

Emotional Competence, Conflict Management Styles, and Relational Factors: Cross-Cultural Comparison between Japan and Myanmar

May Cho MIN, Jiro TAKAI
Nagoya University, Japan

Abstract: Various studies have found cultural differences in emotional competence and conflict management styles, yet very few studies to date have addressed the matter from the perspective of relational contexts. This study investigated the influence of emotional competence on conflict management styles toward different relational targets based on intimacy and status, comparing two cultures: Japan and Myanmar. A total of 601 university students participated in a questionnaire survey. Results revealed cultural differences in intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competence, and conflict management styles. In addition, Myanmar was higher in their preference for integrating and obliging styles across all conditions, while Japanese preferred compromising conflict style more than Myanmar in the high intimacy conditions. Results indicated that participants were apt to change their conflict management styles, depending on relational intimacy and status difference. A causal model testing the influence of culture indicated intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competence mediated its effect on integrating and compromising styles. Moreover, culture affected obliging style in the high intimacy-high status condition through intrapersonal emotional competence, and likewise through interpersonal emotional competence in the low intimacy-high status condition. Furthermore, interpersonal emotional competence mediated the relationship between culture and dominating style in most conditions, except the high intimacy-equal status condition.

Keywords: Emotional competence, conflict management styles, relational factors, Japan, Myanmar

1. Introduction

Interpersonal conflict is unavoidable in our social interactions and communication in daily life. If not handled well, these conflicts will lead to interpersonal stress; hence studying conflict management styles is crucial to the betterment of our relationships. Likewise, dealing with our emotions during conflict plays a key role in maintaining good relationships with others. This study aims to investigate the interconnections among emotional competence, conflict management styles, and relational factors, comparing two cultures, in an attempt to identify basic resources for college students to handle their everyday relationships.

There is a large body of literature on conflict, identifying it to be a major aspect of communication behavior (Rahim, 1983). Conflict refers to an “interactive state manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or difference within or between social entities” (Rahim, 1986,

p.13). Rahim (1983) developed an explanatory model of how people tend to respond to their conflicts, based on two axes of concern for self and concern for others. Rahim described five conflict management styles: integrating style (high concern for self and others), obliging style (low concern for self and high concern for others), dominating style (high concern for self and low concern for others), avoiding style (low concern for self and others), and compromising style (intermediate concern for self and others).

Existing studies found that conflict management styles influence the outcomes at the individual level, such as effective leadership of Chinese (Chen, Tjosvold & Fang, 2005), leader effectiveness of Americans (Barbuto, Phipps & Xu, 2010), and links to personality traits: for example, agreeable persons are less apt to experience conflict, and extraverts are more likely to use integrating, obliging, compromising, and avoiding styles (Ayub, AlQurashi, Al-Yafi & Jehn, 2017).

Cross-cultural research on conflict management styles has uncovered that culture is an important determinant of preferences for conflict management styles. Morris et al. (1998), in their study of young managers in the U.S., China, India, and the Philippines, found that conflict management behaviors differ, with Chinese preferring the avoiding style more than the others, because of their emphasis on conformity and tradition, whereas U.S. participants preferred the competing style due to their stress on individual achievement. Rahim et al.'s (2002) study of seven countries (U.S., Greece, China, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Macau, South Africa, and Portugal) found that motivation is positively associated with problem solving strategy, and negatively related to bargaining strategy. Ohbuchi and Takahashi (1994) found that Japanese prefer avoidance style more than Americans. Similarly, Chinese supervisors rely more on the avoiding style in handling conflicts, while their American cohorts rely more on the dominating style (Morris et al., 1998). With respect to emotional competence, those with high competence are apt to use all types of conflict management except avoidance (Srinivasan & George, 2005). A recent study also indicated that emotionally stable people opt for integrating style whereas neurotics opt for dominating style (Ayub et al., 2017).

Indeed, emotions communicate important information about the nature of, or the potential of, any interpersonal relationship (Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber & Ric, 2006). Accordingly, people need to process emotional information and manage emotional dynamics tacitly to navigate the social world. Emotionally intelligent persons have been found to be more effective in successful resolution of interpersonal conflicts, and consequently, enjoy more satisfying relationships. Emotionally intelligent persons are those who can perform well in social interactions, and manage conflicts only when s/he is mentally sound and emotionally stable.

Emotional competence (EC) plays a vital role in the manifestation of human behavior, in which one attempts to deal with different affective situations, meeting his/her needs including efforts to maintain harmonious relationships with his/her environment. EC refers to individual differences to identify, understand, express, regulate, and use one's own emotions and those of others (Brasseur, Grégoire, Bourdu & Mikolajczak, 2013). Mikolajczak (2009) suggested a three-level model of EC that includes emotion-related knowledge, abilities, and dispositions. One's level of EC implies having ample knowledge to manage interpersonal conflicts, through the controlled use of emotions, as they apply to the real-world situation. The emotion-related ability level is not on what people know, but on what they are capable of doing. For instance,

even though an individual knows how to deal with conflicts in his/her social context, s/he may not be able to do so in real life situations. Finally, the trait level refers to the propensity to behave in a certain way in emotional situations. The focus of this level is not on what people know or can do, but on what they are able to do or consistently do: their dispositions (i.e., the typical performance). For example, knowing what to do and actually doing it are not necessarily the same; one may not be able to always act in a manner consistent with their knowledge. In fact, emotional competence can be nurtured and developed as part of personal growth. Needless to say, developing strong emotional competence is essential for individuals' social interaction and conflict management.

2. The Present Study

Traditionally, the most economically developed Asian countries (e.g., Japan, China and Korea) have been considered to be representative of Eastern culture, particularly in studies probing for East-West differences in communication behavior. This type of convenience sampling of Eastern cultures poses the danger of overlooking the vast diversity in cultural traits of the Asian region, and we challenge the idea that all Asian countries are similarly collectivistic. In order to address this issue, we compared one Asian favorite of cross-cultural researchers, i.e., Japan, with a relatively unexplored Southeast Asian, and developing country, Myanmar. Hofstede's (1980) first study indicated that Japan was leaning more toward individualism than other Eastern countries (e.g., Hong Kong, South Korea). Moreover, Inglehart-Welzel's (2015) cultural map of the World Values Survey attests that Japan is high secular-rational and high self-expression values in their value dimensions, compared to other Asian countries (e.g., China, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, India).

The focus of this study is on emotional competence in the context of conflict management. Once again, East-West studies on conflict management have tended to favor particular countries to represent Asians. For example, Nomura and Barnlund (1983) utilized Japanese in comparison with Americans in their study of conflict styles, discovering that the former resort more frequently to passive and accommodating styles, while Americans use active and confrontational styles of communication more in the context of offering criticism. In a comparison between two frequently utilized Asian representatives, Miyahara, Kim, Shin, and Yoon (1998) found that Koreans were more collectivistic in their conflict management styles than Japanese, and that they focus on social-relational constraints more than Japanese. This difference between two geographically proximal countries with seemingly similar political, economical, and cultural traits points to the need of more scrutiny regarding differences within research in conflict management styles and communication behavior comparing other Asian cultures.

Cross-cultural researchers have a tendency to link preferences of conflict management styles to cultural constructs, such as the individualism-collectivism dimension (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1985; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991), tight and loose cultures (Gelfand et al., 2011), and low and high-context communication (Hall, 1976). Collectivism is associated with indirect communication (e.g., avoiding style), whereas individualism is related with direct modes of expression (e.g., competing style) (Morris et al., 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1988). Hofstede (1991)

identified avoidance of direct confrontation with another person as a collectivist value, and maintenance of harmony with one's social environment is a key virtue in collectivistic cultures. In collectivistic and tight cultures, people may have equally high concern for their partner's needs as their own, hence they may avoid confrontation for the sake of maintaining interpersonal harmony, whereas in individualistic and loose cultures, personal needs take precedence over social constraints, hence people have less regard for any normative strategy selection. Individualists tend to use styles that are more self-oriented, dominating and competitive than those of collectivists who tend to use mutual face-saving, integrative, and compromising styles (Ting-Toomey, 1997). Ting-Toomey (1994) suggests that Hall's (1976) low and high context scheme of cultural variability may explain the styles of conflict management adopted by individuals. Low-context cultures utilized a solution-oriented style more than members of high-context cultures, whereas high-context cultures used non-confrontation more than respondents from low-context cultures (Putnam & Wilson, 1982). Individuals in a high context culture are more likely to assume a non-confrontational, indirect attitude toward conflicts (Ting-Toomey, 1985). Specifically, regarding public and private reactions to conflicts, Japanese behave in a very polite and formalized manner, but their behaviors frequently do not express their private desires, attitudes, or affects, while Americans tend to express their private attributes in virtually any kind of situation, and public and private selves are not so partitioned (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994). Japanese participants value the importance of maintaining public face in the conflict process and prefer the use of a collaborative style to resolve conflict, whereas US participants value the competitive norm, and consequently prefer a competitive style of conflict management (Cushman & King, 1985).

The above studies on conflict have emphasized that communication behaviors in Asian cultures are highly contextualized according to interpersonal relations and situations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), therefore, conflict should be approached not as a trait perspective, but more from a state perspective. Moriizumi and Takai (2006, 2007) note that Japanese use different conflict management styles in different social situations based on intimacy and social status. Drawing from these studies, it is important to consider relational factors to deal with interpersonal conflicts.

The aim of this study was to determine if Japan and Myanmar share similar responses to conflict, depending on relational contexts. While much research has been conducted on Japanese, very little work has been done in Myanmar. The first step in our research was to establish the measurements to be compared, to ascertain that they had equivalence across our two cultures. Once the measurements were established, we sought to answer the following research questions.

Research Question 1: Do Japanese and Myanmar differ in their levels of EC?

Research Question 2: Do Japanese and Myanmar differ in their preference of conflict management styles in four conditions based on the relational factors of intimacy and social status?

Research Question 3: Does culture exert an influence on the preference of different conflict management styles through intrapersonal EC?

Research Question 4: Does culture exert an influence on the preference of different conflict management styles through interpersonal EC?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Participants were from three universities in Central Japan and four universities in Lower and Upper Myanmar, being comprised of 601 students aged from 16 to 24 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.64$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.47$, 64.39% female): 292 from Japan ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.79$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.00$, 70.21% female) and 309 from Myanmar ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.50$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.80$, 58.90% female). All participants identified their nationality with each respective country. The questionnaire was administered in the respective native language of each country, i.e., Japanese and Myanmar. Participants were recruited on a strictly volunteer basis, having been offered course credit in exchange for their participation. A full explanation of the study was offered before they made an informed consent to participate.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Profile of Emotional Competence

Emotional competence was assessed using the Profile of Emotional Competence (PEC) (Brasseur et al., 2013; Japanese translation by Nozaki & Koyasu, 2016 and Myanmar translation by Min, Islam, Wang & Takai, 2018). The scale consisted of 50 items scored on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*), including two second-order subscales: intrapersonal EC and interpersonal EC. Each second-order factor included five first-order subscales: Intrapersonal EC contains identification, comprehension, expression, regulation, and utilization of own emotions, while interpersonal EC consists of identification of, comprehension of, listening to, regulation of, and utilization of others' emotions. Cronbach's alphas of intrapersonal EC and interpersonal EC were .80, .84 for the total sample; .82, .85 for Japan; and .74, .82 for Myanmar, suggesting that there was adequate internal consistency.

3.2.2. Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory

The measure of conflict management styles was done by Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) developed by Rahim (1983) (Japanese translation: Morita, 2003). No Myanmar language version was available, so we used back-translation through the work of three bilingual translators, who were specialists in psychology, following the recommended back-translation guidelines and procedures for obtaining linguistic equivalence (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). Where there was disagreement between translators, discussion amongst them through the conference approach was conducted to yield an accurate translation. The ROCI-II is comprised of 28 items rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). This scale was implemented to probe into conflict management styles (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising styles) toward different relational targets. Cronbach's

alphas of conflict management styles across the four relational conditions, to be described in the Procedure, were .86, .89, .94, .94 for the total sample; .87, .90, .95, .95 for Japan; and .85, .88, .90, .89 for Myanmar, indicating good internal consistency reliability.

3.3. Procedure

Participants were asked to report on their demographic information, before being administered the PEC measure. Next, participants were asked about their conflict management styles toward four different targets varied by intimacy/relational closeness (high and low), and status discrepancy (high and equal). For each target, participants were asked to recall an actual same-sex relationship who fits the target category, and to write down their initials, so that they have a concrete target to which they can refer in responding to the scales. A manipulation check on their choice of target was conducted, asking participants about their intimacy with the target (distant versus close, strange versus intimate), and the status/power discrepancy they have with them (unequal versus equal status, unequal versus equal authority, unequal versus equal power). Hence, there were four relational conditions administered within-subjects, consisting of high intimacy-high status, high intimacy-equal status, low intimacy-high status, and low intimacy-equal status.

4. Results

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the PEC and the ROCI-II

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the PEC and ROCI-II for the total sample and each country, using Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) in order to investigate whether the prescribed factor structures of the PEC and ROCI-II fit the data adequately for the total sample, and also for each respective country. Fit indices for the CFA solutions of the PEC and ROCI-II for the total sample and for each country are reported in Table 1. We assessed the overall model fit based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) CFA procedure through a joint evaluation of several fit indices. We examined the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; < .05 indicates good fit, $\leq .08$ acceptable fit), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; < .05 indicates good fit, $\leq .08$ acceptable error of approximation), and the comparative fit index (CFI; $\geq .95$ indicates excellent fit, $\geq .90$ acceptable fit) (Brown, 2006; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2012). In addition, the model fit can be considered acceptable when the upper bound of the 90% confidence interval of the RMSEA is $\leq .10$ (Chen, Curran, Bollen, Kirby & Paxton, 2008; Rossi et al., 2010).

For PEC, before conducting CFA, the five items of each first-order PEC subscales were created into two item parcels. Each first-order factor had two parcels of three items and two items. We measured two second-order factors with 10 first-order latent variables and a total of 20 parcels (two parcels for each subscale of intrapersonal EC and interpersonal EC) with 50 observed indicators. Intrapersonal EC consists of identification, comprehension, expression, regulation, and utilization of own emotions, while interpersonal EC contains identification of, comprehension of, listening to, regulation of, and utilization of others' emotions. Results of the

CFA in the total sample indicated that the fit of the two second-order factors model of the PEC was adequate overall. In Japan, results clearly indicated that the fit of the two second-order factors model provided adequate goodness of fit. In Myanmar, the fit of the two second-order factors model had good overall fit, although the CFI was slightly below .90.

For ROCI-II, results of the CFA in the total sample suggested that the fit of the model was adequate overall in the high intimate-equal status condition, the low intimate-high status condition, and the low intimate-equal status condition, whereas in the high intimate-high status condition, the model had overall good fit, although the CFI was slightly below .90. For Japan, the models suggested adequate to good fit in the high intimate-equal status condition and the low intimate-high status condition, while the models had overall good fit although the CFI was slightly below .90 in the high intimate-high status condition and the low intimate-equal status condition. In Myanmar, the models had overall good fit in all conditions, although the CFI was slightly below .90.

Table 1. Fit Indices of the PEC and the ROCI-II for the Total Sample and for Each Country

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	90%CI	SRMR	CFI
PEC						
Total sample	481.777	159	.058	.052-.064	.051	.905
Japan	315.434	159	.058	.049-.067	.060	.916
Myanmar	352.389	159	.063	.054-.072	.061	.863
ROCI-II						
Condition 1						
Total sample	895.781	340	.052	.048-.057	.058	.883
Japan	896.324	340	.075	.069-.081	.086	.833
Myanmar	702.966	340	.059	.053-.066	.070	.806
Condition 2						
Total sample	851.972	340	.051	.046-.055	.054	.913
Japan	708.939	340	.061	.055-.067	.075	.907
Myanmar	742.758	340	.063	.057-.069	.065	.822
Condition 3						
Total sample	987.272	340	.057	.053-.062	.050	.927
Japan	933.407	340	.078	.072-.084	.067	.905
Myanmar	738.188	340	.063	.057-.070	.064	.833
Condition 4						
Total sample	930.710	340	.055	.051-.059	.050	.924
Japan	910.851	340	.077	.071-.083	.070	.899
Myanmar	711.261	340	.061	.055-.067	.064	.838

Note. χ^2 =chi-square; *df*=degrees of freedom; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; CI=confidence interval; SRMR= standardized root mean square residual; CFI=comparative fit index; Condition 1=High intimacy and high status condition; Condition 2=High intimacy and equal status condition; Condition 3=Low intimacy and high status condition; Condition 4=Low intimacy and equal status condition

4.2. Measurement Invariance of the PEC and the ROCI-II

We examined measurement invariance for the PEC and the ROCI-II by conducting consequential multigroup CFAs with Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) according to a procedure suggested by Chen, Sousa & West (2005), and Widaman and Reise (1997). First, we tested the *configural invariance* (Model 1), which assumes that the same number of factors and pattern of fixed and freely estimated parameters holds across groups, and can be evaluated running a multigroup CFA without any equality constraints across groups. Second, we assessed *metric invariance*. For PEC, first-order factor loadings were constrained to be equal across groups (Model 2a), and both first- and second-order factor loadings were assumed to be equal (Model 2b). This model requires equivalence of factor loadings and indicates that participants from different groups attribute the same meaning to the latent construct of interest. Third, we tested *scalar invariance* in which factor loadings and item intercepts were constrained to be equal across groups (Model 3). It indicates that the meaning of the construct (the factor loading) and the levels of the underlying items (intercepts) are equal across groups. To examine measurement invariance between different models, we investigated the changes in CFI (ΔCFI) index and RMSEA (ΔRMSEA). Specifically, we examined the differences between models followed by Chen's recommendations (2007), in which $\Delta\text{CFI} \geq -.01$ supplemented by $\Delta\text{RMSEA} \geq .015$ would indicate a lack of invariance.

For the PEC, the configural model (Model 1) had adequate fit indices, suggesting the same two second-order factors best represented the data in both countries. Constraining first-order factor loadings to be equal across groups (Model 2a) and constraining both first- and second-order factor loadings to be equal across groups (Model 2b) did not significantly decrease model fit ($\Delta\text{CFI} < -.01$, $\Delta\text{RMSEA} < .015$), providing support for metric invariance. However, invariance of intercepts of measured variables (Model 3) exceeded Chen's (2007) benchmark for the ΔCFI , while ΔRMSEA was below the cutoff, weakening the fit, suggesting that full scalar invariance did not hold. Due to lack of full scalar invariance, partial scalar invariance was assessed. We conducted ancillary analyses in which we compared the 10 models; each of them calculated by fixing a subset of intercepts to be equal across groups. Item parcels of utilization of own emotions, comprehension of others' emotions, and listening to others' emotions showed lower model fit changes when constrained. Therefore, these intercepts were constrained to be equal across groups in order to test partial scalar invariance (Byrne et al., 1989). Findings indicated that the partial scalar invariance model (Model 4) slightly exceeded the cutoff for the ΔCFI , while ΔRMSEA was below the cutoff.

For the ROCI-II, the configural model (Model 1) had adequate fit indices, suggesting the model best represented the data for all conditions in both countries. The metric model (Model 2) demonstrated no meaningful decrease in model fit ($\Delta\text{CFI} < -.01$, $\Delta\text{RMSEA} < .015$) in all conditions. However, the full scalar invariance model (Model 3) exceeded Chen's (2007) benchmark for the ΔCFI , while ΔRMSEA was below the cutoff. It decreased model fit; hence full scalar invariance was not supported.

Table 2. Tests of Measurement Invariance of the PEC and the ROCI-II

	Model fit				Model comparisons		
	χ^2	<i>df</i>	RMSEA (90% CI)	CFI	Models	Δ CFI	Δ RMSEA
PEC							
Configural invariance (M1)	606.486	300	.058 (.052-.065)	.907			
Invariance of first-order factor loadings (M2a)	618.084	310	.058 (.051-.064)	.906	M2a-M1	-.001	.000
Invariance of first-order and second-order factor loadings (M2b)	637.319	318	.058 (.051-.064)	.903	M2b-M2a	-.003	.000
Full scalar invariance (M3)	765.990	336	.065 (.059-.071)	.869	M3-M2b	-.034	.007
Partial scalar invariance (M4)	716.633	330	.063 (.056-.069)	.882	M4-M2b	-.021	.005
ROCI-II							
Condition 1							
Configural invariance (M1)	1599.290	680	.067 (.063-.072)	.823			
Full metric invariance (M2)	1652.242	703	.067 (.063-.072)	.818	M2-M1	-.005	.000
Full scalar invariance (M3)	1902.381	726	.074 (.070-.078)	.774	M3-M2	-.044	.007
Condition 2							
Configural invariance (M1)	1451.697	680	.062 (.058-.066)	.876			
Full metric invariance (M2)	1507.079	703	.062 (.058-.067)	.871	M2-M1	-.005	.000
Full scalar invariance (M3)	1746.473	726	.069 (.065-.073)	.837	M3-M2	-.034	.007
Condition 3							
Configural invariance (M1)	1671.595	680	.071 (.067-.075)	.885			
Full metric invariance (M2)	1739.412	703	.071 (.067-.076)	.880	M2-M1	-.005	.000
Full scalar invariance (M3)	1886.473	726	.074 (.070-.079)	.865	M3-M2	-.015	.003
Condition 4							
Configural invariance (M1)	1622.112	680	.069 (.065-.073)	.882			
Full metric invariance (M2)	1668.565	703	.069 (.065-.073)	.879	M2-M1	-.003	.000
Full scalar invariance (M3)	1842.698	726	.073 (.069-.077)	.860	M3-M2	-.019	.004

Note. χ^2 =chi-square; *df*=degrees of freedom; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; CI=confidence interval; CFI=comparative fit index; Condition 1=High intimacy and high status condition; Condition 2=High intimacy and equal status condition; Condition 3=Low intimacy and high status condition; Condition 4=Low intimacy and equal status condition

4.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The means, standard deviations of EC and conflict management styles, along with Pearson product-moment correlations between EC variables and conflict management styles for all conditions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, Correlation of EC and Conflict Management Styles

	Mean (SD)		Correlation			
			Intrapersonal EC		Interpersonal EC	
	Japan	Myanmar	JP	MM	JP	MM
Emotional competence						
Intrapersonal EC	3.06 (.43)	3.36 (.40)				
Interpersonal EC	3.02 (.45)	3.19 (.44)				
High intimacy and high status						
Integrating style	3.68 (.63)	3.77 (.49)	.23**	.25**	.27**	.27**
Obliging style	3.46 (.58)	3.57 (.47)	.09	.16**	.01	.16**
Dominating style	2.74 (.78)	3.25 (.45)	.08	.10	.09	.23**
Avoiding style	3.19 (.79)	3.54 (.49)	-.14*	.08	-.14*	-.003
Compromising style	3.60 (.68)	3.59 (.42)	.20**	.16**	.24**	.23**
High intimacy and equal status						
Integrating style	3.82 (.67)	3.84 (.49)	.15**	.24**	.21**	.30**
Obliging style	3.46 (.65)	3.57 (.51)	.03	.13*	-.06	.20**
Dominating style	2.90 (.82)	3.35 (.52)	.02	.10	.01	.15*
Avoiding style	3.22 (.82)	3.57 (.55)	-.10	-.01	-.12*	.01
Compromising style	3.75 (.69)	3.66 (.47)	.11	.22**	.16**	.18**
Low intimacy and high status						
Integrating style	2.83 (.84)	3.49 (.61)	.04	.08	.12*	.16**
Obliging style	3.09 (.93)	3.37 (.58)	.03	.05	.05	.21**
Dominating style	2.53 (.87)	3.15 (.57)	-.03	.05	.05	.19**
Avoiding style	3.18 (.97)	3.52 (.48)	.01	.12*	.08	.09
Compromising style	2.83 (.87)	3.46 (.52)	.04	.15*	.08	.23**
Low intimacy and equal status						
Integrating style	3.18 (.82)	3.57 (.58)	.11	.14*	.12*	.19**
Obliging style	3.07 (.81)	3.26 (.61)	.03	-.03	-.01	.09
Dominating style	2.69 (.78)	3.30 (.55)	-.02	.17**	.11	.25**
Avoiding style	3.14 (.81)	3.45 (.52)	-.04	.07	.02	-.003
Compromising style	3.19 (.82)	3.51 (.51)	.07	.20**	.10	.19**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

4.4. Do Japanese and Myanmar Differ in Their Levels of EC?

In order to probe the answer to this research question, we conducted a one-way multivariate

analysis of variance (MANOVA) to seek for cultural differences of intrapersonal and interpersonal EC. Findings showed a significant culture main effect, Wilks' Lambda = .88, $F(2, 598) = 39.68, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$. Cultural difference was found for intrapersonal EC: $F(1, 599) = 78.65, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$, and for interpersonal EC: $F(1, 599) = 19.98, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Specifically, these effects appeared to be more pronounced for Myanmar on both EC subscales than for Japanese.

4.5. Targets of the Recalled Person

The targets of the recalled person in the participants' actual interpersonal conflict experience for each country are shown in Table 4. The number of participants for each condition were the following: high intimacy and high status condition=291 Japanese, 298 Myanmar; high intimacy and equal status condition=290 Japanese, 297 Myanmar; low intimacy and high status condition=286 Japanese, 286 Myanmar; low intimacy and equal status condition=286 Japanese, 294 Myanmar. Participants freely chose particular relationships in which they had experienced the conflict, and were asked report on what these were. In the high intimacy and high status condition, the top choices of Japanese participants were "friend" and "mother", whereas Myanmar selected "friend", "teacher", "relative", and "sibling". In the high intimacy and equal status condition, participants from both countries selected "friend". In the low intimacy and high status condition, Japanese chose "friend", "acquaintance of friend", "senior at university", and "boss at workplace", whereas Myanmar selected "friend" and "teacher". In the low intimacy and equal status condition, Japanese students chose "friend", "acquaintance of friend", and "classmate", whereas Myanmar selected "friend".

Table 4. Targets of the Recalled Person for Each Country

	Japan				Myanmar			
	HH	HE	LH	LE	HH	HE	LH	LE
Mother	29	3	1		4			
Father	7				3			
Sibling	10	3	1		22	3	8	4
Relative	2		2	2	25	3	6	3
Friend	178	221	58	100	127	250	142	239
Childhood friend	8	12	4	2				
Club member	3		4	7				
Acquaintance of friends		1	34	34				
Romantic partner	4				1	1		
Roommate					2	2	1	
Neighbor			1		3		5	1
Teacher	2	1	16	1	81	2	67	
Classmate	5	7	12	25				

Senior at university	13	2	31	6			13	
Junior at university				2				
Acquaintance from class	1		4	8				
Senior at workplace				1				
Boss at workplace	1		35	8				
Colleague		1		6				
Other	2	1	6	7			3	
No response for relationship	27	38	77	77	30	36	41	47
Total	292	290	286	286	298	297	286	294

Note. HH=High intimacy and high status condition, HE=High intimacy and equal status condition, LH=Low intimacy and high status condition, LE=Low intimacy and equal status condition

4.6. Do Japanese and Myanmar Differ in Their Preference of Conflict Management Styles in Four Conditions Based on Intimacy and Social Status?

We conducted 2 (culture: Japan and Myanmar) by 4 (intimacy: high and low; status: high and equal) mixed multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA, both between-groups and within-groups) to examine if there were cultural differences in conflict management styles across relational factors (intimacy and status), which revealed a significant culture main effect, Pillai's Trace = .28, $F(5, 484) = 38.12$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .28$; a significant target main effect, Pillai's Trace = .42, $F(15, 474) = 22.47$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .42$; and a significant interaction effect on the combined variables of targets and culture, Pillai's Trace = .18, $F(15, 474) = 7.10$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$.

Follow up univariate ANOVAs indicated that there were significant differences for culture effect on integrating style: $F(1, 488) = 47.94$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$, obliging style: $F(1, 488) = 16.54$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, dominating style $F(1, 488) = 122.20$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .20$, avoiding style: $F(1, 488) = 53.17$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$, and compromising style: $F(1, 488) = 26.01$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$.

The results revealed a significant target difference on integrating style: $F(1, 488) = 160.75$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .25$, obliging style: $F(1, 488) = 104.31$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$, dominating style: $F(1, 488) = 5.75$, $p = .017$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, and compromising style: $F(1, 488) = 94.45$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$. However, there was a non-significant target difference on avoiding style: $F(1, 488) = 3.72$, $p = .054$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$. Specifically, for integrating, dominating, and compromising styles, the high intimacy-equal status condition had the highest mean score, followed by the high intimacy-high status, the low intimacy-equal status, and the low intimacy-high status. For obliging style, the high intimacy-high status condition had the highest mean score, followed by the high intimacy-equal status, the low intimacy-high status, and the low intimacy-equal status.

Interaction effects of target and culture were significant for integrating style: $F(1, 488) = 30.31$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, obliging style: $F(1, 488) = 2.61$, $p = .107$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, and compromising style: $F(1, 488) = 42.84$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. However, there

was no significance for dominating style: $F(1, 488) = 2.61, p = .107$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, and avoiding style: $F(1, 488) = 3.56, p = .060$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$. Myanmar had higher integrating and obliging styles than Japanese across all targets, whereas Japanese were higher in preference for compromising style in the high intimacy conditions. Specifically, for integrating and compromising styles, both countries were highest in the high intimacy-equal status condition, followed by the high-intimacy-high status condition, the low intimacy-high status condition, and the low intimacy-equal status condition, whereas for obliging style they were highest in the high intimacy-high status condition, followed by the high intimacy-equal status condition, the low intimacy-high status condition, and the low intimacy-equal status condition.

4.7. Does Culture Exert an Influence on the Preference of Different Conflict Management Styles through Intrapersonal EC?

To test the mediating role of intrapersonal and interpersonal EC on the relationship between culture and conflict management styles, we followed the structural equation modeling procedure recommended by James, Mulaik and Brett (2006) and the bootstrapping procedure suggested by Cheung and Lau (2008). We compared the hypothesized model with alternative models (partial mediation model, full mediation model, and non-mediation model) in each condition. In the full mediation model, the direct paths from culture to conflict management styles were excluded. The non-mediation model included the direct paths from culture to conflict management styles.

For all conditions, the partial mediation model had a significantly better fit compared to the full mediation model, indicating that culture also directly impacts the conflict management styles, not just functioning through intrapersonal and interpersonal EC. The partial mediation model had a significantly better fit compared to the non-mediation model. This suggests that culture indirectly impacts the conflict management styles through intrapersonal and interpersonal EC in all conditions (see Table 5).

Table 5. Mediation Model of Intrapersonal EC and Interpersonal EC

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	90%CI	SRMR	CFI	AIC	BIC
Intrapersonal EC								
<i>Condition 1</i>								
Complete mediation	1726.514	682	.050	.048-.053	.062	.840	52682.263	53276.073
Partial mediation	1612.538	677	.048	.045-.051	.059	.857	52578.287	53194.090
Non-mediation	1721.312	683	.050	.047-.053	.074	.841	52675.061	53264.473
<i>Condition 2</i>								
Complete mediation	1632.526	682	.048	.045-.051	.059	.874	51085.960	51679.771
Partial mediation	1551.909	677	.046	.043-.049	.056	.884	51015.343	51631.147
Non-mediation	1650.040	683	.049	.046-.052	.067	.872	51101.474	51690.885
<i>Condition 3</i>								
Complete mediation	1672.888	682	.049	.046-.052	.059	.905	51030.055	51623.865
Partial mediation	1577.268	677	.047	.044-.050	.051	.914	50944.435	51560.238
Non-mediation	1656.034	683	.049	.046-.052	.067	.907	51011.201	51600.613

Condition 4								
Complete mediation	1586.067	682	.047	.044-.050	.055	.904	50221.568	50815.378
Partial mediation	1507.165	677	.045	.042-.048	.050	.912	50152.666	50768.470
Non-mediation	1597.394	683	.047	.044-.050	.068	.903	50230.895	50820.306
Interpersonal EC								
Condition 1								
Complete mediation	1910.199	682	.055	.052-.058	.065	.828	51734.293	52328.104
Partial mediation	1786.996	677	.052	.049-.055	.061	.844	51621.091	52236.895
Non-mediation	1872.493	683	.054	.051-.057	.078	.833	51694.588	52284.000
Condition 2								
Complete mediation	1753.926	682	.051	.048-.054	.059	.868	50141.873	50735.683
Partial mediation	1665.811	677	.049	.046-.052	.056	.878	50063.758	50679.561
Non-mediation	1735.054	683	.051	.048-.054	.068	.870	50121.001	50710.413
Condition 3								
Complete mediation	1840.896	682	.053	.050-.056	.061	.895	50105.600	50699.410
Partial mediation	1730.685	677	.051	.048-.054	.049	.904	50005.389	50621.192
Non-mediation	1768.025	683	.051	.048-.054	.069	.902	50030.729	50620.140
Condition 4								
Complete mediation	1799.200	682	.052	.049-.055	.058	.889	49292.220	49886.031
Partial mediation	1708.030	677	.050	.047-.053	.051	.897	49211.050	49826.853
Non-mediation	1759.402	683	.051	.048-.054	.068	.893	49250.422	49839.834

Note. χ^2 =chi-square; df =degrees of freedom; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; CI=confidence interval; SRMR= standardized root mean square residual; CFI=comparative fit index; AIC=Akaike information criteria; BIC=Bayes information criterion; Condition 1=High intimacy and high status condition; Condition 2=High intimacy and equal status condition; Condition 3=Low intimacy and high status condition; Condition 4=Low intimacy and equal status condition

For high intimacy and high status condition, culture significantly predicted intrapersonal EC ($\beta = -.20$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$), and in turn, intrapersonal EC significantly predicted integrating, obliging, and compromising styles, with the indirect effect being significant. Findings indicate that culture does exert an influence on these conflict management styles for high intimacy and high status condition. However, intrapersonal EC did not predict dominating and avoiding styles, with the indirect effect of culture to these being non-significant. This suggests that intrapersonal EC does not mediate the effect of culture on dominating and avoiding styles. For high intimacy and equal status condition, culture significantly predicted intrapersonal EC, which significantly predicted integrating and compromising styles, with the indirect effect being significant. Culture does exert an influence in integrating and compromising styles for high intimacy and equal status condition. However, intrapersonal EC failed to predict obliging, dominating, and avoiding styles, with the indirect effect being non-significant. This indicates that intrapersonal EC does not mediate the effect of culture on obliging style, dominating and

avoiding styles. Similarly, for low intimacy and equal status condition, culture significantly predicted intrapersonal EC, which significantly predicted integrating and compromising styles, with the indirect effect being significant. Culture does exert an influence on integrating and compromising styles. However, intrapersonal EC did not predict obliging, dominating, and avoiding styles, with the indirect effect being non-significant. This indicates that intrapersonal EC does not mediate the effect of culture on obliging, dominating, and avoiding styles. However, for low intimacy and high status, intrapersonal EC did not mediate the relation between culture and all conflict management styles (see Table 6).

4.8. Does Culture Exert an Influence on the Preference of Different Conflict Management Styles through Interpersonal EC?

For high intimacy and high status condition, culture significantly predicted interpersonal EC ($\beta = -.09$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$), and interpersonal EC in turn significantly predicted integrating, dominating, and compromising styles. The indirect effect was significant, indicating that interpersonal EC mediates the effect of culture on these conflict management styles. For high intimacy and equal status condition, culture significantly predicted interpersonal EC, while it did for integrating and compromising styles, with the indirect effect being significant. Results showed that interpersonal EC mediates the relation between culture and these conflict management styles. For low intimacy and high status condition, culture significantly predicted interpersonal EC, which predicted integrating, obliging, dominating, and compromising styles, with the indirect effect being significant. This points out that interpersonal EC mediated the relationship between culture and these conflict management styles. For low intimacy and equal status condition, culture significantly predicted interpersonal EC, which also significantly predicted integrating, dominating, and compromising styles. The indirect effect was significant, indicating that interpersonal EC mediated the effect of culture on these conflict management styles (see Table 6).

Table 6. Bootstrapping Mediation Analyses of the Mediating Role of Intrapersonal EC and Interpersonal EC

	Intrapersonal EC to conflict management styles		Estimated indirect effect (Intrapersonal EC)		Interpersonal EC to conflict management styles		Estimated indirect effect (Interpersonal EC)	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Condition 1								
Integrating style	.31***	.06	-.06***	.01	.44***	.08	-.04***	.01
Obliging style	.14**	.05	-.03*	.01	.12	.06	-.01	.01
Dominating style	.12	.06	-.02	.01	.23**	.08	-.02*	.01
Avoiding style	-.05	.05	.009	.01	-.12	.06	.01	.01
Compromising style	.26***	.07	-.05***	.01	.39***	.08	-.03***	.01
Condition 2								
Integrating style	.29***	.07	-.06***	.02	.42***	.08	-.04***	.01

Obliging style	.08	.06	-.02	.01	.11	.07	-.01	.01
Dominating style	.12	.08	-.02	.02	.15	.10	-.01	.01
Avoiding style	-.03	.06	.005	.01	-.10	.07	.01	.01
Compromising style	.24***	.07	-.05**	.01	.26**	.08	-.02**	.01
Condition 3								
Integrating style	.06	.08	-.01	.02	.27**	.09	-.02*	.01
Obliging style	.01	.08	-.002	.02	.23*	.10	-.02*	.01
Dominating style	.01	.07	-.002	.02	.23*	.09	-.02*	.01
Avoiding style	.04	.08	-.01	.02	.17	.10	-.02	.01
Compromising style	.14	.07	-.03	.02	.27**	.09	-.03**	.01
Condition 4								
Integrating style	.22**	.08	-.04**	.02	.32**	.10	-.03**	.01
Obliging style	.003	.08	-.001	.02	.10	.10	-.01	.01
Dominating style	.10	.07	-.02	.01	.33***	.09	-.03**	.01
Avoiding style	.002	.07	.00	.01	.06	.08	-.01	.01
Compromising style	.21**	.07	-.04**	.02	.28**	.09	-.03**	.01

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Condition 1=High intimacy and high status condition; Condition 2=High intimacy and equal status condition; Condition 3=Low intimacy and high status condition; Condition 4=Low intimacy and equal status condition

5. Discussion

First, this study found that factor structure of the PEC and the ROCI-II fit the data adequately in the total sample, as well as for each country. Internal consistency values of the PEC and the ROCI-II were solid. For the PEC, results were consistent with the original factor analysis (Brasseur et al., 2013), a two-country (Japan and Belgium) study (Nozaki & Koyasu, 2016), and a four-country (Myanmar, Japan, China, Bangladesh) study in Asia (Min et al., 2018). The measurement invariance of the PEC was fully supported by configural invariance and the invariance of the first- and second-order factor loadings (metric invariance) for all item parcels. However, it did not support the full scalar invariance. Similarly, for the ROCI-II, findings support the original study conducted by Rahim (1983). The measurement invariance of the ROCI-II was fully supported by configural and metric invariance, but not by the full scalar invariance.

Next, this study indicated that cultural differences were found in intrapersonal EC and interpersonal EC. These findings extend the recent study conducted by Min et al. (2018) that cultural differences of EC were found within Asian cultures. In addition, Japan was the only Asian country with high scores on secular-rational and self-expression values in the Inglehart-Welzel (2015) cultural map of the World Values Survey (2015), and was more individualistic compared with other Asian countries (Hofstede, 1980). Myanmar was a tight, high power distance culture (Earley, 1997) that has high demands for conformity to social practices and customs. It is important to note that here, we need to think twice about the claim that all Asian cultures can be grouped into one category, that of collectivists, as they have different relational

values.

Our study found that Japanese and Myanmar chose different interpersonal categories of the recalled target in each interpersonal condition based on relational factors. Specifically, most Myanmar participants recalled “teacher” in the high status conditions. These targets perhaps reflect value differences between the two countries. Myanmar society perceived “teacher” as having the respectful role, similar to that of parents. In this study, most Japanese participants recalled “friend”, “senior at university”, and “boss at workplace”, and “mother” in the high status conditions. These findings are slightly inconsistent with the past study of Japanese female college students conducted by Moriizumi and Takai (2007) that most Japanese participants recalled targets such as “mother”, “teacher”, “senior at school”, and “boss and senior at workplace” in the high status conditions (both high and low intimacy).

This study revealed that integrating and compromising styles were positively correlated with both intrapersonal and interpersonal EC in both countries for the high intimacy conditions, while integrating style was correlated with EC in both countries and compromising style was significantly related with EC only in Myanmar for the low intimacy conditions. The findings were consistent with past studies (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1997) and reflect the nature of collectivist cultures in that they attempt to cooperate with others in order to maintain social harmony. In Myanmar, dominating style was positively associated with both EC variables for all conditions, whereas obliging style was related with EC for the high intimacy condition. Drawing from this work, relational closeness was important in the choice of obliging style in Myanmar. In Japan, avoiding style was negatively correlated with EC variables for the high intimacy conditions and positively correlated with intrapersonal EC for the low intimacy and high status condition. This confirms past research (e.g., Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994) that Japanese prefer avoiding style, and offers evidence that their preference for avoiding style is based on intimacy and status.

This study confirmed cultural differences for the preference of all conflict management styles. In particular, Myanmar participants’ preference for all conflict management styles was higher across all targets than Japanese, except for compromising style, which showed the Japanese to be higher than Myanmar. These findings are consistent with past studies which found that culture plays a prominent role in the choice of conflict management styles (Morris et al., 1998; Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994; Rahim et al., 2002).

Our study found the influences of relational targets for all conflict management styles, except avoiding. These findings are consistent with Moriizumi and Takai’s (2007) study that intimacy levels and social status variations affect the choice of conflict management styles. The results revealed that, for integrating, dominating, and compromising styles, high intimacy-equal status condition was highest, followed by high intimacy-high status, low intimacy-equal status, and low intimacy-high status respectively. These conflict management styles incite attention toward high and intermediate concern for self; hence they prefer these styles in the equal status conditions than in the high status condition. In contrast, for obliging style, the high intimacy-high status condition was highest, followed by high intimacy-equal status, low intimacy-high status, and low intimacy-equal status. This study stands apart from Moriizumi and Takai (2007) in that the lower the intimacy level and the higher the status, the more obliging was preferred. Obliging style emphasizes high concern for others; hence they prefer it in the high status condition than in the equal status condition.

Our study indicated that the interaction effect of culture and target were confirmed for integrating, obliging, and compromising. Myanmar preferred integrating and obliging styles more than Japanese across all targets, whereas Japanese were higher in preference for compromising than Myanmar in the high intimacy conditions. Both integrating and obliging styles suggest high concern for others, while compromising style hints of intermediate concern for others. As discussed earlier, Japan is regarded to be more individualist compared to other Asian cultures, and Myanmar is a high power distance culture, perhaps emphasizing interpersonal harmony and concern for others more, suggesting that the more collectivistic and the more hierarchical a society is, the more it will accentuate concern for others. With the interpersonal targets, both countries exhibited high scores for their high intimacy conditions, followed by the equal status condition for integrating and compromising, whereas obliging was higher for high intimacy, and high status conditions. Our results demonstrate that relational factors should be taken into account in any investigation of conflict management styles, since self versus other concerns are sensitive to the nature of the target with the Asian samples. The fact that most Asian countries are hierarchical societies, warrants attention toward hierarchical order (social status).

In terms of EC, this study provided solid evidence for the mediating role of intrapersonal EC in the relationship between culture and two conflict management styles (integrating and compromising styles) over all interpersonal targets, except low intimacy-high status. Likewise, intrapersonal EC mediated the relationship between culture and obliging style in the high intimacy-high status condition, supporting the findings from Gunkel, Schlaegel, and Taras' (2016) study of emotional intelligence. Relational factors (intimacy and status) are a must when probing into the mediating effect of intrapersonal EC on the relationship between culture and conflict management styles.

This study revealed that culture influences two conflict management styles (integrating and compromising styles) through interpersonal EC in all interpersonal conditions, consistent with Gunkel et al. (2016). Moreover, interpersonal EC mediated the relationship between culture and dominating style in most interpersonal conditions, except the high intimacy-equal status condition, whereas it did so for obliging style in the low intimacy and high status condition. Japanese in-group identity and loyalty has been predicted by the relational factors, e.g., feelings of personal connectedness with in-group members, whereas Americans based only on category factor such as small and large in-groups (Yuki, 2003).

5.1. Implications, Limitations and Future Directions

This study has five major implications. First, this study was the first to implement the ROCI-II in Myanmar, and we have established its utility. Second, differences between Asian cultures were significant, although they had once been bunched into one group of collectivists, and we have proven that differences exist for both intrapersonal and interpersonal EC, as well as all conflict management styles. Third, we have demonstrated that any investigation of conflict management styles is dependent on relational factors, in particular, intimacy and status variation. Fourth, this study may shed light on the interaction effect of culture and relational target on conflict management styles. Finally, we have established that culture affects how EC

will influence conflict management; hence this variable is indispensable in understanding how people may differ in how they approach conflicts.

Despite these merits, this study has some limitations. First, we did not analyze gender differences of EC and conflict management styles in this study due to the unbalanced sampling of males and females. Sex differences in conflict management can be anticipated, and the interaction of sex with culture is worthy of scrutiny. Second, this study was limited to same-sex relationships, and no information was gained in the case of cross-sex conflict, such as in a romantic relationship.

While we only compared two Asian cultures, the differences between them were significant, and there is much promise for similar differences across other Asian cultures. It remains to be seen if the various cultures in the region would yield as much differences as if they were compared with Western cultures. In any event, our results suggest that lumping Asian cultures into one collectivistic group is a gross misconception, and East-West comparisons should be carefully conducted with this in mind.

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Author Note

May Cho Min is a Ph.D. student at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University, Japan. She serves as Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Educational Psychology, Yangon University of Education, Myanmar. She received her M.Ed. in Psychology from Yangon University of Education, Myanmar. Her major research interests include

emotional competence, interpersonal conflict management, intercultural communication, social interaction, cultural studies, teacher training, and cross-cultural studies.

Dr. Jiro Takai is a Professor of Social Psychology at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University, Japan. He holds a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research interests focus on interpersonal competence, self in social interaction, interpersonal conflict strategies, and cross-cultural adjustment. He has published widely in the areas of interpersonal and intercultural communication.

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