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Cultural Values as a Moderator of the Emotion Suppression to Strain Relationship: A Comparison of Two Dominant Theoretical Mechanisms

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Cultural Values as a Moderator of the Emotion Suppression to Strain Relationship: A
Comparison of Two Dominant Theoretical Mechanisms

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a concentration in Industrial-Organizational Psychology
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ABSTRACT

Although the relationship between emotion regulation and deleterious health outcomes is a robust finding in Western cultures, studies show that this effect is attenuated in non-Western cultures. The present study employed an experience sampling method to examine the mitigating effect of cultural values (i.e., individual-level collectivism) on the relationship between emotion regulation and employee strain (i.e., job satisfaction and anxiety) through the theoretical models of emotional dissonance and resource loss (operationalized as inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion). Using data collected from 182 adults working in the service industry, I ran a multilevel path analysis to test the study's hypotheses. Results indicated that both inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion significantly mediated the relationship between emotion suppression and job satisfaction. Emotional exhaustion also mediated the relationship between emotion suppression and anxiety. Furthermore, individual-level collectivism moderated the relationship between suppression and inauthenticity such that those who report mid and high levels of collectivism reported low levels of inauthenticity whereas those with low collectivism reported high inauthenticity when they suppress. These results suggest that, while suppression can be toxic, cultural values can be protective and promote improved well-being.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Emotions are a universal experience. Likewise, emotion regulation, the process of managing when and how we experience emotions (Gross, 1998b), is a ubiquitous and necessary part of everyday life. At work, employees manage their emotions to adhere to the display rules prescribed by the organization (Ekman, 1992; Grandey, 2000). For example, service workers suppress and/or upregulate their emotions to provide ‘service with a smile’, tax auditors feign a stern attitude to handle difficult conversations, and judges downregulate their emotions to maintain an impartial demeanor. Although emotion regulation may be an essential part of the work role (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), habitual emotion regulation can be detrimental to employees’ health and well-being (Grandey, 2003; Gross & John, 2003). Particularly, the emotional labor and emotion regulation literature identifies emotion suppression (i.e. masking one’s true feelings) as a stressor that is associated with personal outcomes such as increased emotional exhaustion and mental fatigue (Alabak et al., 2019; Nixon et al., 2020) and employee outcomes such as increased job burnout, turnover intention, and decreased job satisfaction (Diefendorff et al., 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013).

Although the relationship between emotion regulation on employee health is broadly studied and its deleterious effects are well established, cross-cultural studies indicate that the negative relationship between emotion regulation and well-being, a core finding in this literature, may not generalize across all cultures (Allen et al., 2014; Butler et al., 2007; Grandey et al., 2005; Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). A comparison of the association between emotion regulation

in Chinese and European-American students revealed emotion suppression to be positively related to depressed mood and negatively related to life satisfaction in the European-American sample, but not in the Chinese sample (Soto et al., 2011). Similarly, Allen and colleagues (2014) found that the positive relationship between surface acting (i.e., emotion suppression) and burnout was significantly weaker in the Chinese sample compared to the US sample. These discrepant findings suggest that there are conditions under which emotion regulation does not have a strong negative effect. Studying such boundary conditions of emotion regulation on health has important implications for the workplace and worker health as the modification of one's emotions is a crucial part of most work contexts.

Scholars propose that cultural values such as collectivism act as a buffer that mitigate the negative relationship between emotion regulation and health outcomes (Nixon et al., 2020). However, direct evidence examining the mechanisms by which cultural values attenuate the damaging effects of emotion regulation on employee well-being is largely unexplored. Theoretical models suggest that emotion regulation may lead to poor health outcomes through two mechanisms: emotional dissonance and resource loss (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Emotional dissonance theory suggests that an individual feels a sense of tension when felt and expressed emotions are not in alignment. This tension is caused by a perceived self-inauthenticity and a lack of control over one's own emotions (Hochschild, 1983; Pugh, 2011). Employees that perceive this threat to their identity report feeling anxious, depressed, and discontent with their jobs (Sheldon et al., 1997). Alternatively, the conservation of resource theory suggests that suppression depletes motivational and social resources, leaving employees feeling emotionally drained and worn out (van Gelderen et al., 2007). While both models have

received support across the literature (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hulsheger & Schewe 2011), our understanding of the emotion suppression-strain process remains divided.

The current study seeks to address the above gap in literature and extend existing research by examining the mitigating effect of cultural values on the relationship between emotion regulation and employee strain through the theoretical models of emotional dissonance and resource loss. In doing so, this study makes three pertinent contributions. First, the present contributes a much-needed multicultural perspective to the currently robust research on emotional regulation by examining a culturally diverse sample. A large proportion of existing research examining the consequences of emotions is western-centric. This restricts the applicability of current findings. Expanding the scope of research beyond western samples allows researchers to detect cultural differences in relationships that might otherwise be considered concrete.

Second, this study addresses Grandey and Gabriel's call for a comparison of the theoretical mechanisms that underpin the emotion suppression-health relationship (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). By assessing the prevailing pathway through which suppression exerts its negative influences on health and well-being, organizations can create targeted training and intervention programs to reduce the impact of emotion suppression for employees.

Third, this study expands on Grandey and Gabriel's call by comparing the mitigating influence of cultural values through the competing emotional dissonance and resource loss models. Identifying the salient mechanism that drives culture's buffering effect not only demystifies the findings observed in extant cross-cultural studies but also provides practitioners and organizations with insight on how to create systems that cater to the needs of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. Capturing and understanding these differences is especially

important in the nation's increasingly globalized workforce (Allen et al., 2014; Grandey et al., 2005).

Literature Review

Emotions are an ever-present, daily phenomenon. However, there are situations in which individuals are unable to freely express their true emotions as they are felt (Alam et al., 2019). In the workplace, explicit rules and unwritten expectations govern the types of emotions individuals can show and to whom that can show them (Ekman, 1992). In instances where workers are unable to express their authentic emotions, they rely on emotion regulation strategies to adjust their expressed emotions to the display requirements of their jobs. However, constantly managing one's emotions can be damaging to one's health. In the following, I will discuss the effect of cultural value orientation on the well-established negative relationship between emotion regulation and health outcomes. Specifically, I will (a) describe the prevailing frameworks for understanding emotion regulation, (b) the consequences of emotion regulation, (c) theoretical mediators of the emotion regulation process, and (d) cultural values as a mitigating factor in the emotion regulation to strain process.

Theoretical Perspectives on Emotion Regulation

Throughout literature, scholars have conceptualized and examined emotion regulation through two theoretical frameworks. The first is the process model of emotion regulation proposed by James Gross (1998) and the second is Alicia Grandey's emotional labor model (2000).

Process Model of Emotion Regulation

Gross's process model is perhaps the most dominant model of emotion regulation. He defines emotion regulation as the process of managing one's experience and expression of

emotional states (Gross, 1998). The model draws its origins from an emotion generation framework (Gross, 1998). According to this modal model of emotion, emotions involve a transaction between a person and the person's current situation and ends in an emotional response (Gross, 1998, 2013). Stated differently, emotions follow a situation-attention-appraisal-response sequence. For an emotional *response* to be generated, an individual must first be exposed to a psychologically relevant *situation*. *Attention* must then be given to that situation. Finally, it must be *appraised* as meaningful. To illustrate the emotion generation process, consider the following example. An uncivil customer storms into a Starbucks and aggressively orders a drink. To the attending barista, this is a psychologically relevant situation. She must take the customer's order as it is within her duties as a barista, so she gives her attention to the situation. She appraises the situation as uncomfortable and finally responds with visible upset.

Gross's model of emotion regulation builds on the emotion generation process by treating each step in the emotion generation sequence as a "target for regulation" (Gross, 2013, p. 7). This result is five emotion regulation strategies. The first strategy is *situation selection*, which involves avoiding unpleasant situations or approaching pleasant ones. Continuing with the example above, the barista may select against such a situation by quitting her job. The second is *situational modification*, which is implemented if one's situation is not within their discretion. Situation modification refers to changing aspects of the situation to alter its emotional impact. In this case, the barista may modify the situation by asking her coworker to handle the customer on her behalf.

Attentional deployment, the shifting of attention away from the situation or its emotional components, is the third emotion regulation strategy. It may manifest in the form of distracting oneself by focusing on the non-emotional parts of a situation and concentrating cognitive

resources into tasks other than the emotionally stimulating situation (Gross, 1998; 2001). For example, the barista may distract herself by reflecting on happy thoughts while dealing with the customer. Alternatively, she may reappraise the situation by being thankful that she has a job to begin with. This is an example of the fourth strategy, known as *cognitive change*. It involves changing the meaning one attaches to an emotional stimulus by changing the way they think about the target situation. This may take the form of perspective-taking (i.e. taking on the perspective of the person eliciting the emotions) or positive reappraisal (i.e. reinterpreting the situation in a more positive light; Gross, 2001). The final strategy is *response modulation*, which involves directly modifying one's emotional response. The most common form of response modulation is emotion suppression, which refers to inhibiting an on-going emotional response (Gross, 2001). In this case, the barista may suppress her upset behavioral expression by forcing herself to serve the customer with a smile.

Gross's model further distinguishes between antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulation based on the location along the emotion generation timeline. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation occurs before an emotional response is generated, whereas response-focused occurs after an emotional response has been generated. In other words, antecedent-focused regulation involves managing the precursors of emotion such as the situation or the appraisal thereof, and response-focused regulation involves managing the behavioral signs of emotions (Grandey, 2000).

Strategies of emotion regulation are differentially associated with employee outcomes. Meta-analytic findings examining the relationship between emotion regulation strategies and emotional outcomes such as anxiety and negative affect revealed that cognitive change is the most effective strategy in predicting emotional outcomes followed by response modulation and

attentional deployment (Webb et al., 2012). Specifically, reappraisal and perspective-taking had a medium overall positive effect ($d = .23, .36$ respectively). Although distraction had a medium positive effect size ($d = .27$), concentration had a negative effect ($d = -.26$), which nullified the overall effect of attentional deployment. Finally, emotion suppression was related to adverse emotional outcomes ($d = .32$; Webb et al., 2012). This finding is corroborated by numerous studies that show suppression to be positively related to anxiety, depressive mood, burnout, and negatively related to job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and cognitive functioning (Butler et al., 2003; Butler & Gross, 2009; Hulsheger et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2008; Soto et al., 2011). Taken together, although emotion regulation strategies are generally adaptive, these studies reveal that the suppression of emotions is especially injurious to one's health and well-being.

Emotional Labor

Largely complementing Gross's model of emotion regulation, Grandey's model of emotional labor focuses on the regulation of emotions at work (Grandey, 2000). Drawing on the sociological roots of Hochschild's work (Hochschild, 1983), Grandey describes emotional labor as the process of managing one's felt and expressed emotions to conform to organizational display standards (Grandey, 2000). The topic of emotional labor is scarcely discussed without mention of service industries as examples of work environments with rigid display rules. Individuals who work in customer service roles are obligated by organizational rules to maintain a cheerful and respectful demeanor when engaging with customers. When workers perceive that they must regulate their emotions to match organizational display rules, the emotional labor framework suggests that they engage in one of two emotion regulation strategies: deep acting or surface acting.

Deep acting refers to the management of one's inner feelings with the goal of aligning one's true feelings with the organization's emotional requirements. This strategy is meant to bring forth emotions that are genuinely in line with display requirements. Deep acting may take the form of perspective-taking or self-talk to draw forth genuine emotions. Continuing with the example described above, the Starbucks barista may perform deep acting by placing herself in the customer's shoes. She may also tell herself that such an encounter is not worth being upset about. Contrary to deep acting, surface acting refers to the management of one's visible emotional expressions without altering one's inner feelings. Rather than producing genuine emotions as with deep acting, surface acting involves faking and/or suppressing felt emotions to meet organizational display requirements (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 2003). For example, the barista may repress her initial inclination to frown and/or fake a smile to pretend she is unbothered.

Surface acting and deep acting have vastly different relationships with organizational outcomes. Like emotion suppression, surface acting is consistently related to negative outcomes such as burnout, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention. Conversely, deep acting does not show the same negative consequences on health (Alabak et al., 2019; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Scholars suggest that the constant monitoring and adjusting one's emotions, as is done when surface acting, is cognitively and emotionally taxing. For example, repressing negative emotions and upregulating positive ones throughout a standard workday requires constant awareness of felt emotions and behavioral expressions and a continuous balancing of felt and expressed emotions. On the other hand, deep acting requires less cognitive resources (Alabak et al., 2019; Nixon et al., 2020). For example, the application of a positive mindset as in positive reappraisal might need to be done only once for it to be sustained throughout the day. Furthermore, deep

acting produces genuine emotions which attenuates the negative impact on well-being (Grandey, 2000).

There is a striking similarity between Gross's model of emotion regulation and Grandey's emotional labor framework. In particular, Grandey (2000) suggests that deep acting parallels antecedent-focused emotion regulation in that it seeks to modify feelings before an emotion is fully developed. Similarly, surface acting parallels response-focused emotion regulation in that it seeks to change already developed emotions (Grandey, 2000). More specifically, scholars classify the emotion regulation strategies of cognitive change (i.e. perspective-taking and positive reappraisal) and attentional deployment (i.e. distraction and concentration) as subtypes of deep acting (Alabak et al., 2019). Likewise, emotion suppression is considered a subtype of surface acting (Grandey, 2000). In addition to conceptual similarities, scholars note that both bodies of literature drawn similar conclusions in terms of the relationship between emotion regulation and employee outcomes (Grandey, 2015).

Despite this overlap, Grandey emphasizes that the two frameworks are not identical. Unlike antecedent-focused regulation that emphasizes reappraisal, deep acting highlights attempts to appear genuine. Similarly, surface acting involves faking and upregulating emotions in addition to suppression, which is the central focus of response-focused emotion regulation. Nevertheless, the conceptual similarity allows researchers to draw from both theoretical frameworks when studying emotion regulation (Grandey, 2015). In particular, suppression/surface acting has received considerable attention for its robust relationship with adverse psychological and physiological outcomes. Therefore, focusing on emotion suppression as a predictor of unhealthy employee outcomes, I draw from both the emotion regulation and emotional labor literature to inform my hypotheses (see Figure 1 in Appendix A).

Cultural Values as it Relates to Suppression and Employee Outcomes

While a robust literature connecting emotion suppression and adverse psychological and physiological outcomes exists, research has primarily been conducted in Western cultures with a dearth of studies on non-Western populations. This lack of research is problematic because cultural values influence our propensity to engage in particular emotion regulation strategies (Allen et al., 2014; Eid & Diener, 2001; Mesquita, 2001). A person's values describe their preference for particular conditions or situations over others (Hofstede, 2011). For example, one might value spending time with family over pursuing a career that is lucrative but excessively time-consuming. Culture describes a collective system of values and patterned ways of thinking that distinguishes societies (Hofstede, 2011). Extending beyond mere routines, rituals, and cuisine, culture describes the "shared implicit beliefs and tacit values that differentiate one cultural group from another" (Taras et al., 2011, p. 190). In today's global economy, understanding the influence of cultural values on workplace outcomes is a key contributor to the success of an organization. This is especially true in multinational organizations as cultural values can provide critical information about workers' leadership preferences, communication style, conflict handling preferences, fairness perception, work design, and group dynamics, which allows employers to better cater to the needs of their employees (Taras et al., 2011). Failure to understand the cultural values of the society has capsized the attempts of several organizations to expand their business internationally (Taras et al., 2011).

Beyond organizational success, cultural values influence the way individuals interpret and express emotions and are predictive of emotions, attitudes, and individual perceptions (Taras et al., 2011). Scholars suggest that our preferences for the type and intensity of emotions we experience, as well as our general tendencies toward behavioral responses and thought patterns,

are a reflection of cultural values (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Moreover, literature asserts that culture influences the tendency to engage in specific emotion regulation strategies (Matsumoto et al., 2008). For example, Butler and colleagues found that emotion suppression is endorsed more often in Eastern cultures such as Japan than in Western cultures (Butler et al., 2007).

The robust relationship between emotion regulation and adverse employee well-being observed in Western samples does not generalize across all cultures (Allen, et al., 2014). Indeed, Nixon and colleagues (2020) revealed that cultural values attenuate the negative effects of emotion suppression on organizational outcomes in Turkish participants, but not in their US sample. Although this study finds evidence that the consequences of emotion suppression vary across cultures, empirical research investigating specifically how culture exerts its influence is largely unexplored. Thus, the current study examines the moderating effect of cultural values on the suppression to strain relationship. In the following section, I discuss the effect of cultural values- in the form of individual-level collectivism- through two theoretically central mechanisms that explain the emotion suppression-strain relationship: emotional dissonance and resource loss.

Emotional Dissonance

The theory of emotional dissonance proposed by Charlie Hochschild (1983) is adopted from Festinger's earlier work on cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007). Cognitive dissonance suggests that individuals hold cognitions that are either consistent or in conflict with each other. He terms consistent cognitions as "consonant" and conflicting cognitions as "dissonant." When individuals experience dissonant cognitions, they enter into a state of unpleasantness and discomfort known as cognitive dissonance. This

dissonance occurs when a person perceives they are behaving in a way that violates their sense of self and identity. Remaining in that state of discomfort is harmful, and so individuals are motivated to engage in behaviors that will reduce the dissonance (Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007; Pugh et al., 2011).

Like cognitive dissonance, emotional dissonance suggests that individuals experience a sense of tension when felt and expressed emotions are not in alignment. This tension is caused by a perception of self-inauthenticity and a lack of control over one's emotions (Hochschild, 1983; Pugh, 2011). Special emphasis is placed on the violation of the self-concept. Inconsistent feelings and actions are not sufficient conditions to elicit a state of dissonance. Individuals must perceive that their self-concept is being threatened for dissonance to occur. For example, people may comfortably engage in emotionally inconsistent behavior if it affirms aspects of their self-concept (Pugh et al., 2011).

Emotion suppression by definition necessitates behaving in a manner that is emotionally inconsistent; they must hide their true emotions in favor of socially "acceptable" emotional displays. Assuming an Anglo-central society, most individuals value emotional freedom and have an overall positive self-concept. Therefore, it is expected that emotion suppression would engender a sense of emotional dissonance. This relationship is consistently supported by numerous studies. However, these studies frequently assess dissonance in terms of perceived discomfort and emotional incongruence (Kwak et al., 2018), largely ignoring the violation of the self-concept. Thus, the current study examines emotional dissonance in the form of self-inauthenticity, which captures the self-inconsistency criteria proposed in dissonance theory and provides a better way to explore the mitigating effect of cultural values.

Hypothesis 1. Emotion suppression is positively related to perceived inauthenticity.

While it is true that individuals are motivated to reduce the discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions, there are circumstances where alleviating this tension is not possible. For example, in the workplace, there are strict emotional display regulations. If employees' emotional responses are not in line with the emotional requirements of the organization, they have no choice but to engage in response modulation, typically in the form of emotion suppression. Remaining in this state of self and emotional inconsistency can relate to adverse personal and work-related outcomes (Hochschild, 1983).

Empirical research has shown support for this rationale. Research by van Gelderen and colleagues (2007; 2017) revealed a positive relationship between emotional dissonance and psychological strain. Van den Bosch and Taris (2014) also found that authenticity had significantly positive relationships with work engagement, in-role performance, and job satisfaction and negative relationships with stress and negative affect. Furthermore, Rogers (1961), in an analysis of inauthenticity, found that prolonged feelings of being unable to express one's authentic emotions increase the risk for anxiety and depression (Rogers as cited in English & John, 2013). Similarly, when employees are constantly in a state of tension due to perceived inauthenticity, they will feel less satisfied with their jobs (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). Building on these findings, I propose that feelings of self-inauthenticity will predict adverse personal and work-related outcomes. Specifically, I propose that the feeling of inauthenticity acts as a stressor that will increase anxiety and lower job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2. Perceived inauthenticity is positively related to (a) anxiety and (b) negatively related to job satisfaction.

A large body of research supports a direct relationship between emotion regulation and several indicators of injurious employee outcomes (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). However, scholars posit that emotional dissonance is an underlying mechanism that drives this relationship. That is, when individuals suppress their true emotions, they perceive a violation of their need for authentic self-expression, resulting in tension manifested in the form of emotional strain (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Judge et al., 2009; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). This mediating mechanism is underscored in the crux of dissonance theory which states that it is the feeling of inauthenticity that solidifies the negative consequence (Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007; Pugh et al., 2011). However, empirical tests of dissonance as a mediator are few. One study examining emotional dissonance as an underlying mechanism that explains the relationship between emotional labor and burnout found emotional dissonance to be a partial mediator (Kwak et al., 2018; Van Dijk & Brown, 2006). Again, dissonance was measured with constructs that do not specify a threat to the self-concept. This study complements and extends previous work by proposing that perceived inauthenticity, a more proximal measure of dissonance, will mediate the effect of emotion suppression on anxiety and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3. Perceived inauthenticity mediates the relationship between emotion suppression and (a) anxiety and (b) job satisfaction.

Emotional dissonance theory assumes that people value being true to their self-concept, value the authentic expression of emotions, and experience strain when authentic self-expression is violated (Hochschild, 1983). However, these assumptions may not be invariably true. Pugh and colleagues (2011) argue that the extent to which expressive suppression negatively affects well-being depends on the value individuals place on emotional authenticity as it relates to their

self-concept. In other words, dissonance will occur only if the discrepancy between real and felt emotions threatens one's sense of self (Pugh et al., 2011). A sizable body of research has established that an individual's self-concept depends largely on their cultural contexts (Li et al., 2006; Miyamoto et al., 2018). It, therefore, follows that differences in felt dissonance may exist according to how individuals perceive themselves as prescribed by their cultural values.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) identify two categories of self-construal that are pervasive in Western and Eastern Asian cultures respectively: the independent and interdependent construal of the self. Individuals with an independent self-construal view the self as an individual, unique entity and focus their efforts on cultivating their unique potential (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This self-concept is typical of Western cultures that value individuality and unique expression. Conversely, the self-concept of individuals with an interdependent self-construal is largely dependent on the thoughts, behaviors, and feelings of others and one's status as a member of the society. This self-concept is common in Asian, African, and Hispanic societies where the cultural norm is to maintain a level of connectedness and social interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The differential impact of emotion suppression on worker outcomes across cultures can be understood in terms of differences in self-perception due to cultural values. Extant literature on emotion regulation and emotional labor regularly draws from Hofstede's dimensions of national culture to examine the differences in emotion norms and display rules across cultures. Specifically, scholars find that Individualism/Collectivism emerges as one of the most proximal constructs relevant in understanding how cultural value systems influence emotions, emotion regulation, and behaviors (Kitayama et al., 2000; Nixon et al., 2020; Taras et al., 2011). Individualism/collectivism (IC) refers to the extent to which individuals within a society are

unified into a group (Hofstede, 2011). Collectivism integrates Markus and Kitayama's self-concept theory as it involves the extent to which individuals affirm their identity through their connection with the group. Individuals holding collectivist values place an emphasis on maintaining harmony and a sense of belonging and relinquish their personal opinions in favor of the groups' decisions (Hofstede, 2011). Conversely, those holding individualistic ideals value speaking their mind, voicing personal opinions, and derive their identity from themselves and their accomplishments (Hofstede, 2011).

Applying the individualism/collectivism framework to emotion display rules and emotion regulation, scholars note that individualistic societies that value emotional freedom tend not to endorse the use of emotion suppression as a regular tactic in emotion regulation (Allen et al., 2014; Eid & Diener, 2001; Safdar et al., 2009). On the other hand, collectivistic societies that value group cohesion tend to suppress strong emotions that might disrupt group harmony (Marcus & Kitayama, 1991). In other words, emotion suppression serves a social purpose in a collectivistic society (Matsumoto, et al., 2008), which may cause it to *not* threaten the self-concept and consequently *not* elicit a sense of dissonance. Drawing from Pugh's (2011) proposition that dissonance occurs mainly when suppression violates one's self-concept and Grandey and Krannitz's (2015) conclusion that the negative consequences of emotion suppression are neutralized if suppression is authentic to one's cultural values, I predict that the extent to which emotion suppression relates to perceived inauthenticity (a measure of dissonance) depends on the individual's level of collectivism.

There is a growing consensus that national culture is not equivalent to individually held values (Cendales & Gómez Ortiz, 2018). Studies have shown within-country differences in culture at the individual level which indicates the heterogeneity of cultural values (Adler &

Aycan, 2018). From this, it can be expected that individual-level measures of culture may have a more proximal influence on day-to-day behaviors and expressions. In a meta-analytic study of the predictive validity of cultural values and organizational outcomes, Taras and colleagues (2010) found that individual-level cultural values were almost as predictive of emotions, attitudes, and behaviors as personality and general mental ability. Thus, this study examines individual-level collectivism as an index of intrapersonal cultural values.

Hypothesis 4. Collectivism moderates the relationship between emotion suppression and perceived inauthenticity such that the relationship will be weaker for individuals higher on collectivism than for individuals lower on collectivism.

Resource Loss

While emotion dissonance has received considerable attention, it is not the only proposed mechanism that explains the relationship between emotion regulation and strain. Resource loss, the expenditure of finite resources, is another mechanism through which emotion regulation relates to negative health outcomes (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Scholars suggest that ineffective emotion regulation strategies such as emotion suppression deplete cognitive and emotional resources and result in diminished well-being (Jeung et al., 2018; Webb et al., 2012). This rationale draws primarily from the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory which suggests that because resources are limited, individuals strive to gain and retain resources and are motivated to protect themselves from resource loss (Hobfoll, 2001). Hobfoll defines these resources as properties that are of personal value and that are used to achieve one's goals and further replenish themselves (e.g., time, money, energy, cognition, and motivation; Hobfoll, 2001).

Conservation of resources theory is often explained using the analogy of a water bucket; the bucket represents the individual and the water represents one's resources. At the beginning of the day, an individual's resource bucket is assumed to be filled with water. As the day progresses, the individual scoops water from their bucket to accomplish tasks and goals. If the water is not replenished, it will eventually run out leaving the bucket completely dried up. Applied to the work setting, individuals invest their time and energy into accomplishing work demands each day. When the resources employees expend is less than or proportional to the reward of accomplishing their task, they are able to replenish the spent resources or avoid a net loss. Conversely, when individuals invest more resources than their perceived reward for accomplishing their tasks, they experience a net loss of resources (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). This net loss can further spiral into a cycle of continuous losses which makes it harder for individuals to replenish their resources. This results in resource depletion, burnout, and further emotional and psychological strain (Hobfoll, 2001).

The threat of loss, actual loss, and failure to gain resources are the most prominent contributors to the stress process (Hobfoll, 2001). Environmental conditions characterized by high demands, such as the workplace, can threaten one's resources and lead to the depletion of personal resources (Hobfoll, 1989). For example, occupations with strong display expectations place a large burden on employees to constantly manage their emotions to match organizational display requirements. This act of emotion regulation requires a great deal of cognitive and motivational resources and is considered a threat to one's resources. When individuals engage in emotion regulation, it disproportionately decreases their resource reservoirs which results in strain (Grandey, 2003).

Although engaging in emotion regulation is generally taxing, research suggests that the extent to which it depletes one's resources depends on the type of emotion regulation strategy individuals employ (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Scholars imply, for example, that antecedent-focused emotion strategies such as perspective-taking and positive reappraisal require much less cognitive and motivational effort than response-focused regulation strategies such as emotion suppression (Alabak et al., 2019; Nixon et al., 2020). Specifically, emotion suppression involves constant repression of negative emotions and upregulation of positive emotions throughout the workday. Doing so requires sustained awareness of felt emotions and behavioral expressions and the motivational energy to persist in adjusting one's emotions to match display expectations. On the other hand, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal may not need to be executed constantly throughout the workday. These strategies may require only a one-time mindset change that self-propagates throughout the day without the need for active monitoring. This line of reasoning is supported by empirical evidence demonstrating that deep acting has a weaker association with negative health outcomes than surface acting (Alabak et al., 2019; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Nixon et al., 2020).

Whereas surface acting is perceived as ingenuine by the receiving party (e.g. customers), deep acting produces genuine emotions that tend to be received positively (Butler et al., 2003; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). During face-to-face interactions, both verbal and nonverbal cues are exchanged between employees and customers. Through these verbal signals, facial expressions, tone, and gestures, customers can sense if employees are being authentic in their interaction with them. When customers perceive that the employee is being genuine, they may "catch" this positive affect through emotional contagion (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Employees may, in turn, feel rewarded by this positive interaction which may lead to resource gain that replenishes

lost resources. Conversely, when customers perceive that the employee is being ingenuine they may reciprocate with a negative response. This may lead to a downward spiral of resource loss, resulting in job burnout with little opportunity for replenishment (Butler et al., 2003; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006).

There is a large body of research that demonstrates a link between emotion regulation and increased burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003; Grandey et al., 2005; Jeung et al., 2018). Particularly, scholars have found that individuals who engage in emotion suppression report higher levels of emotional exhaustion, the dimension of burnout that deals with feelings of being emotionally spent (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Based on these findings, I hypothesize that emotion suppression will lead to increased levels of emotional exhaustion in employees.

Hypothesis 5. Emotion suppression is positively related to emotional exhaustion.

Empirical studies examining the effects of emotional exhaustion on personal well-being have found it to be positively related to psychological strains and physical complaints (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019). Research examining the effect of job demands on employee outcomes found emotional exhaustion to be positively related to depression and anxiety (Santa Maria et al., 2018). Similarly, studies found emotional exhaustion to be predictive of anxiety and psychological distress (Diestel & Schmidt, 2010; Wells et al., 1999). Emotional exhaustion also relates to a variety of work outcomes such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and absenteeism (Ducharme et al., 2007; Green et al., 2013; Iverson et al., 1998; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). In a study examining the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction in emergency health professionals, Tarcan and colleagues (2017)

found emotional exhaustion to be a significant predictor of decreased overall job satisfaction. Similarly, Lee and Lin (2019) report that work-related burnout was significantly related to decreased internal and external job satisfaction among nurses. Furthermore, a longitudinal study examining the directionality of burnout in predicting job satisfaction found that burnout is causally linked related to job satisfaction, and not the other way around (Wolpin et al., 1991). Complementing these findings, this study proposes that emotional exhaustion will predict increased levels of anxiety and decreased levels of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6. Emotional exhaustion is positively related to (a) anxiety and (b) negatively related to job satisfaction.

Conservation of Resources theory used as an explanatory mechanism in the suppression to strain pathway implicates resource loss as a mediator through which strain occurs. Specifically, it is expected that emotion suppression, an ineffective emotion regulation strategy, depletes cognitive and emotional resources and results in diminished well-being (Jeung et al., 2018; Webb et al., 2012). The current study examines emotional exhaustion, an indicator of resource loss, as a mediator of the relationship between emotion suppression and strain. Although burnout is typically examined as an outcome variable, emotional exhaustion can be conceived as a theoretical mediator that is distinct from outcome measures. Previous work supports this rationale with empirical evidence indicating that emotional dissonance predicts job satisfaction through emotional exhaustion (Lee & Ok, 2012). In a study examining the relationship between organizational depersonalization and psychological strain, Caesens and Stinglhamber (2019) found that emotional exhaustion, an indicator of resource loss, acted as a mediator. Finally, Santa Maria and colleagues (2018) found that emotional exhaustion

significantly mediated the relationship between job demands, depression and anxiety. However, except for the above few studies, empirical tests of emotional exhaustion as a mediator are scarce. Extending previous work, I propose that emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between emotion suppression and strain.

Hypothesis 7. Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between emotion suppression and (a) anxiety and (b) job satisfaction.

In the same way that cultural values may influence individuals' perception of dissonance, cultural values may also attenuate the extent to which individuals feel emotionally exhausted as a result of suppressing their emotions. Empirical research by Matsumoto and colleagues (2008) demonstrates that individuals in collectivistic cultures engage in emotional management more often and readily than those in individualistic societies (Matsumoto, et al., 2008). Specifically, Gross and John (2003) found that Asian Americans suppressed their emotions at a higher mean level than Caucasians. Scholars speculate that the normalcy of emotion suppression in collectivistic societies make such the emotion regulation strategy automatic and thus require less emotional effort (Allen et al., 2014). However, this line of reasoning has not been empirically tested. Thus, this study will examine the moderating role of individual-level collectivism in mitigating the relationship between emotion suppression and emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 8. Collectivism moderates the relationship between emotion suppression and emotional exhaustion such that the relationship will be weaker for individuals higher on collectivism than for individuals lower on collectivism.

Grandey and Gabriel, in their 2015 review of the emotional labor literature, issued a call for a comprehensive comparison of the theoretical mechanisms (i.e. dissonance and resource

loss) and boundary conditions that might moderate the pathway to employee well-being using an episodic methodological approach. The current study responds to and extends this call by examining cultural values as a moderator of the emotion regulation to strain relationship through the emotional dissonance and resource loss theoretical pathways and comparing the strength of the two mediated pathways. Given that emotional dissonance theory has received comparatively more support across literature than resource loss, I propose that emotional dissonance will emerge as the dominant pathway. However, there are no prior studies that have compared the salience of the emotional dissonance and resource loss mediation pathways and none that have explored the driving force behind the mitigating effect of cultural values. As such, the investigation of these questions remains exploratory.

Research Question 1. Does emotion suppression relation to strain primarily through emotional dissonance or resource loss?

Research Question 2. Do cultural values mitigate the relationship between emotion suppression and strain primarily through emotional dissonance or resource loss?

CHAPTER TWO:

METHOD

Participants

To achieve a sample of participants who are likely to engage in emotion suppression, I recruited individuals working in the service industry as they have strict emotion regulation requirements. I recruited 28 participants through the University of South Florida's research participation pool (SONA), and another 202 participants through online social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit), flyers, and word of mouth. To be eligible for the study, participants needed to work at least 4 hours per workday, have access to their email or cellphone during work hours, and frequently interact with customers. Because online platforms are susceptible to bots, I scrutinized the data for evidence of aberrant responding and removed flagged responses. Furthermore, participants who failed to provide a verifiable phone number were removed from the study. Of the initial 230 participants, those who failed to respond appropriately to comprehension checks ($n = 39$) or failed to provide a verifiable phone number ($n = 9$) were removed from the study, a 21% attrition rate. The final between-person sample ($n = 182$) was largely female (59%) and occupied roles such as bartender, salon aide, sales associate, and customer service representative. Their racial and ethnic composition included 47.5% White, 25.7% African American, 5.5% Asian, and 20% Hispanic. The mean age of the participants in this study was 28.86 ($SD = 8.81$).

Procedure

To capture emotion suppression at a within-person level and to measure the day-to-day variations in employee outcomes, this study took a within-person approach using the Experience Sampling Method (ESM). The week before the experience sampling surveys were collected, participants completed a 30-minute online orientation during which they received a detailed explanation of the study procedures and information on how to complete each survey. The orientation also included surveys assessing participants' background characteristics (e.g., sex, age, race, working status, tenure, industry, job title, work schedule), display rules perception, and cultural value orientation. Participants' work schedule information was used to tailor the experience sampling surveys to be sent during each participant's working hours. Following the completion of the orientation and a day before each participant's start date, an email notification was sent as a reminder of the study's procedures and the importance of completing the surveys on time.

The ESM data collection took place across five workdays. Participants were notified to complete a paired survey at two random times during their work hours. A paired survey, for the purpose of this study, is one survey that is split into two parts such that the predictor (part 1) is administered at a different time than the outcome (part 2). In this study, participants were signaled to complete the study's outcomes (i.e., anxiety and job satisfaction) 30 minutes after they were signaled to complete the study's predictors and mediators (i.e., emotion suppression, perceived inauthenticity, and emotional exhaustion). This was done to establish temporal precedence so that I could better capture the hypothesized mediated relationships and to minimize the common measurement bias associated with collecting all measures concurrently. Figure 2 in Appendix A provides a depiction of the assessment strategy. Notifications to

complete the surveys were sent via text or email to each participant. An initial sample of 1371 within-person paired survey responses were collected. The average distance between part 1 and part 2 of the paired surveys was 28.90 minutes ($SD = 10.73$). Paired surveys completed too close together (less a than 5-minute distance) or too far apart (greater than an 80-minute distance) were excluded from the analysis. Consequently, I excluded 130 responses, leaving a final sample of 1241 within-person responses. Of the 10 paired surveys sent, participants completed an average of 7.48 surveys ($SD = 2.56$).

Participants recruited through SONA received one point for completing the orientation and .5 points for every paired survey they completed on time. Participants who completed 80-90% of the paired surveys on time received a bonus of one SONA point and those who completed 100% of the paired surveys received two SONA points as a bonus. Participants recruited outside of SONA were compensated \$5 for completing the orientation survey and \$1.5 for each paired survey they completed on time. Those who completed 80-100% of the paired surveys received a bonus of \$5.

Measures

Complete scale items are included in Appendix B.

Level 2 Measures (between-person)

Collectivism. A measure of collectivism was constructed using items derived from a meta-analysis of 27 individualism-collectivism scales (Oyserman et al., 2002). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with scale items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include, “To understand who I am, you must see me with members of my group” and “I make an effort to avoid disagreements with my group members.” Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was acceptable ($\alpha = .71$).

Negative Display Rule Perception. One's recognition negative display rules was measured using the three negative display perception items from Diefendorff and colleagues' (2005) 7-item display rule perception measure. Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with scale items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include, "My organization expects me to try to pretend that I am not upset or distressed." and "I am expected to suppress my bad moods or negative reactions to customers." Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was acceptable ($\alpha = .71$).

Level 1 Measures (within-person)

R_{kRN} and R_{CN} are the reliability of average of all ratings across items and times (between-person reliability) and the generalizability of change over time (within-person reliability), respectively. These values account for time nested within subjects (Shrout & Lane, 2012). The within-person reliability values in this study are low as participants' experiences are expected to vary throughout the workday.

Emotion Suppression. Emotion suppression was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Gross & John (2003). Participants responded to the prompt "Please rate how accurately the following describes your behavior *in the past 30 minutes* of work" on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*does not describe me at all*) to 7 (*describes me very well*). Sample items include "I controlled my emotions by not expressing them" and "When I was feeling negative emotions, I made sure not to express them." Multilevel reliability coefficients were acceptable ($R_{kRN} = .81$; $R_{CN} = .52$).

Perceived Inauthenticity. Authenticity was measured using the 5-item authentic living dimension of the authenticity at work scale developed by van de Bosch and Taris (2014). Participants rated the extent to which survey items describe how they felt *in the past 30 minutes*

of work on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*does not describe me at all*) to 7 (*describes me very well*). Sample items include “I behaved in accordance with my values and beliefs” and “My behavior reflected ‘the real me’.” Scores were reverse coded to attain a measure of inauthenticity. Multilevel reliability coefficients were acceptable ($R_{kRN} = .85$; $R_{CN} = .62$).

Emotional Exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was measured using a 2-item measure adapted by Teuchmann and colleagues from Maslach and Jackson’s burnout scale (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Teuchmann et al., 1999). Participants rated the extent to which survey items describe how they felt *in the past 30 minutes of work* on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Scale items include “I felt emotionally drained” and “I felt burnt out.” The correlation between the two items was .83 and the multilevel reliability coefficients were acceptable ($R_{kRN} = .81$; $R_{CN} = .63$).

Anxiety. Anxiety was measured using the 2-item anxiety dimension of Santa Maria and colleagues’ Depression and Anxiety scale (Santa Maria et al., 2018). Reliability analysis demonstrates an acceptable alpha value ($\alpha = .79$). Respondents rated the extent to which survey items describe how they felt *in the past 30 minutes of work* on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Scale items are, “I felt nervous, anxious, or on the edge” and “I was not able to control or stop worrying.” The correlation between the two items was .74 and the multilevel reliability coefficients were acceptable ($R_{kRN} = .84$; $R_{CN} = .46$).

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured with a 3-item scale developed by Bowling and Hammond (2008). Individuals were asked to rate the extent they agreed to satisfaction items *in the last 30 minutes of work* on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Scale items include, “I was satisfied with my job,” “I

liked working here,” and “I didn’t like my job.” Multilevel reliability coefficients were acceptable ($R_{kRN} = .85$; $R_{CN} = .55$).

Affect. Per Gabriel’s (2019) recommendation, positive and negative mood were assessed as controls. An individual’s mood can influence their perception and appraisal of situational cues and thus may confound the predicted study relationships (Gabriel, 2019; Schwarz, 2012). Mood was measured using the single-item Affect Grid introduced by Russell and colleagues (1989). This measure assesses two dimensions: pleasure-displeasure located on the X-axis and arousal-sleepiness located on the Y-axis. Scores for each dimension range from 1 to 9. Participants were instructed to mark an “X” in the 9x9 grid to indicate how they felt in the past 30 minutes of work. The measure has demonstrated sufficient reliability across several articles (Colomo-Palacios et al., 2011; Jaso, 2021; Killgore, 1998).

CHAPTER 3:

RESULTS

The current study examined the moderating effect of cultural value orientation on the relationship between emotion suppression and worker outcomes as mediated by emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. I ran a multilevel path analysis to account for data dependency due to the nested structure of the data (e.g., observations nested within persons) and to examine the two moderated mediation pathways simultaneously. An additional advantage of a multilevel path analysis is that it reduces measurement error by creating latent between-person outcome variables and interaction terms (Nachtigall et al., 2003). Analyses were conducted using Version 8 of MPLUS (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Patterning the centering process shown in Butts et al., (2015), the level 1 predictor and control variables (i.e., suppression, valence, arousal) were group-mean centered to parcel out the variance at the between-person level. This allows for a closer test of the within-person relationships. The Level 2 moderator and control (i.e., collectivism and negative display rule) were grand-mean centered. The level 1 outcome variables (i.e., inauthenticity, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, anxiety) were not centered. Before testing the hypotheses, I tested for violations of data assumptions and found no significant evidence of heteroscedasticity, outliers, non-normality, and non-linearity. Table 1 in Appendix A presents descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among the study variables.

To confirm the need for a multilevel model, I ran a series of unconditional models for all the level 1 variables (i.e., suppression, inauthenticity, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, anxiety, valence, and arousal) to assess the proportion of the variability accounted for by the

level 2 nesting. The percentage of the variance that resided at the between-person level ranged from 21 to 54 percent. Although these values are high, they are not atypical for ESM studies dealing with emotions (Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009; Tse et al., 2021). Thus, there is evidence of sufficient within-person variability, justifying the use of a multilevel model.

Multilevel Path Analysis Results

I ran a random coefficient model based on the conceptual model specified in Figure 1 and specified a Maximum likelihood (ML) estimator. Specifically, I entered emotion suppression as an exogenous variable and the mediators and outcomes (i.e., inauthenticity, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and anxiety) as endogenous variables. Furthermore, the indirect effects of suppression on the outcomes through inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion were specified as parameters to be estimated in the model. To capture the unique effect of suppression on the study's moderators and outcomes, I included affect and perceived negative display rules as controls. Specifically, I entered valence, arousal, and negative display rule as predictors of the endogenous variables. Affect is a dynamic phenomenon. Therefore, workers' moods are expected to vary throughout the workday influence their response at the time of taking the surveys. This is especially true for this sample of service workers as their interaction with customers is likely to influence their mood. Furthermore, the extent to which works perceive a strong negative display rule in their work environment might also influence their response to the survey questions. Although all participants work in the service industry, there might be variability in the extent to which they perceive strict display rules depending on the work roles they occupy.

The MPLUS software does not provide estimates of model fit such as chi-square, Comparative fit index (CFI), and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) when a

random coefficient model is specified as was done in this study to test the cross-level moderation effect. To provide an estimate of the model fit, I ran a separate random intercept model. This model had the exact specifications of the random coefficient model (i.e., the same main effects, controls, and mediation parameters), but the estimates of the cross-level interaction parameters were excluded. This random intercept model demonstrated good fit (CFI = .994, RMSEA = .045). I compared Akaike's Information Criteria (AIC) and Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC) values of the random coefficient model (i.e., with the interaction term) and the random intercept model (i.e., without the interaction term) and found that the AIC and BIC values for the random coefficient model (13205 and 13533, respectively) were smaller than those of the random intercept model (13428 and 13635, respectively). This indicates that when the cross-level interaction terms are included, the model fits better (Randa, 2019). Thus, there is evidence to justify the use of the random coefficient model to test the study's hypotheses.

Hypotheses 1-3 examined inauthenticity as a mediation mechanism through which emotion suppression relates to job satisfaction and anxiety. Hypothesis 1 suggested that suppression would be positively related to perceptions of inauthenticity. In contrast to my hypothesis, emotion suppression showed a significant negative relationship with inauthenticity ($b = -.10, p < .01$). That is, those who suppress more report lower levels of inauthenticity. Hypothesis 1 was not supported. In support of hypothesis 2b, inauthenticity was negatively related to job satisfaction ($b = -.15, p < .001$). Feelings of inauthenticity relate to decreased job satisfaction. However, contrary to hypothesis 2a, inauthenticity was not related to anxiety ($b = -.00, p = .958$).

Hypotheses 5-8 examined emotional exhaustion as a mediation mechanism. In line with hypothesis 5, suppression was significantly related to increased emotional exhaustion ($b = .20, p$

< .001). That is, those who suppress more report higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 5 was supported. Similarly, emotional exhaustion was negatively related to job satisfaction ($b = -.13, p < .001$) and positively related to anxiety ($b = .20, p < .001$). Feelings of emotional exhaustion were related to increased anxiety and decreased job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6a and 6b were supported.

The mediation effect of inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion were modeled in MPLUS. A test of the indirect effect of inauthenticity showed that inauthenticity fully mediated the relationship between emotion suppression and job satisfaction ($b = .02, p = .02$) but did not mediate the relationship between emotion suppression and anxiety ($b = .00, p = .96$).

Suppression related to increased job satisfaction by decreasing feelings of inauthenticity.

Hypothesis 3a was supported but hypothesis 3b was not supported. The test of indirect effect of emotional exhaustion revealed that emotional exhaustion fully mediated the relationship between emotion suppression and job satisfaction ($b = -.03, p < .001$) as well as the relationship between suppression and anxiety ($b = .04, p < .001$). Suppression related to decreased job satisfaction and increased anxiety by increasing feelings of emotional exhaustion. Hypothesis 7a and 7b were supported.

Hypothesis 4 and 8 suggested that collectivism would moderate the relationship between emotion suppression, inauthenticity (hypothesis 4), and emotional exhaustion (hypothesis 8). In support of hypothesis 4, results revealed that collectivism moderated the relationship between emotion suppression and inauthenticity ($b = -.20, p < .001$). Specifically, for individuals who reported low collectivism, emotion suppression was related to increased feelings of inauthenticity. However, for individuals who reported mid and high levels of collectivism, emotion suppression was related to decreased feelings of inauthenticity (see Figure 4 in

Appendix A). Contrary to hypothesis 8, collectivism did not moderate the relationship between emotion suppression and emotional exhaustion ($b = .10, p = .12$). Hypothesis 4 was supported but hypothesis 8 was not supported. Figure 3 and Table 2 in Appendix A provide a summary of these findings.

To address research question 1, we compared the indirect effects of suppression on job satisfaction through inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion using a Z test. The results suggested the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion was significantly larger than the mediation effect of inauthenticity, $z = 2.857, p < .01$. I did not conduct a second Z test comparing the mediation effect of suppression on anxiety was through inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion because the pathway through inauthenticity was not significant, rendering the comparison unnecessary. Research question 2 asked if cultural values mitigate the relationship between emotion suppression and strain primarily through emotional dissonance or resource loss. Given that this study found a significant moderation effect of collectivism on inauthenticity but no effect on emotional exhaustion, I conclude that culture moderates primarily through emotional dissonance in this sample.

CHAPTER 4:

DISCUSSION

In the nation's increasingly globalized workforce, understanding the influence of cultural values on workplace outcomes has become critical for catering to workers' well-being and is a key contributor to organizational success (Taras et al., 2011). Indeed, practices deemed as benign for people with one cultural disposition might be deleterious to people with another, and vice versa. The effect of emotion regulation on well-being is one such example. Emotion regulation, a necessary tool commonly used to navigate society, is shown to have deleterious personal and organizational outcomes in Western samples, yet this effect is either nonexistent or significantly mitigated in non-western samples (Allen et al., 2014; Soto et al., 2011; Nixon et al., 2020). The current study examined this buffering effect of cultural values on the relationship between emotion regulation and employee outcomes. Specifically, it assessed the moderation effect of individual-level collectivism on the relationship between emotion suppression and employee outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and anxiety) through two theoretically central mechanisms: emotional dissonance and resource loss.

Results indicated that inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion are mediators. Although small in effect size, inauthenticity and emotional exhaustion fully mediated the relationship between emotional suppression and job satisfaction. However, emotional exhaustion emerged as the dominant mechanism. Emotional exhaustion also fully mediated the relationship between emotional suppression and anxiety; inauthenticity did not. Furthermore, collectivistic values had a protective effect against the adverse effects of suppression on felt inauthenticity. This study

directly answers the call from Gabriel and Grandey (2015) to compare the competing theoretical mechanisms that explain the suppression to strain relationship. Moreover, it discusses the differential influence of cultural values through each mechanism. The results of this study have theoretical and practical implications and open the door for future research.

Emotional Dissonance and Cultural Values

The emotional dissonance theoretical mechanism suggests that emotion suppression creates a discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions. This discrepancy is perceived as a violation of one's sense of self and freedom of expression and thus leads to adverse worker outcomes (Hochschild, 1983; Pugh, 2011). Based on the emotional dissonance theory, the study hypothesized that suppression would increase feelings of inauthenticity. Counterintuitively, this study revealed that suppression was related to decreased inauthenticity. However, upon examination of the moderation effect of person-level cultural values, I found that the negative main effect of suppression on inauthenticity was exclusive to those who endorsed collectivistic values. That is, workers with average and high levels of collectivism reported feeling less inauthentic when they suppress their emotions. On the other hand, workers who reported low collectivism experienced increased inauthenticity, which ultimately matched our hypothesis and aligned with the emotional dissonance theory.

Studies examining the effect of emotion regulation across cultures tend to examine culture at the national level. These studies make country-level comparisons of the main effect of emotion suppression on health and well-being and suggest societal differences in collectivism as the buffer that mitigates the negative effects of emotion suppression (Allen et al., 2014; Soto et al., 2011). This study demonstrated that differences in cultural values exist at the individual level within a single society that can mimic the buffer effects seen at the national level (Nixon et al.,

2020). Specifically, individual-level collectivism served as a protective factor against the effect of emotion suppression on inauthenticity.

Resource Loss and Cultural Values

The resource loss theoretical mechanism suggests that emotion suppression is a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy that drains workers' emotional and cognitive resources with little room for replenishment and thus leads to adverse worker outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001; Jeung et al., 2018; Webb et al., 2012). The current study found that emotional exhaustion fully mediated the relationship between emotion suppression and both job satisfaction and anxiety. That is, emotion suppression lowered job satisfaction and increased anxiety in service workers by increasing their level of emotional exhaustion. This finding provides support for emotional exhaustion as a mediator rather than an outcome variable as it is traditionally examined in literature. Cross-cultural research suggests that because collectivistic societies endorse emotion suppression more often than individualist societies, it becomes a normal practice and thus requires fewer resources (Allen et al., 2014). However, this study found no evidence for a moderation effect through the resource loss mechanism. That is, suppression relates to increased emotional exhaustion irrespective of one's cultural values.

Taken together, the significant effect of cultural values on inauthenticity has broad personal and organizational implications. Although emotion regulation is an essential part of our everyday life and is necessary for adjusting to social and occupational roles (Gyurak et al., 2011), habitual emotional regulation can be detrimental to our health and well-being (Webb et al., 2012). Yet, we cannot avoid engaging in emotion regulation for fear of its adverse outcomes. This study highlights one avenue through which we can protect ourselves against the effect of emotional suppression on inauthenticity. Drawing from the Objective Self-Awareness (OSA)

theory which suggests that individuals can change their behavior, attitudes, and trait to maintain a consistent self-concept (Silvia & Duval, 2001), individuals may adjust their cultural values by adopting a more relational and group-oriented mindset into our sense of self. For example, rather than thinking of suppression as an infringement of emotional freedom, individuals can reframe suppression as a behavior that gives them the freedom to maintain existing relationships and remain committed to the group (e.g., family, friend group, organization) they are a part of. According to the results of this study, adjusting one's cultural values is not a viable solution to reducing the effect of suppression on emotional exhaustion. More research is needed to determine how we might decrease the emotional burden of suppression and protect ourselves from its deleterious effects.

Limitations

Two primary limitations restrict the conclusions of this study. First, as with many ESM studies, there is a trade-off between the psychometric properties of the measures used and the practicality of the research design. This study required that participants respond to surveys four times per day during their work hours. To reduce participant fatigue and the time demand of the study, we used several two-item and single-item measures. As such, we relied on the inter-item correlation and evidence of criterion-related validity from previous studies as evidence for the reliability of the measures.

Second, the study's sample was restricted to participants who had access to their cellphone or emails during work hours. In the service industry where workers are constantly interacting with customers and there are rules against the use of cellphones during work hours, this requirement was extremely limiting. Furthermore, this study took a signal-contingent recording approach to collect data. This involved sending survey notifications to participants at

random intervals throughout their workday. Although this approach allowed the study to capture emotion suppression at the moment it occurs, it is limited in that participants may receive the survey notifications at inopportune times (Beal & Weiss, 2003). Participants who were consistently unable to complete the surveys due to timing inconveniences were removed from the study for insufficient data. This further restricted the study's sample.

Practical Implications and Future Directions

The results of this study demonstrate that variability in cultural values exists within a single country and this variability differentially influences workers' outcomes in response to emotion regulation. Previous research demonstrates that individualistic societies tend to experience negative outcomes in response to emotion regulation. However, when cultural values are examined at the individual level, we find that emotion regulation is not always deleterious in individualistic societies. Individuals with average and high levels of collectivism are protected against the effect of suppression on feelings of inauthenticity. This is pertinent information for organizations, especially in the service industry. Organizations might try to build collectivism at the organizational level to help mitigate the negative effects of emotion regulation. Pugh and colleagues (2011) suggest that when individuals' actions align with their goals and sense of self, dissonance is unlikely to occur. It might be the case that individuals in organizations that demonstrate a family atmosphere might be more likely to incorporate that organization into their sense of self (Liu et al., 2013).

This supposition is grounds for future research that examine the role of organizational collectivism and organizational commitment in mitigating the effects of emotional suppression on negative employee outcomes. The current study could also be expanded by examining the moderation effect of both individual-level and organization-level collectivism in countries that

are traditionally individualistic and collectivistic through both the dissonance and resource loss mechanisms. It would be noteworthy to see if the supposition that emotion regulation is normal in collectivistic societies such that it requires fewer resources holds true if sampled from a collectivistic society. Finally, next steps might be to examine how specific combinations of emotion regulation strategies influence well-being. Emotion regulation research tends to examine emotion regulation strategies individually, which implicitly assumes that individuals engage in only one emotion regulation strategy at a time. However, there is a growing recognition that individuals engage in a combination of emotion regulation strategies (i.e., emotion regulation profiles) in response to situations. These profiles might differ across cultures and have differential relationships with well-being (Nozaki, 2018; Suzuki et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The current study contributes to the emotion regulation and emotional labor literature by simultaneously examining and comparing the two dominant theories that explain how emotion regulation relates to strain (i.e., emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion). Furthermore, it demonstrates that collectivistic cultural values mitigate this relationship through the dissonance mechanism. Findings that cultural values can protect against the negative effects of suppression on inauthenticity even in a traditionally individualistic society highlight the need for the examination of within-country differences in cultural values.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Tables and Figures

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Level 1 (within-person)</i>											
1. Suppression	4.43	1.37	.81, .52								
2. Inauthenticity	2.72	1.09	-.05	.85, .62							
3. Emotional Exhaustion	3.54	1.77	.13**	.33**	.81, .63						
4. Job Satisfaction	4.99	1.36	.04	-.40**	-.53**	.85, .55					
5. Anxiety	3.08	1.56	.08**	.29**	.50**	-.45**	.84, .46				
6. Valence	0.74	2.07	-.08**	-.37**	-.52**	.42**	-.35**	—			
7. Arousal	0.02	2.17	-.02	-.02	-.00	.03	.12**	-.12**	—		
<i>Level 2 (between-person)^a</i>											
8. Neg. Display Rule	3.98	0.98	.17*	.19*	.25**	-.23**	-.02	-.22*	-.02	.71	
9. Collectivism	3.67	0.66	.15	.12	.01	.07	.08	-.08	.11	.08	.71

Note. $N_{(\text{level } 1)} = 1140 - 1236$, $N_{(\text{level } 2)} = 182$. Reliability values are on the diagonal (Cronbach's alpha for L2 variables, and R_{KRN} between-person reliability and R_{CN} within-person reliability, respectively for L1 variables).

^aLevel 1 variables were mean aggregated such that a single mean value was created for each participant and correlated with the level 2 variables.

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

Table 2*Multilevel Path Analysis Results*

Variables	<i>Inauthenticity</i>		<i>Emotional Exhaustion</i>		<i>Job Satisfaction</i>		<i>Anxiety</i>	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Between Level</i>								
Intercept	2.70***	0.06	3.57***	0.10	5.81***	0.14	2.36***	0.17
Suppression	-0.10**	0.04	0.20***	0.04	-0.00	0.03	0.04	0.04
Collectivism	0.15	0.09	-0.04	0.12	—	—	—	—
Supp x Coll	-0.20***	0.05	0.10	0.07	—	—	—	—
Inauthenticity	—	—	—	—	-0.15***	0.04	-0.00	0.05
E. Exhaustion	—	—	—	—	-0.13***	0.03	0.20***	0.03
Valence	-0.15***	0.02	-0.30***	0.03	0.09***	0.02	-0.06**	0.02
Arousal	-0.06***	0.01	-0.08**	0.02	0.04**	0.02	0.03	0.02
NDR	0.18**	0.06	0.38**	0.10	-0.18**	0.07	-0.01	0.08
<i>Within Level</i>								
	<i>Variance</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>SD</i>
σ^2	0.36***	0.02	1.14***	0.07	0.61***	0.03	1.03***	0.06

Note. $N_{(\text{level } 1)} = 1140$. $N_{(\text{level } 2)} = 164$. Level 1 predictor and controls (suppression, valence, and arousal) were group mean centered. Level 2 moderator and control (collectivism and negative display rule = NDR) were grand mean centered.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model

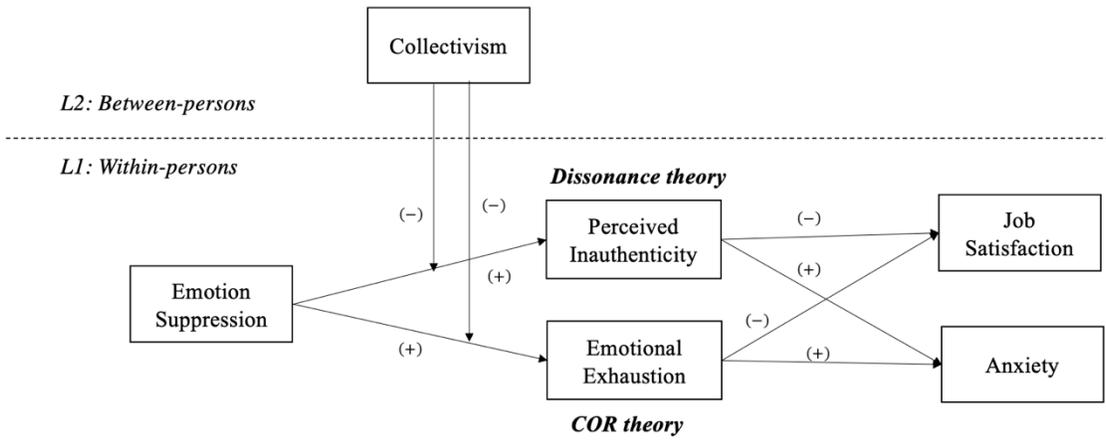


Figure 2

ESM Assessment Strategy

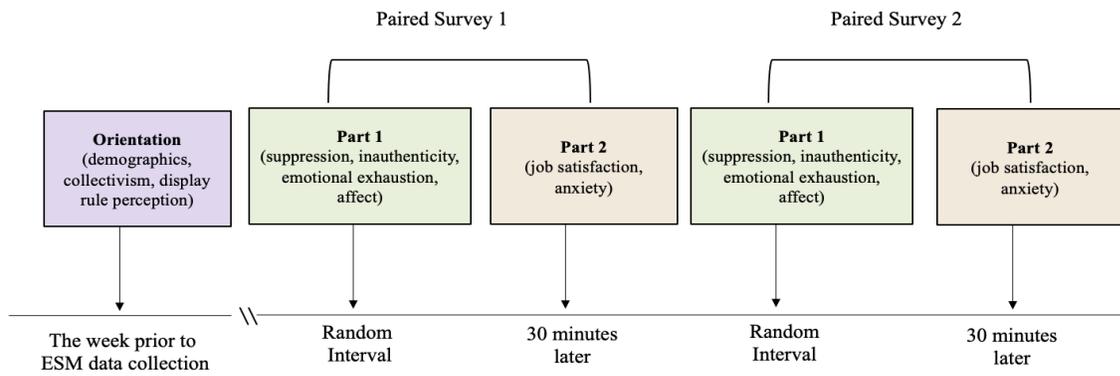
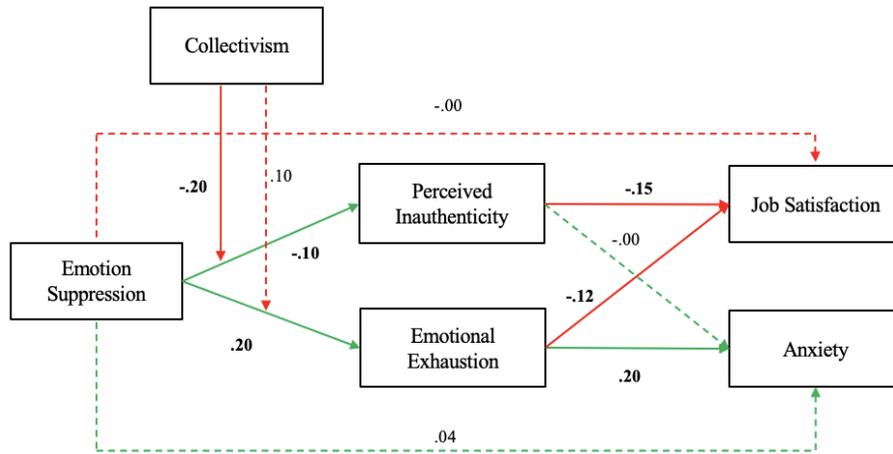


Figure 3

Multilevel Path Analysis Results



Mediation effects:

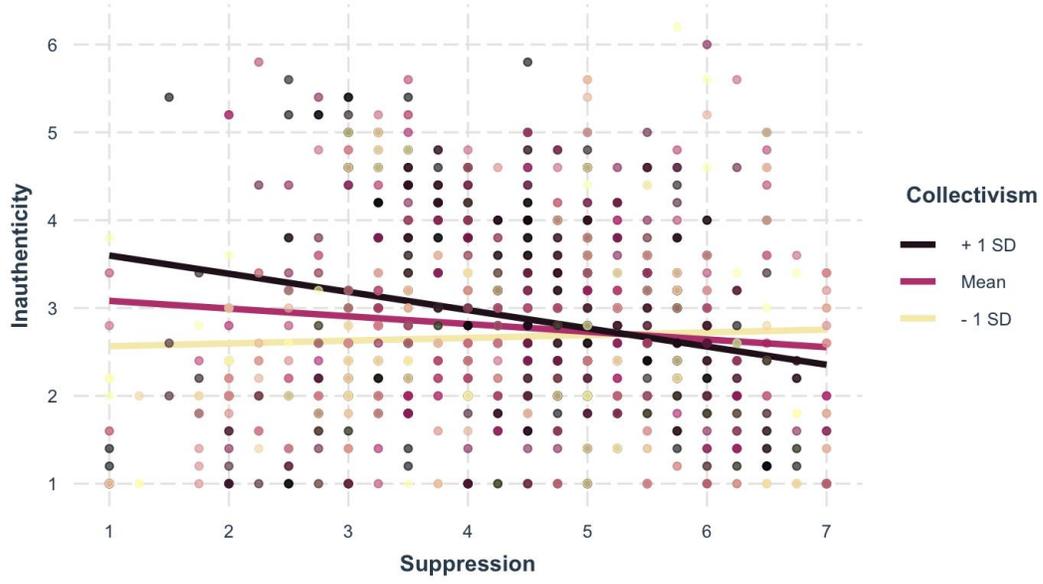
$$\text{SIJ} \rightarrow b = .02, p = .02 \quad \text{SEJ} \rightarrow b = -.03, p < .001$$

$$\text{SIA} \rightarrow b = .00, p = .96 \quad \text{SEA} \rightarrow b = .04, p < .001$$

Note. Solid lines represent significant findings and dotted lines are nonsignificant. Respectively, green and red lines indicate a positive and negative hypothesized direction. Results are controlled for affect and perceived negative display rules. L1 predictors (suppression and affect) were group-mean centered and L2 predictors (collectivism and negative display rule) were grand-mean centered.

Figure 4

The Moderation Effect of Individual-level Collectivism



Appendix B: Scale Items

Collectivistic Values (Oyserman et al., 2002)

Please think about your cultural values (referred to as group below) and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. To understand who I am, you must see me with members of my group.
2. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
3. I would help, within my means, if a relative were in financial difficulty.
4. I make an effort to avoid disagreements with my group members.
5. Before making a decision, I always consult with others.
6. How I behave depends on who I am with, where I am, or both.
7. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.
8. I would rather do a group paper or lab than do one alone.

Negative Display Rule Perception (Diefendorff et al., 2005)

The following questions concern your perception of display rules at your job. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1. I am expected to suppress my bad moods or negative reactions to customers.
2. My organization expects me to try to pretend that I am not upset or distressed.
3. I am expected to try to pretend I am not angry or feeling contempt while on the job.

Emotion Suppression (Gross & John, 2003)

Please rate how accurately the following describes your behavior *in the past 30 minutes* at work.

1. In the last 30 minutes, I kept my emotions to myself.
2. In the last 30 minutes, when I was feeling positive emotions, I was careful not to express them.

3. In the last 30 minutes, I controlled my emotions by not expressing them.
4. In the last 30 minutes, when I was feeling negative emotions, I made sure not to express them.

Perceived Inauthenticity at work (van de Bosch & Taris, 2014)

Please rate how well the following items describe your how you felt at work ***in the past 30 minutes.***

1. In the last 30 minutes, I was true to myself at work in most situations.
2. In the last 30 minutes, I stood by what I believe in.
3. In the last 30 minutes, I behaved in accordance with my values and beliefs.
4. In the last 30 minutes, I found it easier to get along with people in the workplace when I was being myself.
5. In the last 30 minutes, my behavior at work reflected “the real me”.

Emotional Exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Teuchmann et al., 1999)

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following items related to how you feel at work in the past 30 minutes.

1. In the last 30 minutes, I felt emotionally drained
2. In the last 30 minutes, I felt burnt out

Anxiety (Santa Maria, et al., 2018)

Please rate how well the following items describe to how you felt at work ***in the past 30 minutes.***

1. In the last 30 minutes, I felt nervous, anxious, or on the edge
2. In the last 30 minutes, I was not able to control or stop worrying

