

The Influence of Indigenous Cultural Factors on Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

This study examined how the unique cultural aspects of Koreans influence the way they communicate in conflict situations. First, “Chemyon” had a stronger impact on conflict resolution than “Uri” in conflict situations, supporting the results of previous studies on “Chemyon” and conflict communication. Second, the impact of indigenous cultural variables on conflict resolution varied depending on the types of conflict situations. The predictive power of “Chemyon” was stronger in more emotionally-involved situations. Third, the mediating effect of emotion also differed by the types of conflict. In more emotionally-involved situations, compassion appeared to mediate the relationship between culture and conflict while anger was found to be the mediator in less emotionally-involved situations. The results empirically supported the contextual nature of Koreans’ cultural characteristics and their impacts on communication.

Key words: Chemyon, Uri, anger, compassion, type of conflict, conflict styles

1. Introduction

Early studies on Korean’s conflict communication were mostly cross-cultural studies on conflict styles to compare the communication behaviors of Koreans and Westerners in conflict situation. However contradicting results were often reported regarding Koreans’ conflict communication. In some studies, Koreans showed similar patterns of conflict styles as the neighboring East Asian cultures. Koreans showed stereotypical conflict behaviors of collectivist cultures such as avoiding

direct, aggressive communication (Merkin, 2009a & 2009b), being less argumentative (Jenkins, *et. al.*, 1991), and considering being silent as communicatively competent (Yum, 2012). However in other studies, Koreans were found to be more individualistic in communication such as being straightforward with requests (Kim, *et. al.*, 1988), being more confrontational (Lee & Rogan, 1991), being aggressive and unyielding when one’s position is not appreciated but changing very flexibly once sympathy is shared (Paik & Tung, 1999), and relying heavily on the feelings and face-reading during the communication

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(Tung, 1991).

The rather confusing communication behaviors of Koreans during conflict may seem very illogical and unpredictable by Westerners. What is often argued with Koreans' communication behavior is that Koreans are very much influenced by emotions (Cheong, 2007). Being communicatively competent often means the ability to appeal emotionally rather than the ability to argue logically (Jin, 2006). The influence of emotion on Koreans' communication behavior is suggested elsewhere: however, the relationship between Korean culture and Koreans' emotions, and its influence on Koreans' conflict communication has rarely been explored empirically.

In an attempt to explain how the cultural characteristics of Koreans impact on conflict communication, the previous studies examined indigenous cultural factors of Koreans to explain the unique aspects of Korean culture (Lim & Choi, 1996; Choi, 2000). Among the indigenous cultural variables, 'Chemyon(Korean face)' was the most frequently studied variables in the context of conflict communication. Chemyon is prevalent in everyday life of Koreans, and was found to play an important role in Koreans' conflict communication (Kang, 2009; Kim & Yang, 2011). Studies found that the dual aspect of Koreans' Chemyon, personal and social Chemyon, exerted different impact on conflict communication behavior (Kim, 2008; Kim & Yang, 2011). Empirical examination of the influence of Chemyon helped to understand how Korean culture influence on Koreans' conflict communication, however the studies on Korean culture and conflict communication call for further extension at least in two ways.

First, obviously more cultural variables need to

be considered in addition to Chemyon. Especially the collectivistic concept of 'Uri', which is often argued as one of the most important cultural aspects of Koreans, is worth examining (Lim & Choi, 1996; Choi, 2000; Lee & Choi, 2001). Uri is the Korean concept of we-ness and represents Koreans' sense of community and belonging (Shim, *et. al.*, 2008). It has been even argued that the purpose of Koreans' social relation is to confirm and maintain Uri-group (Choi & Choi, 2002). Despite its importance, how this unique collectivism of Koreans influence on Koreans' communication is still underexplored. This study employed Uri in addition to Chemyon as the indigenous cultural variables to influence on Koreans' conflict communication.

Second, contextual factors influencing the relationship between culture and conflict communication should be examined. As discussed, emotion seems to play an important role in Koreans' communication. Previous studies found that emotion played a predicting or mediating role in conflict communication (Zhang, *et. al.*, 2014). Thus this study examined the role of emotion to mediate the relationship between culture and conflict communication. Also based on the finding that the impact of Koreans' cultural factors varied depending on the contextual factors such as the type of conflict (Song, 1996; Kim & Yang, 2013), this study employed type of conflict as the contextual variable.

To sum up, the study aims to examine how the unique characteristics of Korean culture influence on conflict communication and how emotion mediate the impact of culture on conflict communication, depending on the type of conflict.

II. Literature Review

1. The indigenous approach to Korean's conflict resolution

In recent communication studies, indigenous cultural variables were proposed to explain Koreans' unique communication behaviors. Among the indigenous cultural variables, Chemyon was the most studied cultural variable in the context of conflict situation.

Chemyon, the Korean concept of face, is different from Western concept of face in that Chemyon's boundary is much wider than that of Western face. Chemyon is consisted of two dimensions, personal Chemyon and social Chemyon (Lim & Choi, 1996). Personal Chemyon is related to individual competency and autonomy, and shares commonality with Western face (Lim & Choi, 1996). Social Chemyon is related to the social representation of self, and differentiates Korean Chemyon from Western face (Kim, 2008). Social Chemyon is concerned of meeting the standards set by the invisible 'others' of the society, so Koreans constantly worry about the image of self in the processes of social interactions (Choi & Kim, 2000; Shim, *et. al.*, 2008). Also, social Chemyon is related to social hierarchy since social status or position defines how a person should act (Kim, 2009).

Chemyon was employed as an essential cultural factor to explain Koreans' conflict communication in public conflict situations (Chang & Kim, 2013; Kim & Yang, 2011, 2013; Yoo & Shim, 2011; Yoo, *et. al.*, 2011; Chun, 2001). Studies found that personal Chemyon and social Chemyon had different influence on conflict communication. While personal Chemyon was associated with more cooperative

conflict communication, social Chemyon was associated with more destructive conflict communication (Kim & Yang, 2011, 2013). In organizational conflict contexts, communication effort was focused on protecting self and other's social Chemyon in order to maintain relational harmony (Yoo & Shim, 2011; Yoo, *et. al.*, 2011).

Another indigenous cultural variable that received attention was 'Uri'. Uri is the Korean concept of 'we-ness'. However the concept of Uri differs from Western concept of we-ness as Uri is based on the unique sentiment of Koreans called 'Cheong'. 'Cheong' is defined as 'human affection' (Choi, *et. al.*, 1993), but Cheong embraces the sense of sacrifice, empathy, and sincerity (Shim, *et. al.*, 2008). Choi (2000) explained that Uri and Cheong are two sides of the same coin. Uri is the recognition of self-identity when Cheong is presupposed, and Cheong in turn is a quality experienced in Uri-relationship (Choi, 2000). For Koreans, it is important to identify the Uri(our) group and maintain the relationship (Choi, 1993; Shim, *et. al.*, 2008). Koreans develop sense of Uri not only with close, personal relationships like family or friends, but also with members in the same organization (such as school tie, region-tie even cyber-tie) (Shim, *et. al.*, 2008; Yang, 2013).

In an attempt to conceptualize Uri, Choi (1999) developed Uri scales with two dimensions, instrumental Uri and emotional Uri, to reflect the functional and emotional aspects of Uri. Instrumental Uri represents the sense of social network while emotional Uri represents the sense of affection-based community (Choi, 1999). In other words, instrumental Uri focuses on the functional aspect that Uri group serves by maintaining the

Uri-relationship and emotional Uri stands for personal tendency and preference based on the level of 'Cheong'. In order to reflect social aspect of Uri, Yang(2014) developed Uri scale to measure the kind of we-ness that members of public organizations experience. The Organizational Uri scale represents four dimensions: group-boundness, psychological well-being, relationship-orientedness, and emotional care. The scale reflects the physical, formal nature of we-ness as well as the psychological and relational benefits that Uri serves.

Few studies examined how Uri impacts Koreans' communication behavior. Previous studies found that the sense of Uri positively influence on interpersonal trust (Park, 2004), active problem-solving and seeking for social support (Choi & Choi, 2002), and higher level of satisfaction and self-esteem within the organization (Yang & Choi, 2012). Therefore, it could be argued that the sense of Uri does influence on Koreans' conflict communication behavior.

2. Culture, emotion and conflict resolution

Just as conflict styles are influenced by culture, emotions also vary across cultures (Mesquita & Walker, 2003). Cultural differences are found in the prevalent, modal and normative emotional responses (Mesquita & Walker, 2003). Previous studies on culture and emotion suggested that individualism was associated with anger while collectivism was related to fear or compassion (Zhang, *et al.*, 2014). Anger was defined as an ego-focused emotion that derived from independent view of self, whereas compassion was considered as other-focused emotion that resulted from being sensitive to other person's, rather than one's own,

feeling and concerns (Markus & Kitayama, 2001). Thus anger was often found and promoted in a more individualistic culture while compassion was often found in a more collectivistic culture (Hofstede, 2001).

Korean culture is defined as a culture with high level of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 1984), however little is known about Koreans' emotional characteristics. In a study by Rhee and his colleagues(2008), the emotional expressions of Koreans were analyzed and 9 types of emotions were found including joy, pride, love, fear, anger, compassion, shame, despair and sadness (Rhee, *et al.*, 2008). However, few studies empirically examined the relationship between Korean culture and emotions, especially in the context of conflict communication.

The influence of culture and emotion on conflict styles was mostly examined in the negotiation context. Cross-cultural studies examined how the impact of emotion on negotiation behavior differed by culture. The general argument was that positive emotions such as happiness and compassion were related to integrative and collaborative bargaining tactics while negative affect such as anger resulted in destructive bargaining tactics (Allred, *et al.*, 1997; Olekalns & Druckman, 2014; Liu, 2009; Weiner, 1995; Van Kleef, 2012).

Anger received more attention than other emotions with regard to conflict resolution, as anger tended to be more prevalent in conflict situations (Liu, 2009). Although the general assumption was that anger tended to have a negative influence on conflict resolution, results of empirical studies found that the effect of anger

could be positive depending on several factors, including cultural background of the negotiator (Olekalns & Druckman, 2014). Anger had stronger influence when perceived or expressed by East Asians (Adam, *et. al.*, 2010), since negative emotion like anger was considered as inappropriate in East Asian cultural contexts (Mesquita & Walker, 2003). In another study, East Asian negotiator was found to concede less to an angry counterpart than European American negotiators (Liu, 2009).

The cross-cultural studies on the relationship between anger and negotiation were mostly focused on the effect of 'expressed' anger by the negotiator; however few studies have been examined the effect of 'felt' anger of the negotiator. For example, it was suggested that felt emotions like anger and compassion mediated the relationship between face-concern (cultural variable) and conflict styles (Zhang, *et. al.*, 2014).

This study focused more on the role of felt emotions during the conflict communication, and examined how the felt emotions mediated the relationship between culture and conflict styles. As the emotional variables, anger and compassion were employed as representing the negative and positive emotion possibly felt during a conflict communication. Compassion was often examined as a contrast to anger in terms of valence and behavioral tendencies (Zhang, *et. al.*, 2014). Compassion was linked to trust (Liu & Wang, 2010), to better joint outcomes for negotiators in both competitive and cooperative contexts (Galinsky, *et. al.*, 2008; Gillin, *et. al.*, 2013). Also compassion was argued to be closely associated with collectivistic cultural characteristics (Markus & Kitayama, 2011). Based on this, the second research

question is proposed.

3. Type of conflict

In the conflict literatures, type of conflict has long been considered as one of the important factors to influence on conflict communication (Menkel-Meadow, 2003). Past studies examined basic conflict types of relationship, task and process conflict in the context of interpersonal or organizational conflict (Jehn, Greer, Levine, & Szulanski, 2008). In the studies on public conflict, conflict was classified as conflict over interest and conflict over value (Susskind & Field, 1996; Moore, 2003).

The study deals with public conflict situations. Some of the indigenous cultural variables were known to be activated more in the public conflict situation rather than the personal conflict situation (Kim, 2008; Kim & Yang, 2013; Lim & Choi, 1996; Choi, 2000). However instead of classifying the conflict type by interest or value, the study employed the level of emotional involvement as the criteria for the conflict type.

Public conflict, just like other conflicts, is emotionally defined and triggered by event that elicits emotion (Jones, 2001). The intensity levels of emotion are likely to differ conflict by conflict (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). The intensity of emotion signals the salience of the conflict issues and may create the impetus for engaging conflict (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). Based on the discussion, the study employed the level of emotional involvement to differentiate the type of conflict. The role of emotional involvement of conflict issue was examined in the field of communication studies. Emotional involvement was related to the

consumers' evaluation on the brand (Park & Young, 1983; Park & Mittal, 1985), on the judgement of a political candidate (Han, 2006), and the stakeholders' reaction to a certain public issues (Lee & Cha, 2016). Especially in an organizational crisis situation, the level of emotional involvement of the issue was positively associated with stakeholder's level of anger (Lee & Cha, 2016). Therefore, it is construed that the type of conflict issue by the level of emotional involvement could influence on the emotional reaction during the conflict.

By applying conflict type as the contextual variable, this study aims to examine how the effect of culture on conflict styles and the mediating effects of emotion vary depending on the conflict type.

III. Research Questions

Based on the discussion, the followig research questions are proposed.

- RQ1: How do indigenous cultural variables of Koreans (Chemyon and Uri) influence on the conflict styles?
- RQ2: How do emotional variables mediate the relationship between culture and conflict styles?
- RQ3-1: How do the influences of indigenous cultural variables differ depending on the type of conflict?
- RQ3-2: How do the mediation effects of emotional variables differ depending on the type of conflict?

IV. Methodology

1. Participants and process

A total of 327 participants were recruited based on quota sampling. The quota of gender and age group was determined based on the Korean Population Census (2015), published by National Statistics Office. Among the 327 participants, 167 were female (51.1%) and 160 were male (48.9%). In terms of age group, 63 were in their twenties (19.3%), 64 in their thirties (19.6%), 65 in their forties (19.9%), 68 in their fifties (20.8%), and 67 in their sixties (20.5%).

Participants were asked to answer to the questionnaire on their cultural orientation in 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Then the participants were randomly assigned to read one of the scenarios and answer to the questions on their emotional reaction (anger and compassion) and the conflict styles, also in 5-point Likert scales.

2. Manipulation

To manipulate the type of conflict based on the level of emotional involvement, two version of scenario were developed. Each scenario described a public conflict situation; one was a conflict situation between the city government and kindergarten parents'group over the carcinogenic food provided by the public kindergarten; the other was a conflict situation between city government and community residents'group over the construction of a charnel house in the community. These kinds of conflicts are often found in Korean media so it was not so much difficult for the participants to understand the conflict situations described in the

scenarios. Manipulation check was conducted before the survey: questions for manipulation check were adopted and modified from previous studies (Ratchford, 1987; Lee & Cha, 2016), including “I rely on my emotion rather than logic when I judge this kind of issues”, “If this kind of issue happens to me, I would feel very concerned”, “For this kind of issue, my feeling is very important”. Results for independent t-test of the two scenario groups reported statistically significant. The mean difference between the more emotionally-involved issue ($M=3.20$) and the less emotionally-involved issue ($M=2.98$) were shown as statistically significant ($t=2.683$, $p=0.008$).

3. Measurement

The indigenous cultural variables employed in the study were *Chemyon* and *Uri*. Although *Chemyon* and *Uri* represents unique cultural characteristics of Koreans, the level of *Chemyon* and *Uri* certainly varies depending on the various factors including gender, age and region (Choi, 2000). Previous studies tried to address the issue by developing various kinds of *Chemyon* scales and *Uri* scales: For example, Choi & Kim(2000) developed *Chemyon* Sensitiveness Scale, You & Shim(2011) developed Organizational *Chemyon* Scale, & Lim(1994) developed General *Chemyon* Scale. As for *Uri* scale, Choi & Choi (2002) developed General *Uri* Scale and Yang(2014) developed Organizational *Uri* Scale. Among the scales, this study employed *Chemyon* scale developed by Kim & Yang (2011a), as the scale represents *Chemyon* characteristics in communication contexts and were employed and tested in several communication studies. The *Chemyon* scale is consisted of two

dimensions, social *Chemyon* and personal *Chemyon*. Social *Chemyon* represents social performance (items related to others' evaluation on one's performance), social pride (items related to one's social position or status) and social personality (items related to one's image judged by others), and personal *Chemyon* represents ethics (items related to ethical behaviors), competence (items related to self-evaluation of one's ability) and demeanor (items related to physical appropriateness) (Kim & Yang, 2011). The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.709 for social *Chemyon* and 0.779 for personal *Chemyon*. Items to measure *Uri* were adopted from Choi & Choi (2002), as the scales were employed and tested in several communication studies (Yang, 2012; Yang & Kim; 2015). Cronbach alpha value for the two *Uri* dimensions, instrumental *Uri* and emotional *Uri*, were 0.839 and 0.814, respectively.

The emotion variables employed in the study were *anger* and *compassion*. Items to measure anger were adopted and modified from Turner, *et. al.*(2006) and Zhang, *et. al.*, (2014), and items to measure compassion was adopted and modified from Zhang, *et. al.* (2014) and Liu & Wang (2010). Cronbach alpha value for anger was 0.903 and compassion was 0.845.

Conflict styles were measured based on the Thomas-Kilman's instrument for conflict management styles (Thomas & Kilman, 1974; Ting-Toomey, 2012), modified to fit the current study context. The Thomas-Kilman instrument for conflict management were employed and tested in several studies on intercultural conflict (Ting-Toomey *et al.*, 2000; Zhang, *et. al.*,, 2014). Five conflict styles were measured including avoiding, competing, obliging, compromising and integrating and

Cronbach alpha values were 0.677, 0.716, 0.738, 0.680 and 0.877, respectively.

4. Statistical Analysis

For RQ1 regarding the effect of cultural variables on conflict styles, five sets of hierarchical regression analyses were performed for each conflict style. Control variables (gender, age) were first entered into the regression model, followed by the cultural variables of Chemyon and Uri. For RQ2 regarding the mediation tests, Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step procedure was used. Several regression analyses and Sobel tests were performed to discern no, partial or full mediation and to examine the statistical significance of indirect effects of coefficients (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). For RQ3-1, cases were selected for each conflict situation and the same sets of hierarchical regression analyses as RQ1. For RQ3-2, again cases were selected for each conflict situation and the same mediation tests as RQ2 were conducted. Statistical significance was set at the level of 0.05.

V. Results

1. Q1. The effect of indigenous cultural variables on conflict styles

The first research question was to test and compare the causal relationships between indigenous cultural variables and conflict styles. As indicated by the hierarchical regression analyses, after the respondents' demographic factors (gender and age) were controlled, different cultural factors were found significant for different conflict styles (Table 1).

Among the two factors of Chemyon, Social Chemyon was significantly associated with avoiding ($\beta = .264$, $p < .001$), competing ($\beta = .229$, $p < .001$), and obliging ($\beta = .274$, $p < .001$), but not with compromising and integrating. On the other hand, personal Chemyon was significantly related to compromising ($\beta = .277$, $p < .001$), integrating ($\beta = .467$, $p < .001$), avoiding ($\beta = -.137$, $p < .05$), and obliging ($\beta = -.138$, $p < .05$). As for the direction of the effects, personal Chemyon was positively related to cooperative conflict styles such as compromising and integrating while negatively related to unconstructive conflict styles such as avoiding and obliging. Among the two factors of Uri, instrumental Uri was significant for compromising ($\beta = .190$, $p < .01$), obliging ($\beta = .201$, $p < .01$) and integrating ($\beta = .264$, $p < .001$) while emotional Uri was significant for avoiding ($\beta = .262$, $p < .001$), compromising ($\beta = -.027$, $p < .01$) and integrating ($\beta = -.218$, $p < .001$). As for the direction of the effects, instrumental Uri was positively related to compromising, obliging and integrating. Emotional Uri was positively related to avoiding while negatively related to compromising and integrating.

When the standardized beta coefficient of each cultural variable was compared, social Chemyon was the strongest predictor for avoiding, competing and obliging, personal Chemyon was the strongest predictor for compromising and integrating. Overall, Chemyon variables exerted stronger effects than Uri variables for conflict styles. As for the direction of the effects, while most of the effects were positive in direction, personal Chemyon was negatively related to avoiding and emotional Uri was negatively associated with integrating (Table 1).

Table 1. The effect of indigenous cultural variables on conflict styles.

	Avoiding		Competing		Obliging		Compromising		Integrating	
	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2
1 st block: control var.										
Sex	-.234***	-.195***	.008	-.001	-.178**	-.150**	.059	.020	.135*	.056
Age	.129*	.061	-.109*	-.158**	.082	.021	.079	.012	.112*	.077
2 nd block:culturalvar.										
Social Chemyeon		.264***		.229***		.274***		.103		-.076
Personal Chemyeon		-.137*		.054		-.138*		.277***		.467***
Instrumental Uri		-.039		-.080		.201**		.190**		.264***
Emotional Uri		.262***		.086		.102		-.027**		-.218***
ΔR^2	.073***	.134***	.012	.074***	.039**	.143***	.009	.180***	.030**	.285***
Total R^2		.207***		.086***		.182***		.189***		.315***

(*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001)

2. Q2. The mediating effect of emotion

The second research question was to test the mediating effect of emotion between cultural variables and conflict styles. The tests indicated partial mediation of anger between social Chemyon and obliging. Partial mediation was determined by the fact that in the step 4 models, the direct effect of the independent on the dependent variable became smaller, albeit still significant, after the mediator was included. Sobel test for statistical significance indicated the indirect effects coefficient was significant at $p<.05$ ($z=2.10$, $p=0.01$). However, anger and compassion were not significant mediators between any cultural factors and conflict styles (Table 4).

3. Q3-1. The effect of indigenous cultural variables on conflict styles by different conflict situation

In order to compare the effects of cultural factors under different conflict situation, cases were selected for each conflict situation and the results of hierarchical regression analyses were compared. As appeared in Table 2, in the more emotionally-involved conflict situation, social Chemyon was

significant for avoiding ($\beta = .279$, $p<.001$), obliging ($\beta = .305$, $p<.001$) and compromising ($\beta = .179$, $p<.05$) while personal Chemyon was significant for compromising ($\beta = .228$, $p<.05$) and integrating ($\beta = .449$, $p<.001$). Instrumental Uri was only significant for integrating ($\beta = .251$, $p<.001$) and emotional Uri was significant for avoiding ($\beta = .219$, $p<.05$) and integrating ($\beta = -.214$, $p<.05$). When the standardized beta coefficients of each cultural variable were compared, social Chemyon was shown as the strongest predictor for avoiding and obliging while personal Chemyon was found to be the strongest predictor for compromising and integrating. While most of the directions of significant effect were positive, only Emotional Uri was negatively related to integrating (Table 2).

In the less emotionally-involved conflict situation, social Chemyon was significant for avoiding ($\beta = .233$, $p<.001$) and obliging ($\beta = .223$, $p<.05$), while personal Chemyon was significant for obliging ($\beta = -.180$, $p<.05$), compromising ($\beta = .305$, $p<.001$) and integrating ($\beta = .469$, $p<.001$). Instrumental Uri was positively related to obliging ($\beta = .217$, $p<.05$), compromising ($\beta = .249$, $p<.01$),

Table2. The effect of indigenous cultural variables on conflict styles in the more emotionally-involved conflict situation.

	Avoiding		Obliging		Compromising		Integrating	
	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2
1 st block: control var.								
Sex	-.202**	-.164*	-.182*	-.174*	.046	.008	.107	.006
Age	.117	.054	.153*	.093	.110	.038	.055	.029
2 nd block: cultural var.								
Social Chemyeon		.279**		.305***		.179*		-.004
Personal Chemyeon		-.151		-.102		.228*		.449***
Instrumental Uri		-.030		.176		.140		.251**
Emotional Uri		.219*		.054		.056		-.214*
ΔR^2	.056**	.104**	.058**	.126***	.014	.197**	.014	.295***
Total R^2		.160**		.184***		.211***		.309***

(*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001)

and integrating ($\beta = .286$, $p < .001$). Emotional Uri was positively related to avoiding ($\beta = .330$, $p < .001$) and obliging ($\beta = .184$, $p < .05$) and negatively related to integrating ($\beta = -.221$, $p < .01$). When the standardized beta coefficient of each cultural variable was compared, personal Chemyon was the strongest predictor for compromising and integrating, while social Chemyon was the strongest for obliging. Emotional Uri was the strongest predictor for avoiding (Table 3).

4. Q3-2. The mediating effect of emotion by different conflict situation

Another set of mediation tests was conducted to compare how the effect of mediator differs depending on the type of conflict situation. (Table 4) showed contrasted results in each conflict situation. Partial mediations of emotions were found between cultural variable and conflict styles.

In the more emotionally-inducing conflict situation, partial mediations of compassion between social Chemyon and avoiding, between social Chemyon and obliging, and between emotional Uri and avoiding were indicated. Sobel

test for statistical significance indicated the indirect effects coefficient were significant at $p < 0.01$, with z-values of 2.58 ($p = 0.004$), 2.71 ($p = 0.003$), and 2.39 ($p = 0.008$) respectively. In the less emotionally-inducing conflict situation, partial mediation of anger was indicated between social Chemyon and obliging. Sobel test for statistical significance indicated the indirect effects coefficient were significant at $p < 0.05$, with z-value of 2.16 ($p = 0.01$).

It was found that the statistically significant emotion differed depending on the conflict situation. While compassion was found to be the significant mediator in the more emotionally-inducing conflict situation, anger appeared to be the significant mediator in the less emotionally-inducing conflict situation, compassion (Table 4).

VI. Discussion

This study examined how the unique cultural aspects of Koreans influence the way people communicate in conflict situation from the indigenous cultural perspective. The study also

Table 3. The effect of indigenous cultural variables on conflict styles in the less emotionally-involved conflict situation.

	Avoiding		Obliging		Compromising		Integrating	
	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2
1 st block: control var.								
Sex	-.274***	-.238**	-.176	-.137	.073	.040	.169*	.112
Age	.145	.068	-.004	-.062	.060	-.012	.191*	.140*
2 nd block: cultural var.								
Social Chemyeon		.233**		.223*		.077		-.154
Personal Chemyeon		-.121		-.180*		.305***		.469***
Instrumental Uri		-.046		.217*		.249**		.286***
Emotional Uri		.330***		.184*		-.118		-.221**
ΔR^2	.099***	.179***	.019	.187***	.009	.182***	.063**	.271**
Total R^2		.278***		.188***		.191***		.334***

(*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001)

Table 4. Results for mediation tests by conflict situation

DV	More emotionally-involved conflict		Less emotionally-involved conflict
	Avoiding	Obliging	Obliging
Mediator	Compassion	Compassion	Anger
IV: Social Chemyeon			
Step 1: IV on DV	.279**	.308**	.303**
Step 2: IV on Mediator	.216*	.216*	.212*
Step 3: Mediator on DV	.394***	.387***	.289***
Step 4: IV/Med on DV	.209*(IV) .321*** (M)	.241** (IV) .306*** (M)	.257** (IV) .217** (M)
Sobel test (z-score)	2.58**	2.71**	2.16**
IV: Emotional Uri			
Step 1: IV on DV	.265**		
Step 2: IV on Mediator	.195*		
Step 3: Mediator on DV	.394***		
Step 4: IV/Med on DV	.203*(IV) .321*** (M)		
Sobel test (z-score)	2.39**		

*Notes: Baron and Kenny(1986)'s four step approach was used for the mediation test. At step 4, both IV and mediator are regressed onto DV to test whether the effect of IV on DV is reduced significantly. The significant of Sobel z-value was tested with one-tailed p values. (*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001)

explored the role of emotions to mediate the effect between culture and conflict styles. The findings are summarized in three ways.

First, it was found that in conflict situation, Chemyon variables had stronger impact on conflict styles than Uri variables. Moreover, the two dimensions of Chemyon showed somewhat different results: social Chemyon was more strongly

associated with avoiding, competing and obliging, while personal Chemyon was more strongly associated with compromising and integrating. According to Gross & Guerrero (2000), although both obliging and compromising are perceived as neutral strategies, obliging tended to be evaluated as less effective strategy than compromising. If that is the case, it could be argued that social

Chemyon is more related to unconstructive conflict styles while personal Chemyon was more associated with constructive conflict styles. Among the two dimensions of Uri variables, instrumental Uri was more related to constructive conflict styles while emotional Uri was not. Emotional Uri influenced on avoiding quite strongly and exerted negative influence on more cooperative conflict styles such as integrating.

Second, the impact of the indigenous cultural variables on conflict styles varied depending on the conflict situation. In the more emotionally-involved situation, Chemyon variables were the strongest predictors for conflict styles: Social Chemyon was the most powerful predictor for avoiding and obliging, and personal Chemyon was the most powerful predictor for compromising and integrating. However in the less-emotionally involved situation, emotional Uri exerted the strongest influence on avoiding and instrumental Uri had the strongest impact on obliging. The impact of Chemyon became relatively weaker.

Third, the mediating effect of emotion also differed by the types of conflict. In the less emotionally-involved conflict situation, the only mediation found was the mediating effect of anger between social Chemyon and obliging, and no other mediation by emotion was found between the cultural factors and conflict styles. However in the more emotionally-involved conflict situation, compassion, instead of anger, mediated the relationship. Compassion mediated the relationship between social Chemyon and avoiding as well as the relationship between social Chemyon and obliging. Also compassion mediated the relationship between emotional Uri and avoiding.

The findings of the study are in accordance with the previous studies on Chemyon and conflict styles (Lim & Choi, 1996; Kim & Yang, 2011, 2013). The impact of the two dimensions of Chemyon showed vivid contrast. Social Chemyon not only showed association with avoiding, competing and obliging but found to be the strongest predictor for these conflict styles. On the other hand, personal Chemyon was the strongest predictor for compromising and integrating. In any condition, whether statistically significant or not, personal Chemyon was negatively related to avoiding and competing and social Chemyon was negatively related to integrating. In previous studies, the implication of the result was argued that social Chemyon hindered conflict resolution by reacting to the conflict as either confrontation or total avoidance while personal Chemyon nurture conflict resolution by approaching the conflict in a cooperative way (Kang, 2009; Kim & Yang, 2011; Chang & Kim, 2013). In this study, a relatively strong relationship between social Chemyon and obliging was found as well, especially in the more emotionally-involved situation. Considering that people with strong sense of social Chemyon tend to concern much about one's face loss in relationship, especially in public conflict situation (Lim & Choi, 1996), it seems only natural that people with strong sense of social Chemyon choose to yield to the counterpart's request over risking of losing one's face by choosing other conflict strategies.

What was noteworthy was the influence of the two different Uri variables on conflict style, since the relationship was never empirically tested before. Although the sizes of impact were weaker than Chemyon variables, the two dimensions of Uri

variables showed somewhat contrasting influence on conflict styles just like the two dimensions of Chemyon variables. Instrumental Uri, which stands for the cooperative aspect of Korean we-ness, was more positively related to conflict resolution such as integrating and compromising. On the other hand, emotional Uri, which represent the rather emotional (and sometimes irrational) aspect of Uri, was negatively related to conflict resolution. The sense of emotional Uri in Korea is often found in various 'tie-relationships' (Cheong, 2007; Shim, *et. al*, 2008). The various tie-relationships, including family-tie, school-tie, region-tie, are based on the strong emotional sentiment called Cheong. The kind of Cheong found in the tie-relationships tends to be irrational, blind, group-selfish, and very closed (Cheong, 2007). This kind of we-ness does not help conflict resolution because of its competitive attitude towards outsiders especially in conflict situation (Shim, *et. al*, 2008).

Another important finding was the mediating role of emotion in conflict situation. Depending on the conflict situation, either anger or compassion mediated the relationship between culture and obliging/avoiding. In the more emotionally-involved situation, compassion mediated the relationship between social Chemyon and obliging, social Chemyon and avoiding, and emotional Uri and obliging. And in the less-emotionally involved situation, people with strong sense of Chemyon tended to yield to the counterpart when they felt anger. The findings were different from the results of previous studies that compassion contributed to cooperative conflict resolution and anger hinders cooperative conflict resolution. In this study, people with strong sense of social Chemyon or emotional

Uri, tended to avoid communication when they felt anger or sympathy towards the counterpart.

What does it mean? One possible explanation is that emotion could make people communicate less in conflict situation because they did not want to be influenced by the emotion that they encountered during the conflict. As for the people with strong sense of social Chemyon, becoming emotional during conflict could make them even more sensitive to face-loss. As for the people with strong sense of emotional Uri, becoming emotional during conflict could risk them act against their in-groups (i.e. understanding the counterpart's position) thus totally avoid communication. Another explanation is that maybe people with social Chemyon or emotional Uri do not consider avoiding or obliging as negatively, as argued by previous studies (Cai & Fink, 2002; Ting-Toomey, *et. al*, 2000). Rather, avoiding communication could mean higher concern for the counterpart (Cai & Fink, 2002), thus making people choose avoiding and obliging when they experience anger or compassion. The result of the study calls for more elaborated investigation on the emotions of Koreans in relation to cultural characteristics of Koreans.

Lastly, the findings of the study have practical implications for social conflict resolution. By understanding how the sense of Chemyon and Uri influence on conflict communication, conflict strategy based on Koreans' cultural characteristics could be developed. For example, the results of the study suggest that third-party mediation could become a useful conflict resolution system in public conflict situation (Kim, 2008). The strong influence of social Chemyon in the more emotionally-involved situation shows that indirect communication by

third-party mediator to protect the conflict parties' face loss could be an effective way to resolve the conflict. The relationship between emotional Uri and avoiding also suggest the need for a third-party to facilitate communication between the conflict parties, as it was found that people avoid communication when the level of emotional Uri was higher. Another practical suggestion is related to the role of emotion in conflict communication. Although emotion was not associated with active cooperation, emotions at least influenced on conflict parties' passive willingness to resolve conflict, by obliging. Understanding the mechanism that emotion play in conflict situation would be helpful to develop more effective conflict communication strategy for Koreans.

VII. Future research suggestion

The mechanism and function of emotions in relation to cultural aspects of Koreans needs to be further explored in future studies. Studies on the emotions of Koreans are very few, therefore not much is known about what kind of emotions are dominant or less dominant among Koreans and why. How the emotions influence the way Koreans communicate is still unexplored. Future studies should address the relationship between Korean culture and emotion and how the factors influence on their preferred conflict styles. Also, just as culture was approached with an indigenous perspective, conflict styles should be viewed from the eyes of the culture. As argued in previous studies, a certain conflict style does not have the same meaning in other culture. For example, in a certain culture, avoiding could mean unwillingness

to communicate but in another culture, avoiding could mean high concern for the counterpart's position. The relationship between culture, emotion and conflict styles could be better explained when the meaning of conflict styles in the certain culture is understood.

감사의 글

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한국인의 문화적 특성이 갈등해소에 미치는 영향

국문초록 이 연구는 토착심리학(indigenous)적인 관점에서 한국인들의 고유한 문화 변수(체면과 우리)가 갈등 상황에서 커뮤니케이션하는 방식에 어떤 영향을 주는지 살펴보았다. 또한, 감정 변수(분노와 연민)가 문화와 갈등전략의 관계를 어떻게 매개하는지 검증하였다. 연구결과 갈등상황에서 체면은 갈등전략에 우리보다 더 강한 영향력을 갖는 것으로 나타나, 체면이 갈등해소 전략에 미치는 영향과 관련한 선행연구 결과를 지지하였다. 또한 체면과 우리가 갈등해소 방식에 미치는 효과는 갈등 유형에 따라 다르게 나타났다. 체면은 상대적으로 감정관여도가 높은 갈등 상황에서 영향력을 보였다. 감정변수인 분노의 매개효과 또한 갈등 유형에 따라 다르게 나타났는데, 상대적으로 감정관여도가 높은 갈등 상황에서는 연민의 매개효과가 나타났던 반면, 상대적으로 감정관여도가 낮은 갈등 상황에서는 분노의 매개효과만이 발견되었다. 이와 같은 결과를 통해 한국인의 문화변수가 가지는 맥락적 특성에 대한 기존의 이론적 논의를 경험적으로 입증하였다.

주제어 : 체면, 우리, 분노, 연민, 갈등유형, 갈등전략

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