



Cultural impacts on felt and expressed emotions and third party complaint relationships



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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the influence of emotion and culture on intentions to proceed with third party action following a service failure. Negative emotions are broken into two distinct components, those inwardly felt versus those outwardly visible. Consistent with Appraisal Theory, results provide empirical support for positive relationships between felt emotion and displayed emotion and displayed emotion on third party action against a service firm. Hofstede's model suggests that cultural values (individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance) influence emotions internally felt relative to emotions externally displayed as well as intentions to voice a complaint to a third party. Empirical support was found for two of the six cultural-based moderating hypotheses. The results of the data collection effort were less conclusive than theory would suggest. This leads one to question the actual moderating effects of culture in the field of critical incidents. Theoretical and managerial implications are drawn from these findings.

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1. Introduction

The easiest way for a service provider to know when a service failure has occurred is for the customer to verbally express his or her feelings. Firms strive to find proactive means to obtain consumer feedback so they can have an opportunity to implement a service recovery effort and to implement improvements. Unfortunately the majority of consumers are reluctant to voice their complaints (Chebat, Davidow, & Codjovi, 2005; Stephens & Gwinner, 1998) for any number of reasons including attitude toward complaining (e.g., Bearden & Crockett, 1981) and demographic characteristics (e.g., Martin & Smart, 1988). These non-confrontational consumers are likely to use non-verbal means (e.g., frowning, body language) to express their displeasure with a negative encounter (Hess & Thibault, 2009; Mattila & Enz, 2002).

Experts suggest that as much of 70% of all communication is non-verbal in nature (Barnum & Wolniensky, 1989). If the consumer feels as if they did communicate their dissatisfaction in a non-verbal fashion and yet the service firm takes no action to intercede, research suggests that the negativity associated with the encounter is exasperated (Izard, 1990; Matsumoto, 1987). As a result, the customer may consider expressing his/her displeasure with the service failure via any number of methods including those that involve third parties (e.g., consumer agencies, legal actions).

The first purpose of the present investigation is to extend understanding of the impact of non-verbal expressions of emotions generated in the face of a service failure and the relationship to third party complaining behavior. Results show that consumers experiencing negative emotions as a result of a service failure are likely to express those emotions non-verbally. In addition evidence suggests a positive relationship between non-verbal expressions of emotion and third party complaint intentions.

Importantly, different individuals or groups may be uniquely predisposed in their response to felt emotions elicited by a particular event. Hofstede's (1984) seminal work on the role of culture in shaping the norms for behavior in a society provides valuable insights as to why people react the way they do in a wide variety of fields including psychology and management. However, researchers generally agree that the study of culture relative to services marketing has been surprisingly limited to-date (e.g., Wong, 2004; Zhang, Beatty, & Walsh, 2008). This leads to the second purpose of this research, testing the moderating role of three of Hofstede's five dimensions of culture on the aforementioned relationships between (1) felt emotion and non-verbal expressions of emotion and (2) non-verbal expressions of emotion and the intention to proceed with third party action. The results confirm only two (out of six possible) moderating effects. The paper concludes with a discussion on managerial implications and directions for future research.

1.1. Appraisal Theory

Appraisal theories are the most appropriate theoretical frameworks to understand the emotional effects of service failures (Bagozzi, Gopinath, &

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Nyer, 1999). Based on the pioneering work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Lazarus (1991a, b) a secondary appraisal follows a primary appraisal. Essentially, if the individual finds the negative experience motivationally relevant, the primary appraisal results in the generation of negative emotions. The secondary appraisal takes place when the individual asks him/herself “What can I do?” by evaluating the coping resources inside and around him/her. Coping is defined by Lazarus (1991a) as “cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands (and conflicts between them) that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (pg. 112). According to Appraisal Theory, following the appraisal process, one of two coping mechanisms will occur: problem-based coping or emotion-based coping. As this relates to the current research, Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991a) proposes that an appraisal of a negative event in which an observer has some stake leads to negative emotions (primary appraisal) which then leads to the evaluation of possible alternative actions (secondary appraisal) and then initiates a problem-based coping mechanism (third-party action). This not to say that emotion-based coping, which is designed to change the way one thinks about the appraised event, might not occur, but rather that the current research only investigates problem-based coping which is more about taking an action based on the appraisal.

1.1.1. Felt emotion, displayed emotion and complaining behavior

Bagozzi et al. (1999) define emotion as “...mental states of readiness that arise from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features); and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it” (p. 184). Emotions, therefore, arise in response to an evaluative judgment and interpretation of a specific event.

Service failure research focuses on the extent to which participants' experienced negative emotions. Unfortunately for service firms, research has found that consumers who feel frustrated or upset because of a service failure may be unlikely to verbally express their feelings (complain) to the service firm (e.g., Chebat et al., 2005; Tax & Brown, 1998). However, one way service firms may be able to determine how consumers actually feel is to observe outward expressions that reflect the customer's inner feelings. A study by Mattila and Enz (2002) found that observers were able to accurately predict the consumer's assessment of the service provider's performance by examining the consumer's displayed emotions (frowning, smiling, and eye contact).

While Mattila and Enz (2002) show that service providers may be able to discern customer's non-verbal reactions to service failures, the inability or unwillingness of the service provider to recognize the non-verbal expression of emotion made at the time of the service failure may further perpetuate the issue. Research indicates that emotion-expressive behavior increases the intensity of that emotion (Izard, 1990; Matsumoto, 1987). So, when a consumer physically displays the emotion they feel and the service provider does not act upon this, the negativity associated with the emotion may increase leading one to consider more dramatic complaint actions.

Singh (1988) identified three dimensions of complaining behavior: voice (complaining directly to the service provider), private action (informing friends, relatives) and third party action (complaining to an agency) which is of primary interest in the present research. Although third party action represents a small percentage of customer complaints, third party action can represent a considerable amount of money to the firm (lawsuit settlements), have large public relations implications, and constitutes an under-researched phenomenon (Singh, 1989). Furthermore, Feick (1987) indicates that third-party complaint behaviors represent a higher-order level of complaining than simply complaining to friends, family, or the company and as such are more likely to create problems with regard to future patronage.

Based on the above, the conceptual distinction between felt versus displayed emotions is as follows. Felt emotions represent internal responses that arise from unmet expectations. Displayed emotion is a component of emotional responding and has important communicative functions and ignites the negativity of the encounter. Hence,

Hypothesis 1a. A positive relationship exists between felt emotion and displayed emotion.

Hypothesis 1b. A positive relationship exists between displayed emotion and third party complaint intentions.

1.2. Culture and cultural display rules

Hofstede and Bond (1988, p. 6) define culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category or group of people from those of another” where environmental adaptations to a specific ecological context cause individuals to develop unique solutions for living and cause the basis for culture. Culture is often manifest by the development of societal norms for how one thinks and behaves relative to specific situational contexts. These norms provide a framework for what is accepted and expected and helps reduce the ambiguity of situations, thereby maintaining social order. Cultural norms have profound implications for the ways in which emotions are constituted, experienced, expressed, and managed (Keltner, 2003; Mesquita, 2001). For example, Mesquita and Karasawa (2002) had Japanese and American students record the number of emotions they experienced over a one-week period and conclude that Japanese were more likely to report no emotion at all than were Americans. Mesquita and Karasawa (2002) theorize that the interdependent nature of Japanese culture motivated them to avoid negative outcomes and thus engage in fewer negative emotions than the highly independent and self expressive American culture. Thus, it would appear that individuals tap into cultural ideologies to retrieve guidelines for ways in which they should evaluate emotion eliciting situations (Matsumoto, 2006).

Although cultural differences in daily affective experiences have attracted some attention recently (e.g., Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002; Nezlek, Kafetsios, & Smith, 2008; Scherer, Wraniak, Sangsue, Tran, & Scherer, 2004) there can be no study identified that has examined cross-cultural differences in relationships between affective experience in service failures and complaining behavior thus illustrating the importance of the contribution of the present study. In this study, culture plays a central role in shaping emotional experiences. Variations in the relationships between felt emotions, expressed or displayed emotions, and complaining behavior will occur as a function of the cultural orientation of the individuals. This study will specifically look at individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance.

1.3. The moderating role of individualism/collectivism

Individualism/collectivism reflects the degree of interdependency between members of a society. Individualism emphasizes individual goals and independence such that those high in individualism value personal freedom, privacy, and self-actualization. At the opposite end of the spectrum, collectivistic cultures stress conformity and the importance of and loyalty to the group. Highly collectivistic individuals value obedience, collective goals, harmony, and equality.

The emotional independence of individuals is encouraged in cultures high in individualism (Hofstede, 1984, p. 171). Because there is no need to maintain the appearance of a harmonious relationship between people, negative emotional expressions often occur. Highly collectivistic cultures differentiate between the display of positive and negative emotions. A study by Matsumoto (2006) involving Americans (individualistic) and Japanese (collectivistic)

supported this culturally derived difference in emotional expressiveness. A study by [Matsumoto, Yoo, Fontaine, Anguas-Wong et al. \(2008\)](#) that included 2286 university students from 23 countries found similar results.

Therefore, differences are expected in the outward display of emotion arising from a service failure arise based on the degree to which the culture is high or low in individualism. Thus,

Hypothesis 2. Individualism moderates the relationship between felt and expressed emotion such that as individualism is greater the relationship between felt and expressed emotion increases.

Individualism sanctions the extent to which people consider voicing a complaint to a third party to be legitimate. [Liu, Furrer, and Sudharshan \(2001\)](#) suggest that consumers from cultures with lower (versus higher) individualism tend not to complain to the service provider when they receive poor service. Further support can be found by [Yau \(1988\)](#) who theorizes that the collectivistic nature of the Chinese culture is such that Chinese avoid complaining in public. Public action such as lawsuits or complaining to a consumer agency is a very serious and extreme behavior. Theory allows the development of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Individualism moderates the relationship between expressed emotion and third party complaining behavior such that as individualism increases the relationship between expressed emotion and third party complain intentions increases.

1.4. The moderating role of uncertainty avoidance

[Hofstede \(1984\)](#) defines uncertainty avoidance as the way people culturally program themselves to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in novel or surprising situations. Cultures that are high in uncertainty avoidance are characterized as having higher levels of nervous energy from unknown situations which manifest in high emotional expressiveness ([Hofstede, 2005](#)). According to [Hofstede \(2005, p. 171\)](#) cultures high in uncertainty avoidance "...are the places where people talk with their hands, where it is socially acceptable to raise one's voice, to show one's emotions, to pound the table." This compares to cultures low in uncertainty avoidance where people are more phlegmatic and less likely to express their emotions.

Empirical support for the moderating relationship of uncertainty avoidance between felt and displayed emotions is evident in a study by [Edelmann et al. \(1989\)](#). A rank order of the frequency of symptoms (body gestures, posture, eye contact) corresponded to what one would expect relative to uncertainty avoidance. For instance, participants from Greece (regarded as a high uncertainty avoidance country) reported higher levels of physical display of their emotions than did participants from the UK (generalized as a low uncertainty avoidance country).

This suggests that in a service failure, the high uncertainty avoidant individual will experience increased stress or negativity associated with the incident. Hence:

Hypothesis 4. Uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between felt and expressed emotion such that as uncertainty avoidance increases the relationship between felt and expressed emotions increases.

The increase in negativity induced by the expression of emotion increases the likelihood of third party action which is particularly true for the high uncertainty avoidant consumer who feels personally threatened by the incident. In agreement with [Hofstede's \(1984\)](#) conceptualization, thus:

Hypothesis 5. Uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between expressed emotions and third party complaining behavior such that as uncertainty avoidance increases the relationship between expressed emotions and third party complaining behavior increases.

1.5. The moderating role of power distance

Power distance refers to the socially determined extent to which inequality among persons in different positions of power in a given culture is viewed as normal ([Hofstede, 1984](#)). This reflects the way in which interpersonal relationships form and develop when differences in power exist. Cultures receiving a high score on this dimension are those in which norms legitimize differences in power with low scores being indicative of those in which norms reduce power differences among people.

Since Hofstede's conducted his research in the area of business management, his findings relative to power distance relate mostly to dealings with people of varying status within an organization. Relative to emotion, a study by [Matsumoto \(2006\)](#) concludes that cultures that emphasize power distance will encourage the expression of emotions that maintain status and power differences and downplay emotional expressions that threaten this differential. In a service context where the consumer has greater power, you would expect consumers to be more willing to express and act on their heightened displeasure associated with a negative encounter. Therefore expectations are to find that unsatisfactory encounters in the service context results in greater expressive emotion and greater third party complaint intentions for the high power distance cultures. Therefore:

Hypothesis 6. Power distance moderates the relationship between felt and expressed emotion such that as power distance is greater so too will be the relationship between felt and expressed emotion increases.

Hypothesis 7. Power distance moderates the relationship between expressed emotion and third party such that as power distance increases so too will the relationship between felt and expressed emotion increases.

To summarize, consistent with Appraisal Theory expectations are to find empirical support for positive relationships between felt emotion and displayed emotion and displayed emotion on third party action against a service firm. Hofstede's cultural values (individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance) are believed to influence emotions internally felt relative to emotions externally displayed as well as intentions to voice a complaint to a third party. The relationships are shown in [Fig. 1](#).

2. Methods

Data collection occurred in Canada, Japan and Israel from undergraduate business students. Screening potential respondents took place by asking them if they had experienced a negative critical incident within the last six months when eating in a local fast food restaurant. Only those responding that they had been involved with a negative incident completed the questionnaire. This resulted in a total of 300 responses from Canada sample, 149 from Japan, and 115 from Israel.

2.1. Measures and measurement assessment

Four items drawn from [Izard's \(1977\)](#) scale were used to measure felt emotions. Response categories ranged from 1 (not felt at all) to 7 (strongly felt). The same four items were found to load together to form a factor labeled 'inner-passive negative emotions' in a study by [Stapley and Haviland \(1989\)](#). Expressed emotion was measured using six items derived from [Fernandez, Carrera, Sanchez, Paez, and Candia's \(2000\)](#) scale and designed to assess non-verbal aspects of expressed emotions. Respondents responded using categories that ranged from 1 (with very low intensity) to 7 (with very high intensity). Three items adapted from [Singh's \(1990\)](#) scale of third-party solutions to a service failure are used to measure complaining behavior. Response categories ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7

Summary of Results

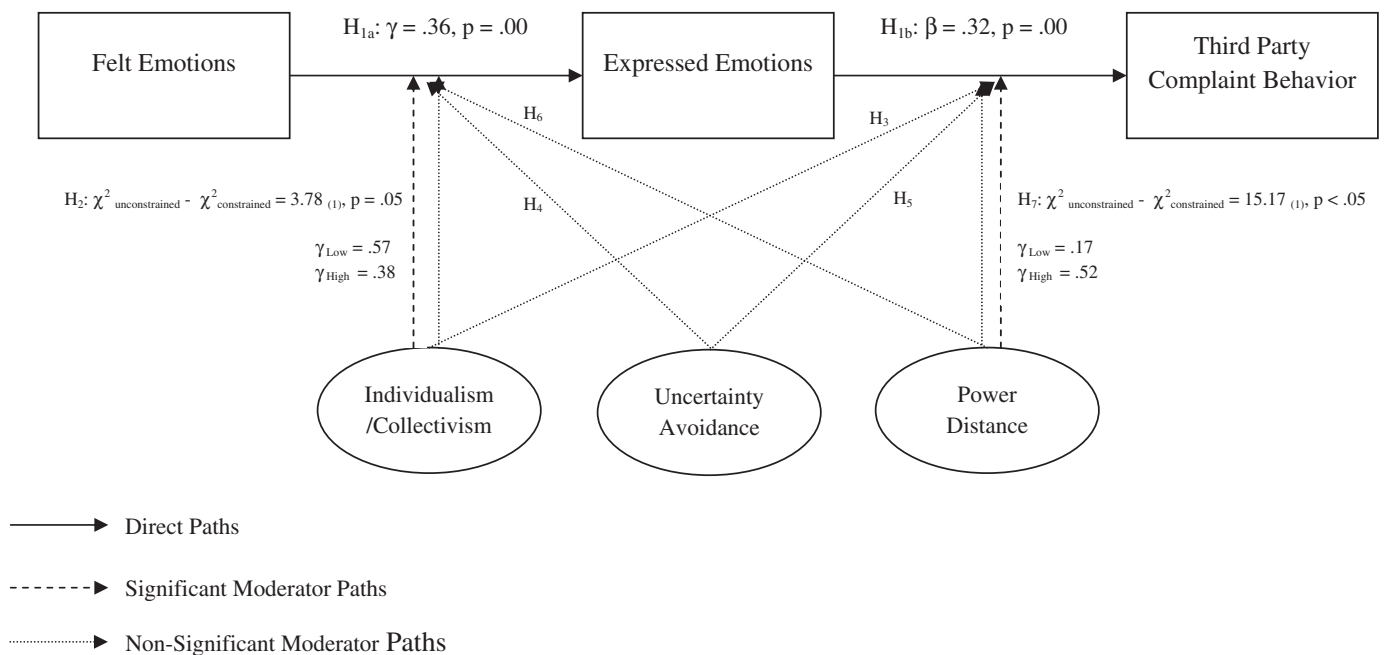


Fig. 1. Summary of results.

(strongly agree). Finally, the three dimensions of culture to be used as moderators were measured using the CVSCALE (Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Yoo et al., forthcoming; Yoo & Donthu, 2002). This scale was designed specifically to assess Hofstede's cultural dimensions at the individual level. The scale has been used in a variety of research contexts and has exhibited good validity/reliability (Soares, Farhangmehr, & Shoham, 2007). Responses categories ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree) for all three dimensions. Tables 1 and 2 provide the specific items, factor loadings and *t*-values for the constructs.

2.2. Assessment of felt emotion, expressed emotion, and third-party complaint behavior

The assessment of measure validity and reliability began with the submission of the measures to a confirmatory factor analysis via LISREL (Joreskog & Sorbom, 2001) for each sample separately in order to be sure the factor structure would hold within each sample and to assess discriminant validity. The factor structure held up well across all three samples with the fit indices for each being within the ranges specified in the literature as being acceptable (CFI and TLI > .09; RMSEA < .10; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). In addition, convergent validity was evident by the fact that all loadings had associated *t*-values greater than 2.0 (Segars, 1997).

The procedure outlined by Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips (1991) was used to assess discriminant validity. High levels of discriminant validity exist between the three constructs in the model across all three samples with the χ^2 differences ranging from 37.62 to 401.21. Calculation of composite reliability allows the assessment of reliability. All of these values were above cutoff value of .70 with the exception of the value for felt emotion for the Israel sample which is .61 and the value for felt emotion for the Canada value which is .66.

2.3. Measure invariance

Since the data came from three different countries, the extent to which the measures are invariant across the countries was examined

(Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Utilization of RMSEA, CFI, and TLI allowed comparison of the models. The χ^2 statistic allows tests of differences across different types of invariance. In addition, following suggestions by Cheung and Rensvold (2002), analysis of the change in CFI and TLI using their criteria of any change of less than $-.02$ indicating an acceptable difference aids in the further assessment of changes between the models.

The first step in assessing measurement invariance is to test for configural invariance which resulted in an adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 386.67_{(186)}$, RMSEA = .07, TLI = .92, CFI = .93).

The next step is to test for metric invariance. This occurs by constraining the factor loadings to be equal across the three samples. The test of full metric invariance resulted in a significant reduction in the fit of the data ($\chi^2_{unconstrained} - \chi^2_{constrained} = 113.47_{(20)}, p = .00$) with the changes in TLI and CFI being $-.03$ and $-.03$, respectively. Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998) suggest that if full metric invariance does not exist, partial metric invariance will prove acceptable as long as one item other than the item used to set the scale metric is invariant. Analysis of modification indices and expected parameter changes allowed the identification of poorly performing items which led to the sequential relaxation of the invariance restrictions for appropriate items across the appropriate groups (e.g., Canada and Japan; Canada and Israel; Israel and Japan). Relaxing the constraints on a number of items led to the identification of a model that did not differ significantly from the configural invariance model. The difference in the χ^2 values between the constrained and final unconstrained model with 12 degrees of freedom was 19.03 which is less than the critical value of 21.03 ($p = .08$). Both the TLI and CFI exhibited no differences from the initial model.

Factor covariance invariance assessment occurred next due having satisfied the requirements for metric invariance. The test of full factor covariance invariance resulted in a deterioration in fit based on the χ^2 difference ($\chi^2_{unconstrained} - \chi^2_{constrained} = 19.4_{(5)}, p = .00$) although the differences in TLI and CFI did not indicate a significant reduction in fit ($\Delta TLI = -.003$, $\Delta CFI = -.005$). An investigation of the diagnostics resulted in the freeing of the covariance between felt emotion and

Table 1
Estimates for felt emotion, expressed emotion, and third-party complaining behavior after invariance analysis.

Item	Israel sample ^a	Japanese sample ^a	Quebec sample ^a
Felt emotion			
Sadness (Felt 1)	1.00 (---)	1.00* (---)	1.00 (---)
Shyness/shame (Felt 2)	.66 (2.85)	.96 (5.66)	1.42 (7.06)
Guilt (Felt 3)	.78 (7.40)	.57 (5.19)	.78 (7.40)
Fear (Felt 4)	1.03 (8.54)	1.03 (8.54)	1.03 (8.54)
Composite reliability	.61	.70	.66
Expressed emotion			
Not verbally communicating one's disapproval with the cause of anger, one's disagreement (leaving the room, slamming the door, etc.) (Exp 1)	1.00 (---)	1.00 (---)	1.00 (---)
Clenching one's fists (Exp 2)	.98 (5.98)	1.61 (6.97)	1.57 (8.46)
Threatening aggressive gestures (Exp 3)	1.24 (8.96)	.30 (2.10)	1.24 (8.96)
Not smiling/frowning (Exp 4)	1.09 (6.99)	1.09 (6.99)	1.09 (6.99)
Heavy, walk, stomping (Exp 5)	1.38 (9.02)	1.38 (9.02)	1.38 (9.02)
Grinding one's teeth (Exp 6)	1.56 (9.45)	1.56 (9.45)	1.56 (9.45)
Composite reliability	.81	.72	.79
Complaining			
Complain to a consumer agency and ask them to make the restaurant take care of your problem? (Com 1)	1.00 (---)	1.00 (---)	1.00 (---)
Write a letter to the local newspaper about your bad experience? (Com 2)	.98 (78.39)	.98 (78.39)	.98 (78.39)
Report to the consumer agency so that they can warn other consumers? (Com 3)	1.06 (21.59)	.98 (25.56)	1.50 (16.30)
Composite reliability	.95	.98	.88

Fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 405.54$ (204), RMSEA = .072, TLI = .920, CFI = .931.

^a Values in cells represent factor loadings with associated *t*-values in parentheses (“—” represents those items fixed at 1.00 to set the scale metric).

expressed emotion for the Japan sample. This resulted in a fit that was not significantly different from the final partial metric invariance model based on the difference in the χ^2 values ($\chi^2_{\text{unconstrained}} - \chi^2_{\text{constrained}} = 3.68$ (4), $p = .45$). In addition, the TLI and CFI indicated a model that fit equally as well (CFI = .93) or even better (TLI = .92) than the final metric invariance model. These analyses provide support for pooling data across the samples for the purposes of the hypotheses tests. Table 1 presents the final factor loadings and the fit statistics across the three samples.

2.4. Assessment of cultural dimensions

The assessment of the cultural dimensions proceeded exactly in the same manner as that for the other constructs. First, a confirmatory factor analysis model was estimated separately across the three samples. For each of the three samples the fit statistics were within the ranges deemed acceptable. In addition, all the *t*-values were above 2.0 indicating evidence of convergent validity. Assessment of discriminant validity occurred using the procedure described by Bagozzi et al. (1991). The differences in χ^2 between the constrained and unconstrained models were between 21.42 and 169.42 which provide good evidence of discriminant validity. The composite reliability values were all at or above the acceptable minimum value of .70.

2.5. Measure invariance

Configural invariance was shown via the fact that the model fit was quite good. The next test was for full metric invariance which requires

Table 2
Estimates for individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance after invariance analysis.

Item	All samples ^a
Individualism	
Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group that they belong to	1.00 ^b (---)
Group welfare is more important than individual rewards	1.55 (13.97)
Group success is more important than individual success	1.40 (13.86)
Individuals should pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group	1.01 (10.74)
Composite reliability	.90
Power distance	
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions	1.00 (---)
People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently	1.05 (17.30)
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions	.94 (16.27)
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions	.82 (12.22)
Composite reliability	.92
Uncertainty avoidance	
High stress and subjective feelings of anxiety are frequent among people	1.00 (---)
Fear of ambiguous situations and of unfamiliar risks is normal	1.20 (8.27)
Uncertainty is a normal feature of life and each day is accepted as it comes	1.09 (8.32)
Composite reliability	.74

Fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 183.93$ (145), RMSEA = .035, TLI = .976, CFI = .979.

^a Parameter estimates are equal across all groups since the tests for invariance did not require any items to be estimated separately for any groups.

^b Values in cells represent factor loadings with associated *t*-values in parentheses (“—” represents those items fixed at 1.00 to set the scale metric).

that all factor loadings to be invariant across the three groups. The test of full metric invariance did not lead to a significant degradation in the fit of the model based on the differences in the χ^2 -values ($\chi^2_{\text{unconstrained}} - \chi^2_{\text{constrained}} = 22.76$ (16), $p = .12$) or in the change in the TLI (–.002) or CFI (–.004) values. The next test was for full factor covariance invariance. Again, there was not a significant reduction in model fit from the full metric invariance model based on χ^2 -values ($\chi^2_{\text{unconstrained}} - \chi^2_{\text{constrained}} = 6.06$ (6), $p = .42$) or changes in the TLI (.001) or CFI (.000) values. This provides support for the conclusion that the cultural dimensions are invariant across the three samples. Table 2 provides final item loadings and fit statistics.

3. Findings

The relationships between felt emotion, expressed emotion, and third party complaint intentions (H1a and H1b) were tested via LISREL (Joreskog & Sorbom, 2001) utilizing the pooled data from the three samples. Although the model did not fit based on the χ^2 test ($\chi^2 = 150.46$ (63), $p = .00$) the other fit indices indicated a very good fit to the data (RMSEA = .05, TLI = .95, CFI = .96). The paths were as hypothesized with felt emotion being positively related to expressed emotion ($\gamma = .36$, *t*-value = 5.98, $p = .00$) and expressed emotion being positively related to third party complaint intentions ($\beta = .32$, *t*-value = 5.79, $p = .00$) thus providing support for Hypotheses 1a and 1b, respectively.

Tests of the moderating effects proposed in H2–H7 were accomplished using multi-group analysis in LISREL. This was accomplished by splitting the sample at the median for each of the three dimensions (median and mean values were: 2.00 and 2.11 for power distance, 3.50 and 3.42 for individualism, and 5.00 and 5.07 for uncertainty avoidance) to create a “high” and “low” group for each of the cultural dimensions and running the analysis to determine if the coefficients for the paths between (1) felt emotion and expressed emotion and (2) expressed emotion and third party complaint intentions were different across the groups. This analysis

proceeded for each cultural dimension individually as well as the two paths between the three constructs. The paths were constrained to be equal across both groups and then each path was allowed to be freely estimated across both groups and the resulting χ^2 values were compared to determine if the value from the unconstrained model was more than 3.84 (the critical value of with one degree of freedom) less than the constrained model.

The results of the moderating tests indicated there are two moderating effects. First, individualism moderates the relationship between expressed emotions and felt emotions as the difference in the χ^2 value between the constrained and unconstrained model is 3.87. In this case, the coefficient for the “low” group is .57 while that for the “high” group is .38. The scale is used to measure individualism is such that lower scores indicate individualism while higher scores indicate collectivism. Therefore, the fact that the coefficient for the low group is higher than that for the high group supports H2 which proposed that as individualism increased so to would the relationship between felt and expressed emotion. Second, power distance moderates the relationship between expressed emotions and third party complaint intentions. The difference in the χ^2 value between the constrained and unconstrained model is 15.17. The coefficients for the “high” power distance group is .52 while the coefficient for the “low” group is .17 indicating that as power distance increases the relationship between expressed emotions and third party complaint intentions will increase which provides support for H7.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the extent to which felt emotions and expressed emotions result in specific behaviors after a service failure. The focus on non-verbal expressions of emotion derives from the fact that while many service marketers provide explicit means for consumers to provide feedback after service encounters, many consumers may still elect to express their emotions in more subtle ways that may not be easily identified by the service marketer. If a consumer elects to communicate a negative service encounter via the utilization of non-verbal forms of communication and that communication is not recognized by the service provider this may lead to a further deterioration in the consumer's feeling towards the service provider and increase the likelihood that the consumer will elect to utilize some other form of complaining such as the use of a third party. Results provide support for the proposed relationships.

In addition to investigating the relationships described above, the research endeavored to discover if those relationships differ due to cultural differences. The current rate of globalization and the significant role of services in the economies of developing countries calls for research investigating a cross-cultural framework whenever possible. Accordingly, the research presented here incorporates three of Hofstede's (1984, 2001) five cultural dimensions as possible moderators of the two relationships described above. Of the six moderating tests conducted only two resulted in significant moderating effects. The first, that cultures high in individualism are ones in which individuals are more likely to act on their emotions rather than subjugate themselves to the will of the larger group. On one hand this is good news as this provides feedback regarding the failure that can be acted on quickly. However, if, as is the case in this study, the expressions of emotion are non-verbal and more subtle the study findings indicate that service providers must be more vigilant with regard to observing consumers who may communicate their displeasure in this manner.

The second significant moderating effect was for the impact of power distance on the relationship between expressed emotion and third party complaining behavior. As hypothesized, increases in power distance were associated with a stronger relationship between expressed emotions and third party complaining behavior. To the extent that service providers hew to a “customer is always right” viewpoint the power in the relationship is with the customer. And since in high power distance cultures one would expect those in a higher power position to

be more willing and able to express their emotions results are consistent with what might be expected.

While there were two moderating effects found, the majority of the moderating hypotheses were not supported. McClelland and Judd (1993) offer a number of reasons why moderating effects may be difficult to find in field studies including the impact of measurement error. While the data collection methods employed as well as assessments of the measures used in the study provide confidence regarding the validity and reliability of the measures, the fact that data collection occurred across three different countries increases the possibility that some amount of measurement error could be acting to mask potentially significant moderating effects.

A second possible explanation is that perhaps culture is not “fine-grained” enough to allow the determination of possible differences in the relationships investigated. For example, Matsumoto (2006) has argued that in some instances differences in culture do not matter but rather differences in aggregate levels of personality within a country do. Therefore, the conclusion is that to the extent the relationships explored here might be expected to differ as a function of a third variable, that third variable does not appear to be culture but some other variable such as personality.

The most significant finding is the positive relationship between non-verbal forms of emotional expression following a service failure and the use of third party complaint mechanisms. Service providers should be more vigilant with regard to observing customer's post-service behaviors, particularly with regard to monitoring possible non-verbal forms communication indicating the perception of a service failure. Service providers should incorporate the recognition of non-verbal forms of negative emotions into training for new service employees to reduce the possibility that a signal a customer believes he/she is sending would be missed.

As with any study of this type there are limitations. First, the assessment of moderating effects is limited to cultural-level constructs. Similar to Matsumoto's (2006) work, there may be other variables which could be have included as possible moderators which would have led to the finding of more significant moderating effects. Second, while there is some confidence that the measures exhibit an adequate level of validity and reliability the fact remains that some of the constructs had reliability levels below that which would normally be preferred. It should also be noted that the data for the study was drawn from undergraduate business students which could have some impact on the generalizability of the results. However, we will point out that the context of the study, restaurants, is one which students should be familiar and for which their perceptions should be similar to other, older consumers. Finally, we should point out that the items used to measure felt emotions might not best represent the types of emotions that would be felt after a service failure. However, we believe that as first study which investigates the impact of culture on emotions in a services context that our study does make a significant contribution if for no other reason that it may lead to further research which builds on that presented in this paper.

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