

# Motivational cultural intelligence and well-being in cross-cultural workplaces: a study of migrant workers in Taiwan

Motivational  
cultural  
intelligence  
and well-being

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Received 18 January 2021  
Revised 27 February 2022  
25 July 2022  
26 November 2022  
4 January 2023  
Accepted 19 January 2023

## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study sought to advance understandings of migrant worker labor outcomes by examining (1) the relationship between migrant employees' motivational cultural intelligence (CQ) and employee well-being and (2) whether voice behavior at work mediates this relationship.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Working with leader–member exchange (LMX) theory and conservation of resources theory, the author proposed a multiple mediation model to explain the relationship between motivational CQ and employee outcomes and how employee voice may mediate this relationship. LMX and voice behavior were tested for the mediating effects in a cross-cultural context. To test the model, a questionnaire was conducted with Vietnamese migrants working in Taiwan (343 valid responses were collected). The results were analyzed using regression and bootstrapping.

**Findings** – Higher motivational CQ was associated with higher levels of work engagement and lower levels of job burnout. Strong employee voice mediated this relationship: high motivational CQ enabled workers to learn cultural nuances that helped them speak up in appropriate ways (in part by building strong relationships with leaders), which positively influenced work engagement and job burnout.

**Originality/value** – This study is one of the first to clarify and contribute to the research domain of cross-cultural management and motivational CQ among Vietnamese migrant workers living in Asian cultures. Past studies regarding CQ have seldom studied Southeast Asian migrant workers and the impact of motivational CQ on job burnout and work engagement. This study fills this gap and provides empirical evidence that may prove helpful for international human resources and organizational leaders.

**Keywords** Cultural intelligence (CQ), Motivational cultural intelligence, Work engagement, Job burnout, Leader–member exchange (LMX), Cross-cultural management

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Since the 1950s, increased recruitment of and reliance on migrant laborers has become a new pattern (Kemp *et al.*, 2000), leading to greater numbers of migrant workers in Taiwan and many other nations. Migrant workers are a critical source of human labor that compensates for domestic labor shortages, which often result from low numbers of working-age individuals in a population or a lack of willingness among citizens of the hosting nation to perform certain jobs (Debrah, 2002). While migrant workers seek new futures, their journeys are not without obstacles and threats. Despite the contributions migrant workers make to organizations, they remain vulnerable; for example, they frequently encounter barriers to resources (Fan, 2021) and racial discrimination (Di Napoli *et al.*, 2021). They are also more likely than nonmigrant workers to experience stressors, such as low control over their work or poor job security (Daly *et al.*, 2018).



The author greatly appreciates the suggestions and feedback on this paper that she has received from the two anonymous reviewers and editor in chief, Dr. Dennis Nickson. The author would also like to thank Mr. Jimmy Liang and Dr. Hsian-Ming Liu for their support and assistance on this paper.

**Funding:** This work was supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST; Grant Number: 105-2410-H-130-058-SS2).

This study sought to advance the existing understanding of migrant workers' well-being in the workplace with a focus on low-skilled Vietnamese workers in Taiwan, where manufacturing factories rely heavily on international labor for staffing. Specifically, this study focused on motivational cultural intelligence and its relevance in advancing migrant worker well-being. First proposed by Earley and Ang (2003), the scholars conceptualized cultural intelligence (CQ) as a multifactor concept comprising four dimensions. CQ is described as an individual's ability to act effectively across different cultural situations (Ang *et al.*, 2006). Meanwhile, "motivational" CQ is one of the four factors of CQ, according to Ang *et al.* (2007)'s conceptualization; specifically, those with a high motivational CQ are known to have behavioral flexibility (Rockstuhl and Van Dyne, 2018) in cross-cultural settings due to their intrinsic interest and confidence in investing energy to learn and function across cultures (Ang *et al.*, 2007; Schlaegel *et al.*, 2021). Notably, CQ more generally is a critical element for determining migrant workers' well-being, including how well they are able to survive in a different culture. Scholars have found that CQ helps migrants working in culturally diverse environments to act in a more culturally appropriate manner; for example, CQ can help them feel more comfortable voicing their opinions and thoughts (Jiang *et al.*, 2018).

According to relevant studies, CQ is a multidimensional construct comprising metacognition, cognition, motivational and behavioral intelligence (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ang *et al.*, 2007), with each dimension having a specific functioning in cross-cultural settings. Metacognitive CQ focuses on the higher-order cognitive processing and refers to the way in which individuals process and gain cultural knowledge (Le *et al.*, 2020). Cognitive CQ is directed at learning the norms and practices of a certain culture (Ang *et al.*, 2007), including understanding the cultural variations of legal systems, social systems and norms. Motivational CQ reflects an individual's capability to focus and direct one's attention and energy toward learning and functioning in different cultural settings (Ang *et al.*, 2007). The fourth dimension of CQ, behavioral CQ, reflects the appropriateness of the verbal and nonverbal behavior of an individual when interacting with others. Taken together, these four dimensions of CQ reflect different dimensions of an individual's overall capability to function in a cross-cultural setting.

The present study is particularly interested in migrant workers' voice behavior in the workplace. Employee voice, a proactive behavior, is central to organizational success in today's increasingly culturally diverse environments (Jiang *et al.*, 2018). Building upon the study of motivational CQ by Jiang *et al.* (2018), this study aimed to extend research on migrant workers' motivational CQ and voice behavior by including additional outcome variables – namely, job burnout and work engagement – as factors related to well-being.

Studies have shown that motivational CQ is the most prominent predictor of employee outcomes. For instance, Lam *et al.* (2022) found that motivational CQ was the highest predictor of employee satisfaction and, moreover, that motivation was the most important dimension of CQ for developing strong cross-cultural knowledge, which translated into positive customer feedback. Presbitero (2017) advised that multicultural workplaces should promote motivational CQ because it encourages individuals to persist in overcoming challenges. Drawing upon leader–member exchange (LMX) theory, we reasoned that the quality of the relationship between migrant workers and their supervisors may be an important factor bridging CQ and voice behavior, which in turn promote employee well-being. Uncovering how CQ influences LMX, employee voice behavior and work outcomes can offer insights into the relationship between CQ and employee work outcomes that may be useful for managers and practitioners in cross-cultural workplaces.

## 2. Literature review and hypothesis development

### 2.1 Burnout and engagement

The concept of "burnout" was first used by Freudenberger (1986) to refer to exhaustion in the workplace. Burnout is a common condition at work where individuals may feel a lack of control

and thus experience hopelessness, mental exhaustion, frustration and low energy (Iacovides *et al.*, 2003). Notably, burnout causes employee turnover—employees may voluntarily leave organizations when they find the working conditions intolerable. Recent studies have shown that migrant workers are more likely than domestic workers to experience job burnout due to the conditions, treatment and pressure they experience at work (Cai *et al.*, 2008; Duan *et al.*, 2020). As Cai *et al.* (2008) documented in their study on Chinese labor reforms between 1995 and the early 2000s, migrants who leave their hometowns for work often face unequal treatment such as lower wages, poor quality housing, poor social insurance coverage and limited access to social assistance programs.

Cross-cultural scholars have therefore called for further studies on migrant worker engagement (Guo and Al Ariss, 2015), noting that migrant workers often have “salient needs for a sense of belonging” and thus desire to feel part of their organization’s in-group (Adamovic *et al.*, 2020). Work engagement is a positive state in which employees feel a strong connection and are willing or able to invest their energy in their work. Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) defined “engagement” as being “fully psychologically present,” or, in other words, investing physical, cognitive and affective energy in one’s current state (Kahn, 1992). Christian *et al.* (2011) stated that engaged workforces tend to be more efficient and effective. Employees who feel their contributions are valued by their leaders tend to be relatively engaged in their work (Seijts and Crim, 2006). Work engagement is therefore an important indicator of how a migrant worker is coping within a new cross-cultural work environment. Consequently, migrant workers need human resources professionals to identify factors that can enhance their work engagement (Adamovic *et al.*, 2020).

### *2.2 Mediating role of LMX and voice behavior*

Social exchange theory explains the mechanism of the reciprocal exchange of resources between employee and leader, where the greater the perceived value of the resource exchanged, the higher the quality of the LMX relationship (Wayne *et al.*, 1997). On the basis of this theory, employees tend to display positive behaviors in response to managers’ support (Jiang *et al.*, 2018). As Van Dyne *et al.* (2008) suggested, should managers wish to elicit voice behavior and encourage communication in the organization, high-quality LMX should be one of the explicit factors emphasized. Since employees in high-quality LMX relationships receive more support from their leaders than do employees in low-quality LMX relationships and develop stronger feelings of competence, they are more comfortable about speaking up in the workplace. Based on the foregoing, we focused on employee voice as a key mediating mechanism that transmits the positive impact of LMX onto employee well-being. In particular, individuals who have high levels of trust and understanding in relation with their superiors are more likely to express their opinions freely than are employees who do not have such strong bonds with their leaders (Jiang *et al.*, 2018). For example, Carnevale *et al.* (2020), using social exchange theory, found a curvilinear relationship between LMX and employees’ promotive voice, showing that employees who felt obliged to make constructive changes to improve workplace quality tended to speak up. Moreover, Gregersen *et al.* (2016) pointed out that leaders building strong LMX relationships helps avoid employee exhaustion.

Although, to the best of our knowledge, studies directly confirming the relationship between employee voice and employee well-being mediated by LMX are scarce, a broad body of evidence does confirm that the supervisor–subordinate relationship quality is associated with employee well-being. For instance, “feeling valued and involved” is an important driver of employee engagement (Robinson *et al.*, 2004). Linking LMX with employee engagement, Agarwal *et al.* (2012) stated that leaders play a crucial role in employee engagement by offering support and suggested that communication is crucial for enhancing the supervisor–subordinate relationship, which supports our proposition that employee voice mediates this relationship. Existing research also found a relationship between employee voice and engagement (Jha *et al.*, 2019), as

employees' well-being increases when the LMX relationship empowers them to voice their opinions and thoughts freely. A high LMX relationship is also characterized by effective communication (Gajendran and Joshi, 2012) and mutual trust (Kim *et al.*, 2018). Individuals who display voice behavior because of a feeling of hope and engagement could thus experience lower exhaustion and strain (Sherf *et al.*, 2021). Hence, leaders' LMX relationship with their subordinates is likely to transmit the positive impact of voice onto the avoidance of burnout.

Building on these findings on LMX and voice behavior, we further suggest that migrant workers' well-being partially may benefit from the positive influence of their motivational CQ. By engaging in voice behavior, employees actively improve their workplaces. Because of the trusting nature of the relationship with their leaders, employees can offer personal opinions and feedback safe in the knowledge that leaders will accept their feedback as not challenging the status quo and rather as helpful and positive organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Migrant workers who have the intrinsic motivation and interest to understand the inherent culture of the organization are likely to be observant and keen to learn cultural cues. These characteristics are likely to help employees shape their voice behavior to fit the inherent organizational culture and therefore deliver effective and culturally appropriate messages.

### *2.3 Motivational CQ, voice and LMX*

Studies on international business and cross-cultural management have found evidence that an employee's CQ is positively related to their voice behavior (Jiang *et al.*, 2018; Jiang and Le, 2016; Ng *et al.*, 2019). As culturally adequate competencies allow individuals to solve problems in cross-cultural contexts, they can help migrant workers to adequately understand and fully function in a foreign culture (Afsar *et al.*, 2019). The study by Ng *et al.* (2019) on cultural distance and CQ pointed out that since voice requires related CQ that combines the skills and abilities to adequately speak up, if employees lack CQ, the risks of voice is a reason for individuals to remain silent. Although studies on CQ and voice have consistently shown that CQ is related to the ability to prosper in a new cultural environment, little work has been carried out on the motivational dimension of CQ and its relationship with voice behavior. As established above, motivational CQ is related to an individual's strategic thinking and desire and energy to learn and adapt to a new culture (Afsar *et al.*, 2019). Individuals with high motivational CQ have the driving force to adapt to a new cultural setting (Chen *et al.*, 2012); they push themselves to learn when and how to voice their opinions. For example, when a migrant worker with high motivational CQ observes and learns a suitable way to communicate with their manager, they may feel more comfortable speaking their thoughts. Building upon existing research and the function of motivational CQ, we thus proposed:

*H1.* Migrant workers' motivational CQ is positively related to their voice behavior.

Migrants working successfully in a foreign culture possess certain characteristics such as high-quality LMX. Past studies found that migrant workers with higher CQ notice cultural differences (Jiang *et al.*, 2018); particularly, motivational CQ is especially important because it involves the motivation to learn and act in culturally appropriate ways. As Jiang *et al.* (2018) emphasized, CQ is a crucial competency for migrant workers if they are to be recognized and appreciated by their leaders. In a study on LMX and leaders' and followers' characteristics, Dulebohn *et al.* (2012) found that when leaders view their followers as more likely to succeed, the former are more willing to contribute to the LMX relationship. From this perspective, migrant workers perceived as competent in carrying out their assigned tasks in a cross-cultural setting are more likely to enjoy a stronger LMX relationship than those who are less competent. Furthermore, since individuals with higher motivational CQ are more likely to invest effort to build cross-cultural relationships and can attentively learn how to build an LMX relationship in a cross-cultural context, they are more likely to succeed (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). We thus proposed:

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H2. Migrant workers' motivational CQ is positively related to their LMX with their supervisors.

Studies have shown that LMX influences employees' behavioral outcomes: employees with stronger relationships with their supervisors are more willing to speak up (Chan and Yeung, 2016). The relationship between LMX and employee voice can be explained using social exchange theory, which suggests that when an individual is treated well by another person, the former develops a sense of obligation to respond and act in a positive manner as well (Park and Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). Marchington and Suter (2013) explained that in addition to the formal manager-subordinate relationship built in the workplace, informal relationships stimulate positive outcomes; for example, managers may be more willing to listen to suggestions from their subordinates. We thus proposed the following:

H3. Migrant workers' LMX with their supervisors is positively related to employee voice.

#### 2.4 Effect of LMX and voice behavior on burnout and engagement

LMX, which can be defined as the quality of the superior-subordinate relationship (Graen and Scandura, 1987), is an important domain of leadership that links the leader and follower (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) to explain the complex interactions in their dynamic relationship. Individuals with a strong LMX relationship with their leader are usually allotted more resources and better rewarded for their performance (Dubrin, 2010). When employees perceive that they have a high-quality LMX relationship with their superior, they experience less role-related stress (Lagace *et al.*, 1993). The findings of Lawrence and Kacmar (2012) supported the notion that high-quality LMX relationships offer effective communication and additional resources that reduce stress among employees. Moreover, the resources derived from a high-quality LMX relationship increase work engagement (Breevaart *et al.*, 2015).

Lepine and Van Dyne (1998) defined employee voice as a way of making suggestions to management to improve the status quo. Employee voice has often been viewed as a kind of OCB, as it is not an employee obligation. Instead, taking the risk to challenge and be honest with one's manager is viewed as an extremely noble attempt to improve the organization's function and performance (Organ, 1988). A few studies have suggested that employee voice can reduce burnout and work-related stress. For instance, Cordes and Dougherty (1993) stated that a lack of participation and little control in decision-making can lead to burnout. Evidencing this, Holland *et al.* (2013) found that employee voice is associated with lower levels of burnout. Accordingly, we proposed:

H4. Migrant workers' voice behavior is negatively related to burnout.

Evidence from both real-world practice and research shows the benefits of an engaged workforce. As suggested above, being able to provide honest feedback to senior management is a positive indicator of employee engagement (Truss *et al.*, 2007). Jena *et al.* (2017) suggested that healthy manager-employee interdependence can only be achieved in a supportive work environment in which employees speak freely. While research advises that voice behavior may reduce issues between workgroups and strengthen individual relationships, here we aimed to investigate whether voice behavior functions equally in a cross-cultural context. Extensive studies on employee voice have been conducted in the West, yet little is known about how the Asia-Pacific cultural context influences the mechanisms of employee voice (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2020). Given that organizations operate in cultural contexts that fit national cultures and traditions, we assumed that in an Asian culture heavily influenced by Western cultural values, such as that of Taiwan (Wong *et al.*, 2010), migrant workers are encouraged to speak up at work. Accordingly, we proposed:

H5. Migrant workers' voice behavior is positively related to engagement.



### 2.5 Mediating effects

The role of motivational CQ in shaping voice behavior and thus employee well-being can be explained by the idea that in culturally diverse settings, motivational CQ improves a migrant worker's understanding of the host nation, which enhances their well-being. An individual with high motivational CQ is likely to be continuously motivated to learn and challenge their original belief system and form new understandings to adapt their behavior to a new culture (Schreuders-Van Den Bergh and Du Plessis, 2016). Wang and Jing (2018) concluded that "the adjustment process of being culturally involved in an intercultural context" impacts the well-being of migrant workers. If high motivational CQ encourages migrant workers to adapt their beliefs and behaviors to a new culture, then it may also help them voice their concerns comfortably, appropriately and effectively.

Crucially, employee voice behavior provides workers with a sense of autonomy in workplace decision-making (Kim and Ishikawa, 2021), which nurtures a desirable workplace. Additionally, voice behavior generates positive outcomes, including lower rates of burnout (Sherf *et al.*, 2021). Environments without effective communication in which employees cannot voice their concerns can contribute to burnout (Holland *et al.*, 2013; Cordes and Dougherty, 1993). Because employee voice facilitates a positive and healthy work environment, Rees *et al.* (2013) found direct and indirect connections between employee voice perception and engagement. When employees express their opinions instead of suppressing them, they are more likely to experience positive feelings (Avey *et al.*, 2012). However, while research found an association between employee voice and positive outcomes, scholars have only just started to explore this relationship in cross-cultural contexts. Drawing upon the above work, we proposed:

- H6. Voice behavior mediates the relationship between migrant workers' motivational CQ and job burnout.
- H7. Voice behavior mediates the relationship between migrant workers' motivational CQ and work engagement.

Individuals with a strong LMX relationship with their leaders communicate more effectively with their superiors than do those without such a strong relationship (Lee, 2001). The ability to effectively communicate and interact with a leader from a different culture is essential for a successful intercultural relationship (Ott and Michailova, 2018). Since LMX is an important indicator of the superior-subordinate relationship quality, migrant workers' motivational CQ levels affect their LMX with their leader in cross-cultural workplaces. Along these lines, Alon and Higgins (2005) found CQ to be positively related to interpersonal interactions, thereby affecting the likelihood of migrant workers' successful adjustment. Gooden *et al.* (2017) highlighted the importance of motivational CQ and its impact on other CQ components, stating that intrinsically motivated individuals are more aware of cultural differences and more effectively assess them and respond accordingly. Accordingly, motivational CQ enables individuals to successfully deal with differences in cross-cultural settings (Schreuders-Van Den Bergh and Du Plessis, 2016), which makes them more efficient at cross-cultural communication.

We therefore suggest that employee voice behavior can lead to positive work outcomes and decrease job burnout among migrant workers. Conservation of resources (COR) theory has been a dominant theory for explaining the dynamics between LMX (Huang *et al.*, 2020; Dong *et al.*, 2020) and voice behavior (Wee and Fehr, 2021; Kim and Ishikawa, 2021). COR theory indicates that individuals calculate and decide which resources, ranging from tangible items, such as personal possessions and monetary rewards, to intangible belongings, such as personal characteristics and energies (Hobfoll, 1989), they desire to preserve. Past studies have used COR theory to explain the mechanisms through which individuals avoid losing resources to prevent psychological stress (Hobfoll, 2001). Huang *et al.* (2020) argued that leaders send out "informational cues" to their followers, which followers use to decide whether to engage in voice behavior.

Drawing upon COR theory, we reasoned that owing to their motivation to acquire resources or avoid losing resources, individuals with a positive LMX relationship with their leaders are more likely to exhibit voice behavior. Taken together, the theoretical bases and empirical evidence discussed on the relationships between LMX, voice behavior and employee well-being suggest that motivational CQ and LMX influence voice behavior in ways that indirectly influence work engagement and job burnout. Thus, we proposed:

- H8a.* LMX mediates the relationship between migrant workers' motivational CQ and voice behavior, thus indirectly affecting job burnout.
- H8b.* LMX mediates the relationship between migrant workers' motivational CQ and voice behavior, thus indirectly affecting work engagement.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Data collection

Considering the research aims and topic, we sought participants who were migrants currently working in Taiwan but planning to return to their home countries after the termination of their contract with local employers. Vietnamese workers in Taiwan account for 53.2% of all Vietnamese individuals working abroad; additionally, Vietnamese workers are Taiwan's largest labor force (Thanh-Tuyen and Nguyen, 2016). Given the importance of Vietnamese labor in Taiwan, we focused on Vietnamese migrant workers. Specifically, our participants were Vietnamese migrants working as front-line employees in a large manufacturing company in northern Taiwan.

We met with the CEO of the organization prior to commencing the study to explain the aim and purpose of the research and to ask for permission to carry out the study. After permission was granted, paper-based questionnaires were distributed to migrant workers after work. All questionnaires were anonymous. Workers were not pressured to participate, and no incentives were offered. Before the official survey was carried out, 30 participants were recruited for a pilot test. The internal consistency of the scales ranged from 0.79 to 0.93.

We collected a total of 410 questionnaires in a one-time wave that lasted approximately one week, with a valid response rate of 83.6% ( $n = 343$ ). All questionnaire items were originally developed and designed in English and were then translated into the migrant workers' native language, Vietnamese, using the back-translation approach to ensure face validity of the items. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being "Never" and 5 being "Always," unless otherwise indicated. Results of the demographic variables can be seen in Table 1. Gender was equally distributed: 49.3% of the respondents were male and 50.7% were female. The majority of respondents (70%) were between 21 and 40 years old. Approximately 95.6% of participants earned NTD 33,100 (approximately USD 1100) or less.

#### 3.2 Measures

The motivational CQ of migrant workers was measured using the 5-item scale developed by Ang *et al.* (2007). A sample item from this scale is "I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me." Cronbach's alpha for CQ was 0.86.

LMX was measured using the scale developed by Liden *et al.* (1993), with a total of 7 items. A sample item from the scale that measures LMX from the subordinate's perspective is "Regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances that he/she would 'bail you out' at his/her expense?" Cronbach's alpha for LMX was 0.92.

Detert and Burris (2007) modification of Van Dyne and Lepine (1998) scale was used to measure employee voice. One of the sample items from the 3-item scale measuring prosocial voice is "I get involved in issues that affect the quality of work-life here." Cronbach's alpha for voice behavior was 0.89.

ER 45,3	Items	Number of counts	Percentage
<b>750</b>	<i>Gender</i>		
	Male	169	49.3%
	Female	174	50.7%
	<i>Age</i>		
	18–24	60	17.5%
	25–34	241	70.3%
	35–44	39	11.4%
	45 and above	3	0.87%
	<i>Education</i>		
	Elementary or below	2	0.58%
	Junior high	9	2.6%
	High school	314	91.5%
	University or higher	18	5.2%
	<i>Monthly income (NTD) 33,100 NTD <math>\cong</math> 1,100 USD</i>		
	Below 23,100	139	40.5%
	23,100–33,100	189	55.1%
	33,101–43,100	12	3.5%
	43,101 NTD and above	3	0.87%
	<i>Marital status</i>		
	Single	149	43.4%
	Married	187	54.5%
Other	7	2%	

**Table 1.**  
Descriptive data of  
respondents

The Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Scale (MBI-GS) adapted by [Hakanen et al. \(2006\)](#) was used to measure job burnout. Participants were asked “*In the past 6 months, how often have you experienced the following (condition)*” and were required to respond using a 5-point scale in which 1 meant *never* and 5 meant *daily*. A sample item from this 6-item scale is “*I feel emotionally drained from my work.*” Cronbach’s alpha for emotional burnout was 0.93.

Vigor, the degree of energy at work, was adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by [Schaufeli et al. \(2002\)](#) and was measured using a 6-item scale. A sample item from this scale is “*At work, I feel like I am bursting with energy.*” Cronbach’s alpha for work engagement was 0.89.

#### 4. Data analysis and results

Our mediation model (which involved multiple mediators) was tested to examine how CQ affects employee outcomes and the mediating role of employee voice and LMX. A regression-based path analysis was conducted to analyze the direct effects. Although there are various methods for testing mediation models, including the causal steps approach proposed by [Baron and Kenny \(1986\)](#) and the [Sobel \(1982\)](#) test, the bootstrapping technique has been found to be most effective when testing mediation effects ([Mackinnon et al., 2004](#)). Therefore, we used bootstrapping to test the mediation effects between the variables in our model.

##### 4.1 Reliability and validity

The internal consistency of the constructs was measured using Cronbach’s alpha for the scales. The measurement scales demonstrated fairly strong internal consistency, with scores ranging from 0.86 to 0.93. To assess the scale reliability, the composite reliability and average variance



extracted were also examined (Table 2). The composite reliability ranged from 0.85 to 0.929, while the average variance extracted exceeded 0.5; thus, the scales had appropriate reliability.

To assess convergent validity, confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyze the factor structure and test the construct validity (Table 2). As suggested by Bagozzi *et al.* (1991), confirmatory factor analysis has several advantages, such as offering accurate measures of both convergent and discriminant validity and the model's overall degree of fit. The standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.637 to 0.909 and were all significant. Regarding discriminant validity, the square root of each variable's average variance extracted was larger than the correlation coefficients of the variables; therefore, the scales achieved discriminant validity. The correlation coefficient matrix (Table 3) assessed the extent of the correlation between the constructs in the model.

#### 4.2 Common method variance

To eliminate the risk of common method variance (CMV), we considered respondent abilities and the questionnaire design. To control the effect of method bias, we avoided ambiguity in the survey items. Harman's single factor test yielded 25.39%; therefore, CMV was not a concern in this study.

In addition, the unmeasured latent method suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2012) was also employed to test for CMV. A first-order method factor was structured so that the measures of the factor were indicators of the variables sharing the method. The delta of the standardized regression weights of the models with and without the common latent factor was used to observe the difference. Cohen (2013) suggests that when this delta is below 0.2, there is a small effect size. The unmeasured latent method results ranged from 0.09 to 0.188; this confirmed that there was no CMV.

#### 4.3 Data analysis for the hypotheses

To test the proposed hypotheses (Figure 1), regression analysis and bootstrapping were conducted (Tables 4 and 5). Hypothesis 1 was supported: migrant workers' CQ

	MEAN	S.D.	Reliability	CR	AVE	MSV
VOICE	3.47	0.54	0.89	0.889	0.727	0.401
CQ	3.31	0.44	0.86	0.850	0.534	0.401
BURN	3.13	0.51	0.93	0.929	0.686	0.031
LMX	3.24	0.49	0.92	0.921	0.629	0.150
ENG	2.26	0.53	0.89	0.905	0.614	0.125

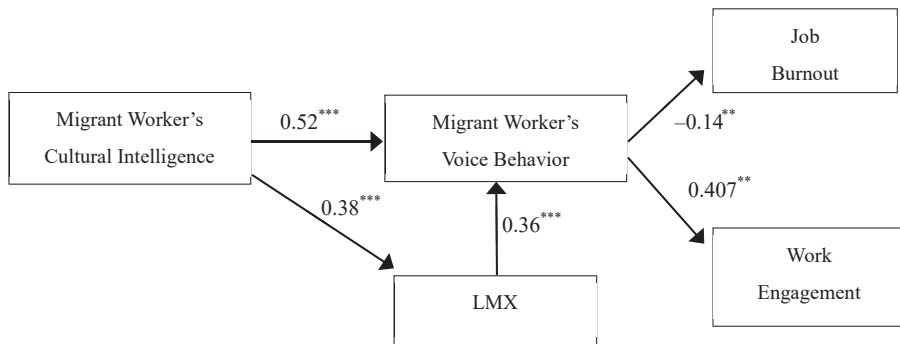
**Note(s):** Abbreviations: Voice Behavior = VOICE; Culture Intelligence = CQ; Job Burnout = BURN; Work Engagement = ENG

**Table 2.**  
CFA analysis results

	VOICE	CQ	BURN	LMX	ENG
	Correlation coefficient*				
VOICE	<i>0.853</i>				
CQ	0.645	<i>0.782</i>			
BURN	-0.182	-0.201	<i>0.848</i>		
LMX	0.475	0.415	-0.053	<i>0.827</i>	
ENG	0.350	0.264	-0.16	0.022	<i>0.813</i>

**Note(s):** \*The diagonals in italic represent the square root of each variable's AVE score

**Table 3.**  
Correlation coefficient  
matrix



Note(s): \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Figure 1.**  
Regression results of  
research framework

significantly affected voice behavior ( $\beta = 0.523, p < 0.001$ ). Hypothesis 2 was also supported: migrant workers' CQ had a significant and positive effect on LMX ( $\beta = 0.376, p < 0.001$ ). Hypothesis 3 was also supported: LMX significantly affected voice behavior ( $\beta = 0.358, p < 0.001$ ). When testing the influence of voice behavior on burnout and engagement, both Hypothesis 4 ( $\beta = -0.139, p < 0.05$ ) and Hypothesis 5 ( $\beta = 0.407, p < 0.001$ ) were supported.

The bootstrapping method was applied to assess the indirect effects of the mediation model. Bootstrapping is a common non-parametric method used to analyze indirect mediation effects in models. We tested the proposed mediation effects to examine the mediation effects between CQ and work engagement and job burnout. Using AMOS v.24, we first used the "selected estimands" function and assigned each parameter a name or symbol so that the AMOS function could estimate the parameter during the analysis. Next, the function value was used to set the three mediation paths to test the mediation effects. The first path was labeled "CQ-LMX-VOICE" and tested whether LMX mediated the relationship between CQ and voice behavior. To test the mediating effect of voice behavior, the second and third paths were labeled "CQ-VOICE-BURNOUT" and "CQ-VOICE-ENGAGEMENT," respectively. The bootstrapping method was then selected to assess these mediation paths. Testing Hypothesis 6, the mediating effect of voice behavior was found to be significant in the relationship between migrant workers' CQ and job burnout ( $\beta = -0.073, p < 0.05$ ). Regarding Hypothesis 7, voice behavior significantly mediated the relationship between migrant workers' CQ and work engagement ( $\beta = 0.213, p < 0.01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 8a was supported. LMX mediated the relationship between CQ and voice, thus indirectly affecting job burnout ( $\beta = -0.019, p < 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 8b was also supported: LMX significantly mediated the relationship between CQ and voice, thus indirectly impacting work engagement ( $\beta = 0.055, p < 0.01$ ). Regarding the four control variables (income, gender, age and education level), only income had a significant impact on work engagement ( $\beta = -0.175, p < 0.001$ ).

## 5. Discussion

This main purpose of the present study was to investigate whether motivational CQ enhanced work engagement and lowered job burnout among Vietnamese migrant workers in Taiwan. Our theoretical model proposed a link between motivational CQ, LMX, employee voice and the above-mentioned employee outcomes in a cross-cultural work environment. Our study yielded three major findings that offer insights into the mediating effect of LMX and voice behavior and its outcomes.

Variable	First stage			Second stage				
	LMX Coeff (SE)	95% CI	Voice Coeff. (SE)	95% CI	Job burnout Coeff.(SE)	95% CI	Work engagement Coeff. (SE)	95% CI
Constant	1.99 <sup>***</sup> 0.376 <sup>***</sup>	(1.537,2.369) (0.258,0.518)	0.578 <sup>**</sup> 0.523 <sup>***</sup>	(0.128,1.058) (0.363,0.662)	2.7 <sup>***</sup>	(0.212)	2.033 <sup>***</sup>	(0.206)
CQ								
Voice			0.358 <sup>***</sup>	(0.255,0.471)	-0.139 <sup>*</sup>	(0.058)	0.407 <sup>***</sup>	(0.056)
LMX	44.31 <sup>***</sup>		105.930 <sup>***</sup>		0.014	(0.064)	-0.095	(0.062)
F					3.401 <sup>*</sup>		28.335 <sup>***</sup>	
R <sup>2</sup>					0.02		0.143	

Note(s): \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; Culture Intelligence = CQ; Voice Behavior = Voice

Tables 4.  
Regression analysis for  
direct effects

First, we confirmed that motivational CQ had a positive and direct influence on LMX, employee voice, job burnout and work engagement; therefore, motivational CQ played an important role in migrants' well-being at work, enhancing work engagement and lowering burnout. This study further found that voice behavior mediated the relationship between motivational CQ and employee outcomes. Specifically, we found that employee voice was necessary for employee well-being, even when there was a strong LMX relationship (Table 4). Crucially, voice behavior helped migrant workers with motivational CQ perform better at work due to their ongoing motivation to live and work in a foreign culture.

Second, this study found that while voice behavior meaningfully promoted positive employee outcomes, other factors may also reduce negative work outcomes for migrants. Antecedent factors significantly impacted burnout both directly and indirectly; however, this impact was smaller than that for work engagement. The reason may be that there are other influential factors that reduce job burnout that were not included in this research. For instance, Duan *et al.* (2020) studied job burnout among migrant workers in China and found that younger and more ambitious migrant workers had a stronger need for their leaders to be responsive and listen to their concerns. This implies that age also likely impacts the LMX–burnout relationship. Their study also mentioned that job demand is a strong predictor of the level of job burnout among migrant workers. Another possible explanation might be that the challenges that migrant workers face in their personal life intensify job burnout. For instance, Wong *et al.* (2008) found an alarmingly high rate of mental issues among migrant workers, ranging from interpersonal conflicts with other coworkers to low wage issues.

Third, it is worth noting that while the relationship between CQ and employee outcomes has been the recent focus of cross-cultural research, most studies have focused on expatriates instead of migrant workers. These two groups of international workers vary significantly; migrant workers are often seen to be less valuable despite contributing greatly to the economy and workforce. Southeast Asian migrant workers (or Vietnamese workers in this study) generally have lower levels of education than domestic managers and earn lower wages than the average domestic worker; meanwhile, they may struggle with cultural differences in their workplaces—these factors can cause migrant workers to face difficulties at work. Consequently, they are more likely to need to communicate with their superiors to clarify and seek assistance with these issues, which highlights the importance of CQ and LMX.

Governments in Taiwan and Southeast Asia have recognized that the increasingly frequent business exchanges between their regions call for further research and effort regarding cross-cultural workplace dynamics. However, existing studies on CQ have rarely examined how interactions between Southeast Asian employees and Confucian Asian managers impact motivational CQ. Although traditional Chinese proverbs and teachings, such as “do as the boss says” or “rules cannot compare with the boss’s words,” seem to silence genuine employee feedback that may advance the workplace (Yang, 2014), westernization and an evolving work atmosphere in Asia are now encouraging employees to make themselves heard and seen (Huang

<i>Analyzed Path</i>	<i>b (SE)</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
CQ-LMX-BURN	0.005 (0.025)	(−0.045, 0.053)
CQ-LMX-ENG	−0.036 (0.028)	(−0.092, 0.018)
CQ-VOICE-BURN	−0.073 (0.035)*	(−0.148, −0.008)
CQ-VOICE-ENG	0.213 (0.055)**	(0.119, 0.335)
CQ-LMX-VOICE-BURN	−0.019 (0.01)*	(−0.044, −0.003)
CQ-LMX-VOICE-ENG	0.055 (0.014)**	(0.031, 0.087)

**Table 5.**  
Bootstrapping testing  
of mediation effects

**Note(s):** \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

Culture Intelligence = CQ; Job Burnout = BURN; Work Engagement = ENG; Voice Behavior = VOICE

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*et al.*, 2016). CQ is a necessary asset for leaders and managers who want to create effective cross-cultural working environments with bottom-up communication and strong interpersonal work relations. Our results contribute to research on this topic by suggesting that motivational CQ may be an important predictor of migrant worker well-being in foreign workplaces.

### 5.1 Managerial implications

The high number of migrant workers in Taiwan and elsewhere critically facilitates social and professional adjustments (Song *et al.*, 2021). Our results imply that migrants can bring motivational CQ to the workplace in ways that encourage them to speak up about possible changes. Our findings may have particularly useful applications for managers of cross-cultural workplaces.

First, our results suggest that international organizations should primarily select individuals with a strong motivational CQ. Migrants with motivational CQ can better adjust to a new cultural environment (Schreuders-Van Den Bergh and Du Plessis, 2016) and thus will more likely be able to appropriately voice their opinions. The benefits of motivational CQ can also transfer to different levels, such as societal harmony and broadened mindsets for new outlooks.

Second, human resource professionals working with migrant workers should build CQ training programs and interaction events that strengthen individual LMX relationships and offer channels for employee voice. Meanwhile, although interest in CQ is growing rapidly, few organizations offer CQ training. Professionals in cross-cultural training familiar with the customs, traditions and other relevant aspects of both the migrant worker's culture and the domestic culture should design and implement CQ training programs.

### 5.2 Limitations and future research

This study offers findings useful for leaders seeking direction in a cross-cultural environment and scholars aiming to extend research on motivational CQ and cross-cultural management. However, as with all research, this study is not without limitations. First, the data in this research were collected by cross-sectional self-reported questionnaires administered to migrant workers. Such self-reported measurements may result in self-reporting bias (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). Second, this study only examined the effects of motivational CQ and prosocial voice behavior on migrant workers' well-being, focusing on only one dimension of CQ and voice. Future research on migrant workers could investigate the differences between various types of voice behavior; such work could offer a more complex model for the mediating effect of voice behavior. Third, we did not measure leader CQ, which likely impacts employee well-being in a cross-cultural workplace. Alon and Higgins (2005) linked CQ to leadership success, noting that culturally sensitive and attuned leaders are more likely to be successful across different cultures. Yang (2017) reported that supervisor CQ is linked to lower migrant worker isolation. Therefore, more extensive studies should be conducted on the dynamics and interacting effects of supervisor CQ and employee motivational CQ.

Ultimately, our findings about the influence of motivational CQ in a cross-cultural work setting in Taiwan offer insights into migrant worker CQ and work outcomes that call for further investigation into which additional cultural factors may have particular effects on different Asian cluster or regions. Hofstede (1993) proposed that the management practices and theories presently used are mainly based on American cases, yet each region is unique. Hofstede (1993) further introduced five cultural dimensions – power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term versus short-term orientation – that can be used to assess and categorize individuals according to cultural background. For example, studies that examine work relationships between individuals with Confucian Asian backgrounds often find that deep personal relationships with supervisors yield additional resources and acceptance. Yang (2020) noted that the interpersonal relationship known as “guanxi” in Chinese cultures motivates subordinates and creates supportive work environments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to new challenges for cross-cultural management. A study by Mangla (2021) on virtual teamwork in India suggested that CQ is likely to facilitate trust and understanding between teams. In addition, Bajaj *et al.* (2021) noted that cultural differences between employees will affect transcultural crisis management in multiple ways. For instance, in high-context cultures, messages are not made explicit; instead, employees are expected to read between the lines. Future studies should address the influence of COVID-19 on migrant workers' motivational CQ and well-being and adjust this study's model to incorporate additional factors in response to the new challenges faced by international organizations.

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