will moderate the relationship between creating FOC and emotional exhaustion, the results in this study failed to support the hypothesis. That is, collectivism did not affect the strength of the relationship between employee creating FOC and emotional exhaustion; creating FOC by itself has a weak but positive correlation (.24) with the level of emotional exhaustion experienced by employees (see Table 1). The researcher assumed that this can be due to the severity of the impact of emotional exhaustion on the employees. When an employee is experiencing emotional exhaustion, he or she is emotionally drained, exhausted by excessive amount of stress (Maslach & Jackson, 1981),

experience fatigue, depletion of mental resources (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), and experiences negative emotions and tensions (Phillips et al., 2016). These symptoms of emotional exhaustion are harmful and are likely to threaten the health of individuals who experience emotional exhaustion. Therefore, even the internalized values and norms of collectivism are not able to moderate the relationship between employee creating FOC and emotional exhaustion.

Additionally, the result of the current study showed that collectivism did not moderate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employees' intention to leave the organization. The result showed that emotional exhaustion does have an effect on employees' intention to leave the organization without the moderating effect ($r = .50, p < .001$) (see Table 1). The result was contradicted with Hewlin's (2009) study, in which Hewlin (2009) found that collectivism negatively moderated the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employee's intention to leave. Besides that, the result of the current study was also not supported by the statement made by Hofstede (1980) where employees in collectivist cultures were more loyal to the organization compared to employees within individualist cultures. These contradictory results can be explained by generational issues, as most of the participants in this study were comprised of working adults aged between 25 and 34 (Gen Y). According to McDonald and Hovland (2008), each generation (Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y) have different work-related characteristics. For instance, Gen Y working adults were found to have high requirements and expectations of their employers, and were not hesitant to leave the organization when their requirements and expectations were not fulfilled by their employers (Hutchinson & Longworth, 2012).

Furthermore, Gen Y is more multicultural than Baby Boomers and Gen X (Weston, 2006). They were exposed to a more global world through the Internet, study abroad, and having friends from other cultures. The increased global exposures of Gen Y to other cultures, such as

the individualist cultures, led them to acquire, learn, and adapt to the value of individualism (Stebe, 2015). Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha of the individualism-collectivism scale in the current study was found to be relatively low (Cronbach's alpha = .48) compared to other studies (Cronbach's alpha = .80) (e.g. Wagner & Moch, 1986). This may be due to the applicability of the scale to other cross-cultural studies. Based on these justifications, the researcher concluded that having majority Gen Y working adults in the current study sample, along with their different work-related characteristics, increased global exposure, and the applicability of the individualism-collectivism scale to cross-cultural studies, may have influenced the result of this study. Therefore, the moderating effects of collectivism within this society are not present. Lastly, Hewlin's (2009) study was conducted with primarily Caucasian sample, the sample might not be accurately illustrated a collectivist culture.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. First, the data for this study were collected using self-report surveys. A self-reported survey was used to measure FOC because it is difficult to judge by observation if individuals are creating FOC (Hewlin, 2009). The common disadvantages of self-report surveys include social desirability issues and rating scales issues. To reduce response biases, participants were assured that the survey was confidential and that their responses were recorded anonymously. However, it is possible that bias toward self-consistency may still be present in the data (i.e., Hewlin, 2009). Second, participants may want to conform to the organizational norms in their workplace and unconsciously have engaged in creating FOC. Thus, the results of the current study should be interpreted cautiously. Third, this study was based on a specific population - working adults in Malaysia; and the responses were mainly from participants from the age of 25 to 34 (78.4%). Therefore, generalizability to other age groups or

other cultures may be a concern for this research. Fourth, the applicability of the measures to cross-cultural studies is inconclusive, which may have skewed the results of the study.

Furthermore, in accordance with Hunter, Luchak, and Devine (2012), the survey was designed such that the construct name was not shown to the participants and that each measure was on a different page in the survey to prevent participants from fabricating their response after looking at the next questions in the survey.

Future Research

FOC is a relatively new field of study. Hewlin (2009) suggested that additional research is needed to improve the understanding of how employees establish FOC in the workplace, and how FOC influences workplace behaviors. The researcher of the current study suggested that future research can be conducted more on participants that are non WEIRD countries (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) to gain further insights. This is because many social science and psychology research were mainly comprised of college students from WEIRD population (Henrich et al., 2010). The over dependence on WEIRD population in research are likely to cause generalizability issues. The results and conclusions derived from this population may not generalize well to the larger workforce population.

In addition, future research studies could potentially examine the ways in which the individual characteristics of employees interact with other factors to establish FOC in the workplace. For example: Age, gender, position level, education level, and length of employment with the organization may play a large impact on the likelihood of employees creating FOC. Based on the analysis of the current study, if item 1, 2, and 3 from the Individualism-collectivism Scale were to be removed, the Cronbach's Alpha of the scale would have increased to .575. Item 1, 2, and 3 asked respondents if they would rather work on their own or work with others. These

questions seemed to be nonspecific as there are many jobs do not require as much teamwork as other jobs and are best done individually. Therefore, by removing the 3 items from the scale may increase the reliability or internal consistency of the scale. Lastly, it is possible that the individualism-collectivism scale was not tailored for cross-cultural application; therefore, future research can be conducted using a scale that is more applicable for cross-cultural studies.

Conclusions

Due to global economic recession and mechanization, many employers are forced to lay off their employees. This had led employees in the organization to feel less secure in their jobs. They have to compete with other employees not only on their work ability, but also their likability in order to remain in the organization. This sense of insecurity may lead employees to suppress their personal values and embrace organizational values they do not agree with in order to survive in the organization (Hewlin, 2009). Seeing that FOC could affect both the well-being of employees and the organization, it is important for employers to address the issues of FOC and create a work environment that allows employees to express their true personal values (Hewlin, 2009). For instance, managements can encourage their employees to engage in good communication, to voice and listen to opinions from others, and to build trust within the organization. By having a positive work environment that allows employees to express their authenticity at work not only enhance the welfare of the employees, but it also helps organizations to improve their workforce productivity and minimize the costs of employee turnover by retaining talented employees in their organization.

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Appendix A: Facades of Conformity Scale

1. I don't share certain things about myself in order to fit in at work.
2. I suppress personal values that are different from those of the organization.
3. I withhold personal values that conflict with organizational values.
4. I don't "play politics" by pretending to embrace organizational values.
5. I behave in a manner that reflects the organization's value system even though it is inconsistent with my personal values.
6. I say things that I don't really believe at work.

Appendix B: Job Satisfaction Scale

1. I receive recognition for a job well done.
2. I feel close to the people at work.
3. I feel good about working at this company.
4. I feel secure about my job.
5. I believe management is concerned about me.
6. On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health.
7. My wages are good.
8. All my talents and skills are used at work.
9. I get along with my supervisors.
10. I feel good about my job.

Appendix C: Emotional Exhaustion Scale

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
5. I feel burned out from my work.
6. I feel frustrated by my job.
7. I feel I am working too hard on my job.
8. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
9. I feel like I am at the end of my rope.

Appendix D: Turnover Intention Scale

1. I often think about quitting my present job.
2. I will probably look for a new job in the next year.
3. As soon as possible, I will leave the organization.

Appendix E: Individualism-collectivism Scale

1. I prefer to work with others in my work group rather than work alone.
2. Given the choice, I would rather do a job where I can work alone rather than do a job where I have to work with others in my work group.
3. I like it when members of my work group do things on their own, rather than working with others all the time.
4. People in my work group should be willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the work group (such as working late now and then, going out of their way to help, etc.).
5. People in my work group should realize that they sometimes are going to have to make sacrifices for the sake of the work group as a whole.
6. People in my work group should recognize that they are not always going to get what they want.
7. People should be made aware that if they are going to be part of a work group, they are sometimes going to have to do things they don't want to do.
8. People in my work group should do their best to cooperate with each other instead of trying to work things out on their own.