

# e\_dissatisfaction\_in\_workplace\_ among\_public\_sector\_employe es.pdf

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**COMMUNICATING THE DISSATISFACTION IN WORKPLACE  
AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES: LOYALTY AND  
NEGLECT AS AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF RESPONSES**

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**Abstract:** The need for reformation in public sector management appears from the community's pressure demanding the public sector to produce quality products by applying the concept of business management to public services. However, this new discourse that attracts the attention of human resource management specialist globally faces obstacles from dissatisfied employees who are comfortable with old practices. This paper proposes the model of Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (EVLN) as a manifestation of employees communicative responses in reacting to dissatisfaction within the Indonesian public sector setting. Path analysis is used to fit the data provided by 150 public university lecturers. The results reveal two dominant clusters: first, those who will stay in the organization but demonstrate withdrawal behavior such as pretending to be sick, showing up late, putting little effort into their work, and frequently not to attend official meetings (neglect) and the second, those who will remain confident, assume that in the end, everything will be all right and patiently wait and expect for betterment (loyalty). This brings the implication that in most cases, the most significant constraint to a new model is a non-technical, in the management category, such as internal employee resistance. To overcome the obstacle, public sectors require effective, knowledgeable leaders who can help spur bureaucratic action, and implement strategies that promote sustainable change.

**Key words:** loyalty, neglect, employee responses, dissatisfaction, public sector management

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### **Introduction**

Recently, public sectors experience more enormous pressures for strengthening the services and quality management by innovating both in technology and management (Rajiani & Norain, 2019; Bileviciute et al., 2019; Ingaldi & Ulewicz 2018). With the rapid growth of technology, several e-based management practices proven effective and efficient in private sectors have been applied (Ślusarczyk & Ul Haque 2019), which inevitably affect the employment nature in public sectors (Abbas et al., 2018). The expectation of employees in public sectors on the organization is changing, which considerably influences the employment relationship. The risks associated with the performance budgeting in the public

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sector management are portrayed in the researches of Emerling & Wojcik-Jurkiewicz (2018) and Kowo & Akinbola (2019). Accordingly, a series of dissatisfaction is happening among the Indonesian public sector apparatus preferring to work conventionally instead of operating technology information-based (Haspara et al., 2017) and the disruption of job market by artificial intelligence is portrayed by Vochozka et al. (2018) and Rodeny et al. (2019).

Scholars have long been concerned in investigating the causes of leading an individual to prefer some dissatisfaction coping strategies over others (Lee et al., 2019). Studies show that a person feeling a severe concern to the other, and the relationship is likely to respond with relationship-maintaining responses. In contrast, a person who is showing little interest for the other and the relationship is expected to react with relationship-undermining acts (Michalak et al., 2019). However, most of this research is conducted in the business sector and western laden (e.g., Balabanova et al., 2019; Nigro & Cisaró, 2020) with very scarce research in public services (John, 2017). Public organizations are designed and operated differently from the private sectors in terms of recruitment, career path, work environment, and political expectations (Al-Tkhayneh et al., 2019). Despite western (mainly British, American and French) public administration has been the leading paradigm due to the colonial and postcolonial imposition all over the world, there has emerged a flowering conviction that public administration in East and Southeast Asia represents typical uniqueness (Haque, 2019). Even, since long time ago, Peter Drucker (1995), the management guru, emphasized that management commonly refers to business management (private sector). As such, culturally and practically, public employees have different perspective and expectation toward their career. Besides, the main objectives of the two organizations are entirely dissimilar with the later is more profit-oriented. Given these differences, it is possible that the way of employees to express dissatisfaction toward the job would be different as well.

Previous research (Cheng et al., 2019) has investigated two main types of relationship-undermining responses: neglect (indirect anger responses allowing the relationship to deteriorate passively) and exit (active moves threatening or ending the relationship). Research also has focused on two classes of relationship-maintaining reactions. Loyalty responses are posing quiet forgiveness, acceptance, and accommodation. Voice responses, on the other hand, involve engaging in direct problem-solving discussions where feelings are carried into the open and creative joint-gain solutions are sought. As a strategic communication response, Voice and loyalty are seen as constructive behaviours, while exit and neglect are destructive behaviours (Sheridan et al., 2019). Nowadays, the exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN) typology remains the most famous model of response strategies and has gained considerable theoretical and empirical support (Lee & Varon, 2020).

Bound by cultural norm as well as the organizational culture (Piotrowska, 2019) within the public sector, we assume that the dissatisfaction will be communicated in both relationship-maintaining responses (*loyalty*) and relationship-undermining acts (*neglect*) which is consistent with the conflict avoidance principles in Indonesian cultures (Rajiani & Pyplacz, 2018). With the wider application of the model of business practice to the private sector currently (Funck & Karlsson, 2020), the main objective of this paper is to examine the generalizability of EVLN framework and findings to public sector employees which is notably different from business sectors. Highlighting questions of generalizability is necessary to fight the implicit universalism that exists much in organizational research.

### Literature review

In his seminal works, Hirschman as cited in Lee & Varon (2020) postulated that primary behaviours of employees in organisations are "exit", on turnover intentions, and "voice", referring to the active and constructive endeavors to improve the condition at the office. "Loyalty" is a passive but positive behavioural mode, that loyal employees stay positive under entire organisation circumstances and wait passively until the impact of negative occurrences is finished. Later on, "neglect" was acknowledged as a prospectively vital behaviour (Weiser & Weigel, 2014), denoting to people who silently permit things get deteriorated in the organisation, for instance by coming late and by putting small effort. Exit and voice are active behaviours, contrary to loyalty and neglect, which are passive ones. Current studies posed three main variables mostly to impact the responses public sector employees will display in problematic worksituations: (a) job satisfaction (Lee & Sabharwal, 2016), (b) magnitude of investment in the job (Du et al., 2019), and (c) quality of job alternatives (Wadsworth et al., 2018).

The essential components of job satisfaction include feelings regarding supervision, pay, and coworker relations (Yousef, 2017; Ranasinghe, 2019). Such overall job satisfaction affects how organizational members' strategy respond (Follmer et al., 2018; Civelek et al., 2019) when confronted with the problems of conflicting messages on tasks, unethical business conduct, inconsistent supervision, incompatible coworker and relationships. Investment also affects the responsive strategies of employees to do in work environments (Du et al., 2019). Investment in a job refers to the resources an employee has put into a career that has become intrinsic to that position, such as years on the job, nonportable training, familiarity with the organization and supervisor, nonvested retirement funds, and resources that were initially been extraneous but have become connected to the job, such as convenient housing and travel arrangements and friends at work (Wiswall & Jafar, 2018).

The extent to which an employee has a high-quality alternative to the present job should also affect response when confronted with problems in the work setting. Alternatives such as attractive job offers, the possibility of early retirement, or the

acceptance of not working are likely to be related to active strategies such as exit and voice (Godechot & Salibekyan, 2019). On the other hand, if high-quality alternatives are not available, one's options are likely to be limited to waiting for things to get better (loyalty; Ganic et al., 2018) or letting the situation worsen (neglect; Abubakar et al., 2018).

Though these findings demonstrated the different behavioural responses in the exchange relationship, they did not consider the societal or cultural context in which the exchange was embedded (Rai & Agarwal, 2019).

In collectivist countries like Indonesia, people are susceptible to the status of the other party in the exchange relationship. Further, the paternalistic nature of organizations in these cultures makes confrontation more harmful (Rajiani & Pyplacz, 2018). Although dissatisfied with the workplace, they are not likely to leave it (exit). Besides, when communicating, collectivists use the context of the stimuli. Specifically, they communicate indirectly with more emphasis on nonlinguistic cues, such as gestures, posture, eye contact, the position of the body, level of voice, and more circumlocutions (Bakar, 2017). Ambiguity in communication is tolerable in a collectivist culture as blatant communication may result in a break in interpersonal relationships or sanctions from authorities (Cowden et al., 2019). Since the social behavior of collectivists is highly influenced by norms, perceived duties or obligations (Yang et al., 2020), they are less likely to show non-conforming behavior. Organizations usually interpret speaking up as unfavourable because it can threaten cohesiveness (Lee et al., 2019). Therefore, collectivists are less likely to possess a script for voice (Unler & Caliskan, 2019). Loyalty has been conceptualized as both an attitude that deters exit and promotes voice and as well as a distinct behavioral response (Monzani et al., 2019). As a passive and non-confrontational response, it is consistent with the collectivist cultural orientation. Maintenance of harmony and conflict avoidance norms associated with this cultural orientation is indicative of a dominant loyalty script. As Neglect, like loyalty, is a passive response, it is consistent with the passive pursuit of conflict resolution characteristic of collectivism. Neglect and loyalty, are vague as to the target of behavior, and thus are more subtle means of responding to a dissatisfying situation that avoids confrontation with organization members (Rodrigues et al., 2019). These subtle responses allow higher status members in the exchange relationship to maintain face while still satisfying the lower status individual's need to respond. Both loyalty and neglect will be more prevalent scripts for collectivists (To et al., 2020). Consequently, collectivist Indonesian will engage in passive exchange behavior; neglect and loyalty, which is the reflection of conflict avoidance norm.

#### **Data and Methodology**

This study is a quantitative method in nature aimed at analyzing the model of responses among public sector employees toward deteriorating conditions in the

workplace by referring to job satisfaction, job alternatives, and job investment. Respondents of 150 public sector employees were taken from governor and mayor offices in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. These two sites are chosen as here is mostly decision affecting the life of the community is made. The conventional recruitment model is that the applicants are recruited chiefly from high school and university graduates to be employed at the entry-level. Selection is based on educational background and simply ignore previous experience. In most cases, who recommends is more critical than administrative capability as a selection criterion? Like other government officials, employees generally expect to stay within the same bureaucratic establishment with few opportunities to move outside government or other bureaucratic establishments. Therefore, the authors applied purposive random sampling by intentionally selected employees in the middle hierarchy as they have stayed long in organization assuming they have high job satisfaction, high job alternatives, and high job investment. The use of purposive sampling as the study examines and determines who are willing to supply the relevant information based on knowledge or experience (Oliver and Jupp, 2006). Path analysis was employed to examine the connection among variables. The data for job satisfaction, job alternatives, and job investment was adapted from Lee & Sabharwal, (2016), Du et al., (2019), and Wadsworth et al., (2018). For each item respondents were requested to state their level on Likert scales agreement from 1, do not agree, to 5, strongly agree. High scores indicate a higher job satisfaction, job alternatives, and job investment. Items used to measure neglect and loyalty are adapted from Naus and Iterson (2007). The hypotheses are:

1. When dissatisfied with the organization, public sector employees with high levels of prior job satisfaction will reply with loyalty and less likely to engage in neglect.
2. When dissatisfied with the organization, public sector employees with high-quality job alternatives will reply with neglect and less likely to engage in loyalty.
3. When dissatisfied with the organization, public sector employees with a high investment in their jobs will reply with neglect and less likely to engage in loyalty.
4. In the Indonesian public sector, neglect behavior may turn into loyalty behavior.

### **Results and Discussion**

Based on previous literature review, the model was developed. The inner model result of this research is shown in Figure 1.



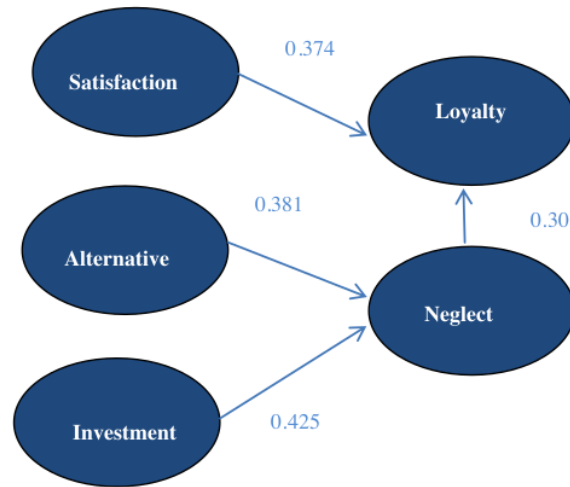


Figure 1: The inner model

Traditionally, "Cronbach's alpha" is one of the most widely used to examine reliability in social science studies. Although criticized as being obsolete, the recent works of Raykov & Marcoulides (2019) titled "*Thanks coefficient alpha, we still need you!*" claimed that this classical measurement is dependable as a reliability estimator and should remain and not be abandoned for attempts to legitimize obsolescence are not frequently supported by precise, complete, and correct interpretations and references to the original published works. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the instrument are 0.75, 0.77, 0.80, 0.85 and 0.73, respectively surpassing 0.60, which is the threshold for accepted reliability (Bonett & Wright, 2015).

The value of the path coefficient and p-values in the inner model are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. The value of the path coefficient

| No. | Variables              | Path Coefficient | R <sup>2</sup> | P-Value | Remark      |
|-----|------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------|-------------|
| 1.  | Satisfaction → Loyalty | 0.374            | 0.40           | 0.01    | Significant |
| 2.  | Alternatives → Neglect | 0.381            | 0.56           | 0.00    | Significant |
| 3.  | Investment → Neglect   | 0.425            | 0.63           | 0.00    | Significant |
| 4.  | Neglect → Loyalty      | 0.271            | 0.30           | 0.05    | Significant |

The result indicates high job satisfaction is positively related to loyalty instead of neglect. This group when dissatisfied with the working condition will still trust the decision-making process of the organization, believe the organization will solve the problem, remain confident that the situation will be taken care, assume that in the end, everything will work out fine and hopefully wait for better times. The path coefficient for this construct is 0.374, and the p-value is 0.01. In contrast, high job alternatives and high job investment are positively related to neglect instead of loyalty. These groups when confronted with the adverse working condition will report ill because do not feel like working, come late because do not feel like working, put less effort into work than may be expected, not put enough effort into work and miss out meetings because do not feel like attending them. The path coefficient for these construct are 0.381, 0.425 and the p-values are 0.00 respectively. The positive and significant path on neglect to loyalty (0.271, P = 0.05) indicates that employees will not respond negatively forever to deteriorating work atmosphere that one time they will respond positively. This is in line with incremental theorists (Levontin et al., 2019) believe that individuals can, through effort, modify even their the most fundamental qualities not only from good to bad, but it can be from evil to good.

The goodness of fit of the model is performed with the Stone-Geisser Q-square test for predictive relevance (Chin, 2010) under the following formula :

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2) \dots (1 - R_n^2)$$

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.40, 0.56, 0.63, and 0.30. Putting the figures into the formula, the Q-square predictive relevance is then calculated.

$$\begin{aligned} Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2) \\ &= 1 - (1 - 0.40)(1 - 0.56)(1 - 0.63)(1 - 0.30) \\ &= 1 - (0.60)(0.44)(0.37)(0.70) \\ &= 1 - 0.068 = 0.932 \text{ (93.2\%)} \end{aligned}$$

The model indicates the Q-squares of 0.932 is higher than 0.5 implying the model requirement is satisfactory.

Concerning the applicability of the theory of loyalty and neglect to the responses of job dissatisfaction, the fact that all of the hypotheses were supported provides initial evidence of the generalizability of the theory to Indonesian public sector employees in line with previous research in the business sector and developed countries (Balabanova et al., 2019; Nigro & Cisarò, 2020).

However, because of its bureaucratic nature, obeying the rigid rules & regulations of the organization is a sine-qua-non in public sectors when they make policies and run management resulting in less autonomy and less flexibility. Consequently, the public sectors experience a more vital and radical organizational change in coping with the reforms. Moreover, the difference between social and economic context makes employees' values in public sectors is entirely dissimilar with the private sectors. Therefore, when organizational changes happen, public-sector



employees in Indonesia usually have different behavioural responses which are loyalty and neglect only supporting To et al., (2020) out of EVLN (Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect).

The adoption of a business model to public sector management in the Indonesian government requires adjustment of operational pattern related to individual civil servants to raise the administrative effectiveness of the government. Since government reform, the complicatedness of bureaucracy has shown some improvement, and the privileges of civil servants have been restricted. With the application of business model into public sectors, the employees start to feel more and more job insecurity, mainly the benefits on performance, rewarding and promotion matters. Shifting the paradigm in managing changes the structure and workflow at public sectors. As civil servants have been in comfort zones for a long time, unfavorable behavioral responses to government reform are inevitable in outcomes such as low work efficiency, less effort at work, and reduced loyalty to the government.

The Indonesian people are often described as "closed," which means that they rarely or never reveal their true feelings. They are relatively compromising or submissive when conflicting with others, especially superiors. The effect of the "harmony" ethic imposing in the concept of *kerukunan* (harmony) and *pasrah* (submissiveness), is still highly significant for Indonesians today. *Pasrah* involves accepting everything without protest. Conditioned this way, individuals have to adjust themselves to the environment where the norms belong to the group must be carried out regardless like or dislike that lead to the hypocrite behavior. Therefore it is somewhat difficult to evaluate people by judging how they behave in workplace. They dislike saying "no" and will rather leave things unsaid or say "*belum*," which means "not yet." With their special characteristic, people may stay in organizations but their productivity is low as they display neglect behavior. In the other hand they may become productive employees due to their loyalty to organizations.

### **Managerial Implication**

With the current Indonesian Government policy (Indonesia Expat, 2019) a wide variety of new positions is opened for foreign workers to be able to live, work and do business in Indonesia. Consequently by recognizing these two types of work behavior (neglect and loyalty), international managers can provide a modified motivation technique not simply rely on the western Douglas McGregor' Theory X and Theory Y. The theories may not be entirely valid in specific countries as the particular cultural context adds complicatedness to the already complex issue of the concepts of employees' behavior in an organization (Rajiani & Pyplacz, 2018). Managers must be careful not to use 'self-referent' criteria when evaluating the behavior of their subordinates. Using the rule of thumb 'what would cause me to behave that way' may cause managers to wrongfully interpret the motives for

non-confrontation behavior such as neglect and respond inappropriately or to try and encourage culturally inappropriate behavior such as voice. To anticipate and explain employee responses to such situational contingencies, managers must get to know employee values and beliefs that are the product of culture.

### Conclusion

Due to the cultural constraint, public employees are more loyal and show a greater tendency to express dissatisfaction in the workplace in relationship-maintaining responses (loyalty). Within the Indonesian public sector setting, one cannot directly assume that people who respond to job dissatisfaction in neglect way cannot be modified into loyalty or vice versa. This support the incremental theorists that individuals can change, but when they are dubious to the possibility of change, they switch to other responses, including acceptance (loyalty) or disengagement (neglect). The examination of civil servants' behavioral responses within Indonesian cultural background will assist in dealing with the relevant problems during the reform mainly for international consultants on public management that are largely employed.

One limitation of this study is that sample of this research is drawn from restricted government agencies adhered to those staying in one province of Indonesia making the generalizability of the results to other occupations, and ethnic groups is unknown. This way this research offers meta-analysis for different ethnic groups in Indonesia to investigate the taxonomy of work place in more heterogeneous samples. Future researchers also could examine the comparison of the responses toward the adverse working condition in the public sector in other Asian countries not only in Indonesia or expand the sample of respondents to the larger territory of Indonesia to predict broader generalizability.

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**NIEZADAWAJĄCA KOMUNIKACJA W MIEJSCU PRACY WŚRÓD  
PRACOWNIKÓW SEKTORA PUBLICZNEGO: LOJALNOŚĆ I  
ZANIEDBANIA JAKO ALTERNATYWNY MODEL ODPOWIEDZI**

**Streszczenie:** Konieczność reformy zarządzania sektorem publicznym wynika z presji społeczności, która wymaga od sektora publicznego produkcji wysokiej jakości produktów poprzez zastosowanie koncepcji zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem do usług publicznych.



Jednak ten nowy dyskurs, który przyciąga uwagę specjalisty ds. Zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi na całym świecie, napotyka przeszkody ze strony niezadowolonych pracowników, którzy nie są zadowoleni ze starych praktyk. W tym artykule zaproponowano model wyjścia, głosu, lojalności i zaniedbania (EVLN) jako przejaw komunikatywnych reakcji pracowników w reakcji na niezadowolenie w indonezyjskim sektorze publicznym. Analiza ścieżki służy do dopasowania danych dostarczonych przez 150 wykładowców uniwersytetów publicznych. Wyniki ujawniają dwa dominujące klastry: po pierwsze, tych, którzy pozostaną w organizacji, ale wykażą zachowania związane z odstawieniem, takie jak udawanie, że są chorzy, spóźnianie się, wkładanie niewielkiej pracy w pracę i często nie uczestniczenie w oficjalnych spotkaniach (zaniedbywanie), a po drugie, ci, którzy pozostaną pewni siebie, zakładają, że ostatecznie wszystko będzie dobrze i cierpliwie czekają i oczekują poprawy (lojalności). Daje to implikację, że w większości przypadków najbardziej znaczącym ograniczeniem dla nowego modelu jest nietechniczne, w kategorii zarządzania, takie jak wewnętrzny opór pracowników. Aby pokonać przeszkodę, sektory publiczne wymagają skutecznych, kompetentnych liderów, którzy mogą pomóc w stymulowaniu biurokratycznych działań i wdrażaniu strategii promujących trwale zmiany.

**Słowa kluczowe:** lojalność, zaniedbanie, reakcje pracowników, niezadowolenie, zarządzanie sektorem publicznym

#### 公共部门雇员之间工作场所的不满沟通:忠诚和过失是一种替代的回答模式

**摘要:**公共部门管理的改革需求来自社区的压力,要求公共部门通过将业务管理概念应用于公共服务来生产优质产品。但是,这种新的方法吸引了全球人力资源管理专家的关注,但是他们面临的障碍来自对旧做法不满意的员工。本文提出了退出,声音,忠诚度和疏忽(EVLN)模型,作为员工在印度尼西亚公共部门环境中对不满做出反应时的沟通反应的体现。路径分析用于拟合150位公立大学讲师提供的数据。结果揭示了两个主要方面:第一,那些将留在组织中但表现出退缩行为,例如假装生病,迟到,在工作上几乎不花力气,以及经常不参加正式会议(被忽略);第二,那些会保持自信的人认为,到最后,一切都会好起来,耐心等待并期待改善(忠诚)。这意味着在大多数情况下,对于新模型而言,最重要的约束是管理类别的非技术人员,例如内部员工抵制。为了克服障碍,公共部门需要有效,知识渊博的领导人,他们可以帮助推动官僚主义行动,并实施促进可持续变化的战略。

**关键词:**忠诚度,疏忽,员工反应,不满,公共部门管理



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