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Unintended Consequences of Organizational Error Culture:

Does the strive for perfection cause employees to put on a façade and consider leaving?

By

Scott H. Crumpton

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

of

Executive Doctorate in Business

In the Robinson College of Business Of

Georgia State University

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

J. MACK ROBINSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2023

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of Scott Crumpton's Dissertation Committee. It has been approved and accepted by all members of that committee and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Executive Doctorate in Business Administration in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business of Georgia State University.

Richard Phillips, Dean

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank my faculty advisor and committee chair, Dr. Wesley Johnston. His ongoing positivity, encouragement, and expertise during this journey have been invaluable to my progress. Next, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Kris Byron and Dr. Likoebe Maruping, for their thought leadership and helpful insights that contributed to the betterment of my research. I would also like to thank Dr. Lars Mathiassen and Dr. Louis Grabowski for accepting me into the program and for their ongoing encouragement and guidance.

I would also like to thank my amazing cohort for their constant support and friendship during the past three years. Also, a big thank you to my research partner, Carey Blackstone, from whom I have learned tremendously.

Last, but certainly not least, I owe special thanks to my family. First, to my awesome wife, Dawn; thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to tackle this endeavor. You have sacrificed tremendously on behalf of our family and I will be forever grateful. I love you. To my children, thank you for always being understanding as I balanced personal and professional commitments. To my parents, David and Linda, thank you for supporting me in this journey and encouraging me to strive for happiness. To my parents-in-law, Bill and Karen, thank you for always having my back during the completion of this program. To my brother, Bill, thank you for your encouragement and for always providing a place to stay when visiting Atlanta.

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ABSTRACT

Unintended Consequences of Organizational Error Culture: Does the strive for perfection cause employees to put on a façade and consider leaving?

By

Scott H. Crumpton March 2023

Committee Chair: Wesley Johnston
Major Academic Unit: J. Mack Robinson College of Business

In an increasingly digital world, and further amplified over the last two years by COVID, customer expectations have never been higher. Facing intense competition, B2B technology providers are under growing pressure to deliver a frictionless customer experience to their clients (Baliga et al., 2021). Striving for perfection, organizations naturally operationalize how they manage their customers and how they handle errors as they occur. But as organizations work through their cultural error practices, are they considering the well-being of their employees and how their error culture practices may inadvertently influence the ways that employees look at their organizations?

In this study, I examined organizational error culture through the strategies of error management and error aversion cultures. I then examined how these error culture types could impact an employee's tendency to surface internally and influence his/her turnover intentions. To gather data, I conducted an on-line survey of 270 customer-facing employees working for B2B organizations that provide technology services.

Ultimately, this study's findings suggest that both turnover intentions and the level of surface acting exhibited by employees have a direct relationship with the type of error culture that their organization employs. Further, I tested whether an employee's organizational tenure and hierarchal role within the firm would moderate the relationships between error aversion

culture and intra-organizational surface acting. The results for organizational tenure were statistically significant, while role hierarchy did not produce a conditional effect.

This research should be of interest to practitioners. Understanding how error culture can impact employee well-being and turnover intentions is useful and especially timely during this era of the 'Great Resignation' and 'Quiet Quitting' phenomena. Further, focusing this study on customer-facing employees working for IT organizations adds further relevance as IT companies have been combatting high employee attrition.

I   CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to error that counts." - Nikki Giovanni

All companies strive to deliver an exceptional experience to their clientele. B2B organizations, in particular, serve a customer base that values consistency (Lam et al., 2004) and expects seamless service execution (Chung & Schneider, 2002). Further, strong customer engagement is becoming more and more prevalent as organizations link engagement to "corporate performance, sustainable competitive advantage, as well as customer feedback and loyalty" (Sands et al., 2022, p. 47). Facing such intense competition, B2B organizations are under growing pressure to deliver a frictionless customer experience (Baliga et al., 2020).

In this endeavor for perfection, organizations naturally operationalize how they manage their customers and how they handle errors as they seek to deliver consistency and eliminate friction. however, as those organizations work through their cultural error practices, do they consider the well-being of their employees and how their practices may inadvertently influence their employees' regard for their organization? During this era of both the 'Great Resignation' and 'Quiet Quitting', numerous studies have discussed these phenomena of employees resigning in record numbers and becoming less and less engaged with their work environment.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics calculated that approximately 4 million people quit their jobs in July 2021 (Case, 2021). The technology ("tech") sector, with a 13% turnover, is among the highest of all sectors (Johnson, 2018; Larson, 2020). Further, resignations increased by 4.5% from the previous year within the tech sector, even though other industries, with the exception of healthcare, experienced decreases (Case, 2021). Several articles have touched on how work culture is driving resignations; below, we highlight a few to reinforce the gravity of the problem.

In a study conducted by Booz (2018), over 100,000 employees indicated that one of their top reasons for leaving was dissatisfaction with their work environment. In other research in which 34 million online employee profiles were analyzed, the authors found that "toxic work culture is by far the strongest predictor of industry-adjusted attrition" (Sull et al., 2022, p. 2). Additionally, it has been concluded that "harmful elements of any toxic work environment can lead to physical and mental health outcomes such as anxiety, fatigue, depression, isolation, frustration, stress and resignation" (Robertson, 2021, p. 217). In summary, work culture is a major driver of employee turnover and has a strong impact on personal well-being.

Notwithstanding, this time of 'Great Resignation' is a closely related phenomenon dubbed "Quiet Quitting" in which employees are becoming less engaged in their work and doing the "bare minimum" that is required of them. Citing research by Gallup, Harter (2022) noted that at least half of the U.S. workforce was comprised of "quiet quitters" and concluded that the rise in employee disengagement is a result of "clarity of expectations, opportunities to learn and grow, feeling cared about, and a connection to the organization's mission" (para. 5). Klotz and Bolino (2022) explained, "while its disruption to organizational functioning may be less visible than that of the Great Resignation, quiet quitting can in fact be even more damaging" (para. 12). They recommended that employers improve motivation tactics, implement better listening, better employee care, and focus on creating cultures of encouragement. As such, quiet quitting, another well-studied problem, can be tied to work culture.

In light of these salient problems in which organizations are aiming for perfection, while simultaneously operating during times of high employee attribution and low employee engagement, I principally examine three concepts within the academic literature, i.e., organizational error culture, turnover intentions, and surface acting. These concepts are directly

related to the ways in which organizations manage their error culture and the consequential, perhaps inadvertent, impacts on employee attrition and well-being.

Organizational error culture is studied through the strategies of error management and error aversion. Error management cultures "encompass organizational practices related to communicating about errors, to sharing error knowledge, to helping in error situations, and to quickly detecting and handling errors" (Van Dyck et al., 2005, p. 1229). Most importantly, error management cultures embrace mistakes as proactive opportunities to learn from service failures and to utilize those learnings to focus on improvement. Error aversion cultures, on the other hand, produce an avoidant, reactive response in which errors are covered up for fear of retribution, resulting in psychological strain (Van Dyck et al., 2005). As can be seen in the literature review, previous research has demonstrated that an organization's error culture can impact turnover intentions.

For the second key concept of this study, I examined turnover intentions, specifically examining the concept of voluntary turnover intentions, as opposed to involuntary, such as a layoff or termination (Mobley, 1982). This definition was utilized as the aim was to uncover the relationship between an organization's error culture and how it may influence an employee's voluntary desire to leave his or her respective company. As noted above, I have articulated in the literature review how previous studies have examined these constructs together.

Finally, surface acting, my third key concept, refers to the emotional dissonance that occurs between the emotions that one is experiencing from within, and the expressions that one is outwardly exhibiting during an interaction (Zapf, 2002). In other words, the emotions displayed on the outer "surface" do not reflect the emotions one is experiencing from within. Like organizational error culture, previous research has suggested that surface acting can impact

employee well-being which, in turn, can impact employee attrition.

Given the detrimental impact that employee turnover can have on B2B organizations, it was chosen as one of the contexts in this study. After all, B2B organizations count on strong relationships between their customers and employees; when employees leave the company, and it can disrupt those customer relationships. Additionally, as noted earlier, the IT sector also aligns well with this study as employee turnover is a salient problem for this sector. Therefore, within the context of B2B technology providers, the aim of this paper was to explore the relationships between organizational error culture (error management vs. error aversion), employee turnover intentions, emotional regulation (surface acting), and how the characteristics of an employee (organizational tenure and hierarchical position) potentially moderate these relationships. It was expected that the results of this study would yield insights to help organizations better understand how organizational culture can impact employee emotional regulation and contribute to employment turnover.

Finally, while it is recognized that turnover, particularly within the tech sector, can be driven by external competitive forces such as higher pay, promotions, employee benefits, etc. (Booz, 2018), our study puts the internal challenges of the organization in the foreground of this research. Resignation rates were highest in the tech sector, and, higher among employees that had experienced heightened increases in demand due to the pandemic, likely leading to overworking and corresponding employee burnout (Case, 2021). Therefore, irrespective of external forces contributing to employee turnover, I was interested in understanding the nature of the internal, error culture climate of B2B technology providers and how those error culture dynamics can impact the psychological well-being of employees and potentially influence their desire to leave their respective firms.

I.1 Research Question

Therefore, from the perspective of customer-facing (customer service/success, account management, service delivery, etc.) professionals, working for B2B technology providers, my research questions were:

RQ1: What is the relationship between organizational error culture and the turnover intentions of the employee?

RQ2: What is the relationship between organizational error culture and the level of intra-organizational surface acting exhibited by the employee?

RQ3: How do the employee's organizational tenure and hierarchal level moderate the relationships in research question 2 (organizational error culture and surface acting)?

II   CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the major streams of scholarly literature in the fields of error culture, turnover intentions, and emotional regulation.

II.1   Error Culture

The idea of an error management or error aversion (prevention) strategy was first developed by Michael Frese in 1991. He applied these concepts through the lens of managing errors within software design (Frese, 1991). In 2005, Frese, along with authors Cathy Van Dyck, Markus Baer, and Sabine Sonnentag, introduced the idea of applying error management to the organizational level and suggested that it be embedded into a firm's culture.

To define culture, they adopted the following definition: "a system of shared norms and values and a set of common practices in an organization" (Van Dyck et al., 2005, p. 1229). It is important to emphasize that this definition hones in on the organizational level and views the approach to errors as systematic, with a set of cultural norms and practices. As noted above in the introduction, error management cultures employ a proactive approach to managing errors, while error aversion cultures emphasize avoidance.

In terms of origination, scholars have suggested that the formation of error culture within organizations could be a byproduct of employee self-regulation, specifically, learning-goal vs. action-state orientation (Van Dyck, 2010). Leveraging the definition from Dweck and Leggett (1988), learning goal orientation refers to individuals that seek to learn and develop new capabilities. An action-state orientation describes individuals that struggle with instigating action and can become consumed with worry about stressful or difficult situations (Diefendorff et al., 2000). Van Dyck et al. (2010) argued that individuals with a learning goal orientation are likely to embrace an error management culture, while employees with an action-state orientation

are likely to adopt error eversion.

Additionally, consistent with the previously mentioned study, Van Dyck et al. (2005) discussed how organizations with learning goals would be more likely to utilize an error management culture. However, their study also suggested that organizations with a principal focus on securing and maintaining control would be more likely to enforce an error aversion culture. Others have suggested that error culture may be a result of the organization's appetite for innovation (Fischer et al., 2018). Those companies with a higher degree of innovation would enforce error management, while those with lower degrees of innovation would practice error aversion. Nevertheless, regardless of how the error culture is developed, the literature speaks to different consequences for employing each type of error culture.

II.2 Error Management Culture Outcomes

Error management culture and its associated outcomes have been well-researched and tested in the academic literature. Employee perceptions of an error management culture can yield positive outcomes for both the employee and the firm. First, numerous studies have found evidence to suggest that an error management culture, or at least employee perceptions thereof, can lead to a decrease in turnover intentions (Guchait et al., 2016; Guchait et al., 2020; Jung & Yoon, 2017; Wang et al., 2019).

In the study by Guchait et al. (2016) specifically, data were collected for 345 employees within the hospitality industry, the results suggesting that error management culture had a significantly direct, negative effect on employee turnover intentions. Otherwise stated, an employee's perception that the firm employed an error management culture reduced the inclination to resign. Further, the study's results also suggested positive relationships between error management culture and group cohesion and negative relationships to work stress.

Expectedly, if individuals work together more effectively and stress levels are reduced, it would make sense that employees are happier with their work environment and less likely to seek a change in employment.

Other scholars have expanded on this finding and found evidence to suggest that an error management culture reduces employee turnover intentions through both increased employee psychological safety and perceived fairness in the work environment (Wang et al., 2019). Psychological safety "refers to the member beliefs that the team is safe when taking interpersonal risks" (Edmondson,1999, p. 354). Stated another way, a psychologically safe environment is one whereby individuals have "interpersonal trust" and "mutual respect" for one another (Edmondson, 1999, p. 354). As an error management culture promotes openness, learning, and collaboration regarding the discovery of errors, this study would suggest that this, in turn, increases an employee's comfortability in their respective work environment and creates a favorable impression on the organization as fair.

Next, the relationship between error management culture and job satisfaction has been previously tested and determined to be positive (Deng et al., 2022; Gaube et al., 2021; Jung & Yoon, 2017). Deng et al. (2022) discovered that error management culture not only increased employee job satisfaction, but also increased customer-oriented behaviors through job satisfaction. Customer-oriented behaviors exhibited by employees includes demonstrating a desire to meet customer expectations in a service context (Brown et al., 2002). Therefore, their results suggested that when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are also more likely to satisfy customers.

Highlighting one additional study on error management culture and its positive relationship to job satisfaction, occurring within an IT context, Brown et al. (2002) also found

that employee perceptions of an error management culture led to a decrease in self-reported errors. Similar to the previously mentioned study, this demonstrates that error management culture not only increases employee job satisfaction but can also enhance elements of work performance (stronger customer orientation and fewer reported errors). Taking this one step further, other research has supported the idea that error management culture can have a positive impact on an individual's career success (Maurer et al., 2017) and increase one's level of self-efficacy (Dimitrova et al., 2017). These studies reinforce that error management can increase employee confidence and work performance.

In addition to reduced turnover intention, increased job satisfaction, and job performance-related concepts, the literature has touched on additional, positive employee outcomes of utilizing an error management culture. For instance, scholars have suggested that an error management culture can increase workplace gratitude and organizational citizenship behaviors (Chen et al., 2020) and decrease employee anxiety (Wang et al., 2020). In other words, an error management culture can make employees feel grateful, compel them to go above and beyond, and reduce their levels of anxiety. One could reasonably argue that each of these characteristics could serve as potential antecedents of turnover intention, job satisfaction, or job performance.

Finally, we focus on the impact of error management culture on organizational outcomes. Numerous studies have touched on the positive impacts on organizational performance (Guchait et al., 2020; Javed et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2022). In research conducted by Van Dyck et al. (2005), error management culture was investigated in two separate studies; study 1 investigated 65 Dutch firms and study 2 included 47 German organizations. In both studies, the researchers discovered a positive relationship between error management culture and firm performance (Van Dyck et al., 2005). Firm performance was measured by reviewing objective, and organizational

data including economic performance and organizational goal accomplishment.

Illustrating a second example, one study not only found a positive relationship to firm performance, but the research also investigated the contribution of an error management culture. Specifically, the authors discovered that an error management culture enhanced firm performance through both learning from organizational errors and through innovative work behaviors (Javed et al., 2020). That recent study advanced the discussion on which elements of error management culture can influence firm performance.

Shifting gears to innovation, which is especially relevant for the IT sector in which our study is grounded, it is important to recognize error management culture's impact. Several studies have examined the positive relationship between error management culture and innovation (Akgün et al., 2022; Fischer et al., 2018; Frese & Keith, 2015; Zhao et al., 2022). In the study by Fischer et al. (2018), error management culture was positively related to both organizational innovativeness and individual innovativeness. The researchers went on to advocate that organizations striving for innovation should strongly consider evaluating their organization's error culture. More plainly stated, as B2B technology providers work to keep up with the competitive, technical landscape, as well as ever-increasing customer expectations, an error management culture can aid them in developing the right type of environment to foster innovation.

Another piece of literature examining the relationship to innovation found that error management culture positively influenced innovation through organizational learning capabilities and organizational resilience (Akgün et al., 2022). Organizational learning capability refers to how a firm uses the resources and skills of its employees to facilitate learning at the organizational level (Alegre & Chiva, 2008). Organizational resilience describes how firms react

and respond to setbacks in such a way that they emerge stronger from them (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2008). Thus, this study concluded that an error management culture fostered an environment in which a firm can better develop learning capabilities and respond favorably to challenging situations. These capabilities ultimately promote increased innovation within the firm.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with error management culture, some previous research has suggested that it may be difficult for leaders to embrace it (Dimitrova & Van Hooft, 2021). As leaders are under pressure to set high expectations and drive results, increasing their tolerance for errors may seem counterintuitive to them. Nevertheless, studies have reinforced that adopting an error management culture can be beneficial to both leaders and their subordinates. One study's results suggested that leaders embracing an error management culture were perceived positively by their subordinates; subsequently, employees produced positive work-related outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, work engagement, job performance, and reduced turnover intention (Dimitrova & van Hooft, 2021).

In another study, perceptions of management and team support for error management resulted in a positive relationship with perceived psychological safety (Guchait et al., 2014). Essentially, if employees believe that their managers and respective co-workers support an error management approach, they exhibit increased trust, confidence, and comfortability in the workplace, all of which would lead to better job satisfaction and reduced intention to leave.

As we have found, the literature has provided evidence of the positive effects of error management culture at the individual and firm levels. A summary of the literature search findings is included in Table 2.1 below.

Table II.1: Error Management Culture Outcome Literature

Articles	Key Findings
Guchait, P., Paşamehmetoğlu, A., & Madera, J. (2016) Guchait, P., Qin, Y., Madera, J., Hua, N., & Wang, X. (2020) Jung, H. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2017) Wang, X., Guchait, P., Lee, J., & Back, K. J. (2019)	Error management culture has **a negative effect on employee intentions to leave**
Deng, D. S., Kim, H. J., Min, H., & Murray, J. C. (2022) Gaube, S., Cecil, J., Wagner, S., & Schicho, A. (2021) Jung, H. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2017)	Error management culture has a **positive effect on job satisfaction**
Chen, L., Guo, Y., Song, L. J., & Lyu, B. (2020). Wang, X., Guchait, P., & Pasamehmetoglu, A. (2020)	Error management culture **is positively associated with workplace gratitude and organizational citizenship behaviors and negatively associated with anxiety**
Maurer, T. J., Hartnell, C. A., & Lippstreu, M. (2017) N. G. Dimitrova et al. (2017)	Error management culture can **positively impact career success** and **increase self-efficacy**.
Guchait, P., Qin, Y., Madera, J., Hua, N., & Wang, X. (2020) Javed, B., Jalees, T., Herani, G. M., & Rolle, J. A. (2020) Van Dyck, C., Frese, M., Baer, M., & Sonnentag, S. (2005) Wang, Y., Xue, X., & Guo, H. (2022)	Error management culture **positively impacts firm performance**
Akgün, A. E., Keskin, H., Aksoy, Z., Samil Fidan, S., & Yigital, S. (2022) Fischer, S., Frese, M., Mertins, J. C., & Hardt-Gawron, J. V. (2018) Frese, M., & Keith, N. (2015) Zhao, B., Lu, Y., Wang, X., & Pang, L. (2022)	Error management culture **stimulates innovation and learning**

II.3   Error Aversion Culture Outcomes

While the literature on error aversion culture is not as extensive as that on error management culture, it has been researched by scholars as well. The literature suggests that error aversion culture has a negative impact on both employee and firm outcomes.

In a 2010 study by Van Dyck, she investigated the relationships between error aversion on individual outcomes; her results suggested that individuals adopting error aversion experienced increased self-focused attention when facing failure, which overconsumes the cognitive resources necessary to perform future tasks. In a work context, self-focused attention arises when one is evaluating their performance against the standard with which that performance is measured (Mor & Winquist, 2002). Therefore, error aversion encourages employees to be self-critical when generating an error, rather than focusing on the upcoming tasks in front of them. Further, the individuals in the study so impacted lost motivation to correct problems, as they did not envision a successful path forward for improvement. On one hand, error aversion negatively impacted the employee's well-being; on the other, it discouraged the

employee to correct mistakes, negatively impacting the organization and its stakeholders.

Once again, touching on the impact of error aversion culture, previous academic findings conveyed that operating within an error aversion culture would cause employees to experience fear, as well as the perception that they possess little control of their respective work situations (Maurer et al., 2017). In the Van Dyck (2005) study referenced earlier, comments from employee interviews reinforced the chances of negative outcomes. Employees communicated that the "fear of being caught" when committing an error was a sensitive issue to them; subsequently, the effort would be invested to "cover up their mistakes" (Van Dyck et al., 2005). Error aversion culture influenced employees to conceal errors and prevent collaborating on and learning from them.

Others have found evidence to suggest that an error aversion culture increases supervisor stress and abusive supervision (Ng et al., 2021) which would lead to negative outcomes for both a leader and their respective direct reports. Also, scholars have touched on how, by its very nature, an error aversion culture may inadvertently fail to reward employees for the absence of errors and only punish them when errors actually occurred (Van Dyck, 2009). This approach causes organizations to fail to reward employees for their error-free performance, potentially causing them to feel underappreciated. Also, in direct contrast to an error management culture, an error aversion culture has been found to decrease organizational citizenship behaviors (Zhang et al., 2022). This would suggest that employees will not exert additional effort beyond their normal job responsibilities.

Highlighting one final study, the scholars found that error aversion culture decreased an organization's ability to reduce rework (Matthews et al., 2022). Interestingly, an error aversion culture is implemented with the goal of minimizing errors through error avoidance. In this

particular study, it was discovered that an error management culture was more effective at increasing organizational ability to reduce rework. This may suggest that those embedded in an error aversion culture, with its more punitive and avoidance approach, fail to learn from previous errors or mistakes, causing the organization to repeat previous errors.

The literature's findings on the negative effects, at both individual and firm levels, are included in a summary in Table 2.2 below.

Table II.2: Error Aversion Culture Outcome Literature

Articles	Key Findings
Van Dyck, C., Van Hooft, E., De Gilder, D., & Liesveld, L. (2010)	Error aversion **increased self-focused attention when facing failure.** Individuals became **demotivated to correct problems**.
Maurer, T. J., Hartnell, C. A., & Lippstreu, M. (2017)	Error aversion culture leads to **decreased motivations to lead**. And "**employees may experience low psychological safety, low control over outcomes, and negative affects**".
Van Dyck, C., Frese, M., Baer, M., & Sonnentag, S. (2005)	**Creates "fear of being caught when making an error" and "effort would be invested to cover up their mistakes"**
Edmondson, A. (1999)	**People suspect that they will be blamed (for errors) and that errors will be attributed to undesirable personality traits, lack of knowledge and skills, or low intelligence"**
Brown, R. S., Williams, C. W., & Lees-Haley, P. R. (1994)	**"reducing potential communication about such incidents (errors)".** "People **are inherently hesitant to talk about their errors**" due to "**negative attributions**"
Ng, B. C. S., Zhang, X., & Chen, Z. X. G. (2021)	Error aversion culture **increases supervisor stress and abusive supervision.**
Matthews, J., Love, P. E., Ika, L. A., & Fang, W. (2022)	Error aversion culture **negatively impacts the ability to reduce rework**.
Zhang, B., Liu, L., Cooke, F. L., Zhou, P., Sun, X., Zhang, S., & Bai, Y. (2022).	Error aversion culture **decreased employee organizational citizenship behaviors**.

II.4   Error Culture and B2B Relationships

As I was conducting this study against the backdrop of employees employed by B2B organizations, I also briefly examined the B2B relationship literature to argue its relevance to organizational error culture. Given the nature of B2B relationships, I found the idea of error culture to be highly relevant. For example, B2B service providers must be cognizant of how errors can produce service failures, and how such failures can generate a domino effect on their customers (Baliga et al., 2020). This domino effect refers to the risk that a service provider's end

customer's customers also experience the negative consequences of a service failure. In other words, the service provider's customers can be put into the difficult position of having to potentially defend, articulate and mitigate the effects of these failures (errors) to their end customers. If failures are not addressed effectively and if they persist, it can be quite damaging for an end-customer's business and can jeopardize their relationship with the service provider.

Critical incidents arising from errors and a challenge often associated with technology providers can have a significant impact on B2B relationships as well. The severity of critical incidents can create an inflection point, causing the customer to take a hard look at their service provider. Secondly, depending on how the service provider recovers, it can actually strengthen the relationship if recovery is performed well (Van Doorn & Verhoef, 2008). These insights are important because they illustrate that, if managed effectively and mitigated in the future, these critical incidents can actually serve as events that help increase customer loyalty.

Finally, touching on the general nature of B2B relationships, they are ultimately partnerships. As such, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, is accumulated over time. Decisions with respect to retaining or terminating a service provider occur over the course of the relationship, not overnight (Hollman et al., 2015). Consequently, service providers should evaluate their organizational error culture so that they can mitigate service breaks and maximize customer satisfaction.

In summary, this literature would suggest that a B2B organization's error culture can influence the health of long-term, B2B customer relationships. I believe these examples provide additional relevance for conducting our study within a B2B, technology context.

II.5   Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions, also commonly referred to as intention to leave, behavioral

intentions, or voluntary turnover intentions (VTI), have been well-studied in the academic literature across various disciplines and contexts. Several studies have suggested that turnover intentions are an accurate predictor of actual turnover (Chau et al. 2009; Sun & Wang, 2016; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Other researchers have argued that different variables, such as personal demographics, management practices (Cohen et al., 2016), individual motives (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999), value orientations (Peltokorpi et al., 2015), and "self-monitoring, locus of control, proactive personality, and risk aversion" (Allen et al., 2005, p. 980) influence whether turnover intentions lead to actual turnover.

While it is fair to conclude that the individual characteristics of an individual may influence the likelihood that he or she may leave the company, high turnover intentions still signal a negative relationship between the company and the employee. Additionally, negative implications tied to turnover intentions have also been discussed in the literature. Research has suggested that turnover intentions can lead to a decrease in organizational citizenship behaviors (Christian & Ellis, 2014; Coyne & Ong, 2007; Mai et al., 2016; Xiong & Wen, 2020) and an increase in deviance behaviors. This is troubling as it suggests that employees who are considering leaving are less engaged in work and more prone to exercise behaviors that can be damaging to the work environment. Further, scholars have found evidence that turnover intentions are a direct result of poor job satisfaction (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006) and work-related stress (Qureshi et al., 2012), more indications that there is a negative relationship between the employee and company.

In summary, it is reasonable to conclude that turnover intentions are a meaningful measure, one which can illuminate and assess the degree of health between employees and their respective employers. A summary can be seen in Table 2.3.

Table II.3: Turnover Intentions Outcomes Literature

Articles	Key Findings
Chau, Samantha L., et al. (2009) Sun, Rusi, and Wang. (2017) Tett and Meyer. (1993)	Turnover intentions are an **actual predictor of turnover**.
Allen, Weeks, and Moffitt. (2005) Cohen, Galia, Blake, and Goodman. (2016) Peltokorpi, Allen, and Froese. (2015) Vandenberg, Robert J., and Jodi Barnes Nelson. (1999)	**Different variables**, such as personal demographics, management practices, individual motives, value orientations, self-monitoring, locus of control, proactive personality, and risk aversion **influence whether turnover intentions lead to actual turnover**.
Christian and Ellis. (2014) Coyne, Iain, and Tanya Ong. (2007) Mai, et al. (2016) Xiong and Wen. (2020)	Research suggests that turnover intentions **can lead to a decrease in organizational citizenship behaviors and an increase in deviance behaviors**.
Carmeli, Abraham, and Jacob Weisberg. (2006)	Turnover intentions are **a direct result of poor job satisfaction**.
Qureshi, Imran, et al. (2012)	Turnover intentions are **a direct result of work-related stress**.

II.6   Emotional Regulation

As discussed earlier, the emotional regulation concepts of surface and deep acting were first introduced by Hochschild in 1983. While originally viewed as mutually exclusive, the literature has evolved. More recent studies have noted that surface acting and deep acting are not mutually exclusive concepts, meaning that it is possible for an individual to use both surface acting and deep acting within varying contexts and situations (Arnold et al., 2015). This is important to note because it recognizes the decisive process of acting; individuals can make deliberate choices to engage in surface or deep acting. We will further elaborate on some of the differences between the two acting methods and their corresponding impacts on outcomes.

II.7   Surface Acting

Surface acting entails exhibiting emotions on the outside that do not reflect the emotions (or lack thereof) being experienced on the inside. It can involve putting on an act, or a façade, so to speak. Surface acting includes "careful presentation of verbal and nonverbal cues, such as facial characteristics, gestures and voice tone" (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993, p. 92).

Interestingly, though, surface acting may not always be intentional. The difference between displayed emotion and experienced emotion could be the result of other factors influencing the behavior, such as stressful situations that impede a person's ability to convey their actual emotions (Gardner et al., 2009). Examples could include conversations around performance, employee terminations, and corporate restructuring to name a few.

While external surface acting and its propensity to produce negative outcomes such as higher turnover intentions (Chau et al., 2009; Cho & Song, 2017; Goodwin et al., 2011), poor job satisfaction (Bhave & Glomb, 2016; Grandey, 2003; Wang et al., 2020) and poor job performance (Goodwin et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2021; Peng, 2015) has been studied extensively in the literature, intra-organizational surface acting, in particular, has received less attention. The next section will highlight literature, specifically focused on intra-organizational surface acting, having the greatest relevance to the current study.

In 2013, Ozcelik published a study in which he collected data from two different firms located in Northern California. These data included collection from employees and their respective supervisors. He noted at the beginning of his paper that surface acting has historically been investigated more heavily between employees and external relationships (often customers). His study more uniquely examined surface acting intra-organizationally, discovering that surface acting and emotional exhaustion had a positive relationship, while surface acting and job performance had a negative relationship, both potential antecedents to employee turnover intentions. His results would suggest that surface acting intra-organizationally produces negative outcomes; this is consistent with the results of external surface acting.

In another study (surveying 276 working adults) focusing on intra-organizational interactions, the authors concluded that in environments perceived to be more political,

employees will utilize surface acting to interact with their coworkers; ultimately, this surface acting can result in decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Andrews et al., 2016). Not only did this serve as another example regarding the effect between intra-organizational surface acting and negative employee outcomes, but it also touched on the influence of culture, via its reference to the 'political work environment'. It suggests that organizational culture can influence intra-organizational surface acting.

On a related note, there was a study conducted in which data were collected for 309 employees. The findings revealed that intra-organizational surface acting had a negative effect on job satisfaction. However, more interestingly, it found that when individuals experienced perceived organizational support (POS), it would moderate the negative relationship between intra-organizational surface acting and job satisfaction, ultimately weakening the relationship (Hur et al., 2015). The researchers leveraged the following definition for POS from Eisenberger et al. (1986), i.e., "the extent to which employees perceive their contributions are valued by their organization and that the firm cares about their well-being" (p. 501). We view POS as an element of work culture; thus, we derive that this study provides further evidence supporting a relationship between organizational culture and intra-organizational surface acting.

Along with the negative impacts on turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and job performance, others have found additional negative outcomes associated with intra-organizational surface acting. Hu and Shi (2015) discovered a positive relationship between intra-organizational surface acting and felt inauthenticity and interaction avoidance. Further, they found a negative relationship between communication satisfaction and perceived information sharing (Hu & Shi, 2015). Their study suggests that during co-worker surface acting, employees are not being authentic and may tend to shy away from interaction altogether;

if they do interact, they may dislike the quality of the interaction itself. Peker and Ersoy (2022) also conducted a study and confirmed intra-organizational surface acting's negative impact on workplace authenticity.

Others suggest that intra-organizational surface acting is positively related to perceptions of organizational dehumanization (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020). Leveraging previous literature, scholars have defined organizational dehumanization as instances when an employee "feels objectified by his or her organization, denied personal subjectivity, and made to feel like a tool or instrument" (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p. 5). In other words, how the organization treats its respective employees can also lead to intra-organizational surface acting. Table 2.4 below highlights the literature findings on intra-organizational surface acting.

Table II.4: Intra-Organizational Surface Acting Literature

Articles	Key Findings
Ozcelik, H. (2013)	*Intra-organizational surface acting* is **positively related to emotional exhaustion and negatively related to job performance**, both potential antecedents to employee turnover intentions
Andrews, M. C., Kacmar, K. M., & Valle, M. (2016)	*Intra-organizational surface acting* **can occur when employees believe their work environment is highly political**. This, in turn, **can decrease job satisfaction and increase turnover intentions**
Hur, W. M., Han, S. J., Yoo, J. J., & Moon, T. W. (2015)	*Intra-organizational surface acting* **negatively impacts job satisfaction**. **Perceived organizational support (POS) can moderate the negative relationship between intra-organizational surface acting and job satisfaction**, such that it weakened the relationship
Hu, X., & Shi, J. (2015)	*Intra-organizational surface acting* was **positively related to felt inauthenticity and interaction avoidance** and **negatively related to communication satisfaction and perceived information sharing**
Peker, M., & Ersoy, N. C. (2022)	*Intra-organizational surface acting* was **negatively related to a workplace climate of authenticity**
Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2020)	*Intra-organizational surface acting* was **positively associated with perceived higher levels of organizational dehumanization**

II.8   Deep Acting

While deep acting is not included as a construct in the current study, I will briefly touch on the literature as it is another form of emotion labor, often compared to and contrasted with

surface acting. Deep acting occurs when one actively regulates their emotions internally to match the feelings deemed appropriate for the situation or interaction (Arnold et al., 2015). Recipients on the other end of these interactions view these actors to be more authentic than those who surface act; thus, they view them more favorably (Gardner et al., 2009). However, it is important to note that this definition distinguishes deep acting from genuine emotion; genuine emotion involves "naturally felt emotions" (Diefendorff et al., 2005), while deep acting involves "active regulation" of emotions. Generally, the effects of deep acting have been seen as a bit more mixed. In some instances, deep acting has been viewed in a slightly more positive light than surface acting as it has been associated with generating positive outcomes. However, in other instances, the results have suggested that deep acting can produce negative effects. In the following section, I will provide a few examples.

Research conducted by Huang et al. (2015), in which they collected data from 84 service professionals, yielded findings suggesting that when faced with more challenging work, individuals utilizing deep acting experienced higher job satisfaction and lower emotional exhaustion. In another study, in which the researchers specifically focused on work teams, the authors found that the influence of deep acting produced team-level deep acting, which in turn, led to higher job satisfaction, better job performance, and lower emotional exhaustion (Becker & Cropanzano, 2015). Further, in the same study referenced earlier in which POS (perceived organizational support) was investigated as a moderator, the authors found that deep acting had the opposite effect of surface acting such that deep acting was positively associated with job satisfaction. Additionally, they discovered that POS moderated the relationships between deep acting and both job satisfaction and job performance, such that it strengthened those relationships (Hur et al., 2015).

Remembering that deep acting is a form of emotional regulation, it still does require effort. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) noted the following, "Deep acting may ultimately lead to self-alienation as one loses touch with this authentic self, and it may impair one's ability to recognize or even experience genuine emotion" (p. 97). In other words, repetitive use of deep acting can lead one to depart from experiencing naturally felt emotions, potentially impacting psychological well-being. Aside from the impacts on emotional exhaustion, and in direct contrast to some of the studies referenced earlier, other authors' works have suggested that deep acting can actually lead to negative job satisfaction (Chung et al., 2021; Grandey, 2003).

Overall, the literature's view on surface acting provides a more consistent stance on the impacts on employee outcomes, while deep acting can generate conflicting outcomes. Table 2.5 highlights literature findings on the concept of deep acting.

Table II.5: Deep Acting Literature

Article	Key Findings
Huang, J. L., Chiaburu, D. S., Zhang, X. A., Li, N., & Grandey, A. A. (2015)	**When faced with more challenging work, individuals using deep acting experienced higher job satisfaction** and **lower emotional exhaustion**
Becker, W. J., & Cropanzano, R. (2015)	The influence of deep acting (when working on teams) produced **team-level deep acting**, which in turn**, led to higher job satisfaction, better job performance** and **lower emotional exhaustion**
Hur, W. M., Han, S. J., Yoo, J. J., & Moon, T. W. (2015)	**Deep acting** had the opposite effect of surface acting such that **it was positively associated to job satisfaction**. Additionally, **POS moderated the relationships between deep acting and both job satisfaction and job performance, such that it strengthened those relationships**
Grandey, A. A. (2003)	**Deep acting can actually lead to negative job satisfaction.**
Chung, M., Jang, Y. H., & Edelson, S. A. (2021)	**The conflicting results between positive** and **negative outcomes can be explained by the multidimensional nature of deep acting** (Alabak, Hulsheger, Zijlstra and Verduyn, 2020) in which the researchers argue that **deep acting involves various emotional regulation strategies that can produce different outcomes.**

III CHAPTER III: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

III.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework is depicted in figure 3.1. As outlined in the research questions, the aim of this study was to understand the relationships between error culture influence, turnover intentions, and the degree of intra-organizational surface acting utilized by employees, and the moderating effects of an employee's organizational tenure and hierarchical role between organizational error culture and surface acting.
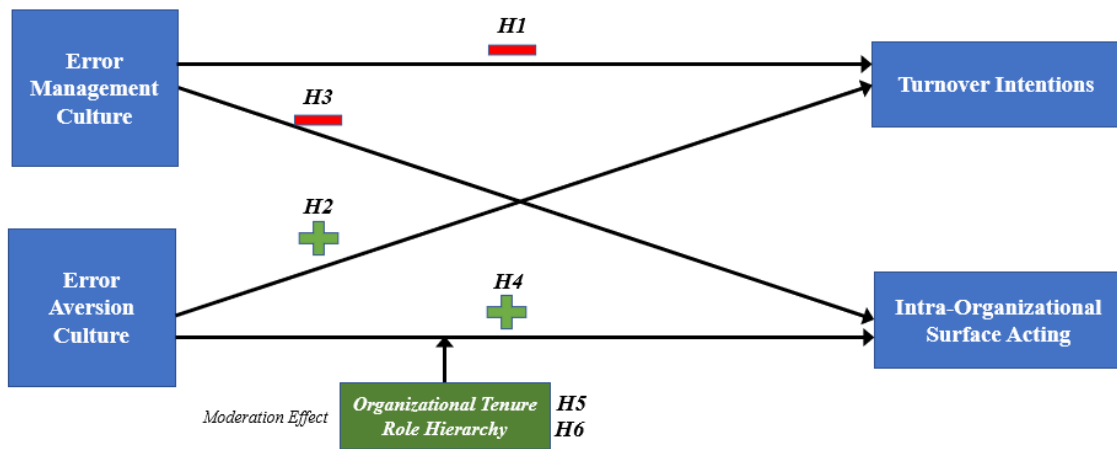
Figure III.1: Conceptual Framework

III.2 Hypotheses

In response to research question 1, I hypothesized the following:

H1: Higher employee perceptions of error management culture will lead to weaker turnover intentions.

H2: Higher employee perceptions of error aversion culture will lead to stronger turnover intentions.

As noted in the literature review, previous research has noted that an error management culture reduces employee turnover intentions and yields several other positive outcomes at both the firm and individual levels. In direct contrast, the literature has advocated that an error

aversion culture generates both negative firm and individual outcomes, including increased turnover intention. The aim was to test and reinforce these previous findings in a new context that is highly relevant to B2B organizations, the IT sector, and overall employee sentiments during this time of the 'Great Resignation' and 'Quiet Quitting' era.

As discussed earlier, B2B companies can be particularly sensitive to errors, especially those errors that may impact their customers. The heightened pressure to deliver seamlessly can subsequently put additional stress on employees. I believe testing the impact of error culture (how organizations culturally operationalize responses to errors) on turnover intentions can provide meaningful insights. Additionally, noting the high attrition within the technology sector, I believe testing these relationships among employees working for technology companies provides additional relevance.

In response to research question 2, I hypothesized the following:

H3: Higher employee perceptions of error management culture will lead to weaker intra-organizational surface acting.

H4: Higher employee perceptions of error aversion culture will lead to stronger intra-organizational surface acting.

In various studies, such as the articles highlighted earlier, the academic literature supports the notion that organizational culture can influence one's propensity to surface act. My plan was to test this idea to see if there is a relationship between error management and error aversion cultures and surface acting levels. Given these very contrasting cultures, I would expect them to influence leadership behaviors differently.

As an error management culture promotes a proactive and transparent approach to learning from and correcting errors, I posited that it should lead a weaker degree of intra-

organizational surface acting exhibited by an employee. It is believed that employees operating within these cultures should feel more comfortable operating authentically. In direct contrast, it is expected that an error aversion culture should strengthen the level of intra-organizational surface acting, as employees may be more prone to utilize political skill and suppress their actual emotions as they navigate in a more punitive, finger-pointing type of organization.

Furthermore, once again grounding this study to B2B, it is important to emphasize that the handling of errors may not only impact employee turnover intentions, but it could also affect the degree to which employees surface act amongst colleagues. For example, managing or avoiding errors may create instances in which employees feel compelled to mask or suppress their emotions. Perhaps in an effort to save face, or in an employee's desire to hide frustration about the occurrence of errors, he or she may be influenced to surface act. Again, we believe this to be relevant for the B2B context given the general desire for B2B organizations to maximize customer satisfaction for large, complex, strategic accounts.

In response to research question 3, I hypothesized moderation between error aversion culture and intra-organizational surface acting. It is important to note that no moderation is hypothesized for error management culture as it is expected to have a weaker relationship to intra-organizational surface acting. The specific hypotheses are as follows:

H5: Organizational tenure will moderate the relationship between error aversion culture and intra-organizational surface acting such that higher organizational tenure weakens the relationship.

Organizational tenure, measured by the amount of time that employees have worked at their current organization (McEnrue, 1988), may have an influence on the dynamics between error culture and corresponding surface acting. For example, longer-tenured employees may

have more confidence and comfort in deviating from common practice and voicing their opinions (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Additionally, longer-tenured employees have had more time to firmly establish themselves within their work roles and to develop strong work relationships (Gregersen, 1993). On the other hand, newer employees, or those with less organizational tenure, may still be in a transitionary period in which they are learning more about the nature of their work responsibilities, the culture of their work environment, and the personalities of their key stakeholders (Bidwell, 2011; Gregersen, 1993). For these reasons, organizational tenure may prove to have a significant, moderating influence on this relationship.

H6: Role hierarchy will moderate the relationship between error aversion culture and intra-organizational surface acting such that higher role hierarchy strengthens the relationship.

Role hierarchy refers to the employee's respective business title and the overall level of responsibility relative to others in the organization. Previous literature has touched on intra-organizational surface acting and how it positively relates to having 'higher status' leadership present during those interactions (Shumski Thomas et al., 2018). Similarly, a study by Nyquist et al. (2018) reinforced this finding as they measured intra-organizational surface acting and its relationship to hierarchical distance. They defined the term hierarchical distance as "related to the amount of direct contact individuals of differing status level experience as a function of their organizational roles" (p. 208). Their study found a positive relationship between surface acting and hierarchical distance. Finally, "when individuals perceive their work environment to be highly political, in order to participate, they engage in surface acting" (Andrews et al., 2016, p. 1274). Therefore, I conclude that the literature support testing whether an employee's hierarchal level can moderate the impact of error culture influence on surface acting levels.

IV CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

IV.1 Research Design

To test my six hypotheses and subsequently answer the three research questions, I have

employed a quantitative research approach. Structural equation modeling (SEM) has been

employed utilizing AMOS version 28. SEM is an appropriate technique to use when one is

testing the extent to which a hypothesized model's entire system of variables is consistent with

the data (Byrne, 2012). After model fit was successfully assessed utilizing AMOS, regression

analyses were performed in IBM SPSS version 27 utilizing the imputed scores derived from the

AMOS model. Direct effects for hypotheses 1-4 were calculated using a linear, hierarchal

regression. The conditional, moderating effects for hypotheses 5-6 were calculated using the

Hayes Process Macro version 4, model 1.

IV.2 Sample Selection and Data Collection

To collect data, I acquired a sample of B2B customer-facing professionals operating

within the IT sector to complete an online survey using the platform, Qualtrics. Over an

approximate four-week period, respondents answered a series of questions using established

Likert scales from the academic literature. Questions included employee perceptions of their

organization's error culture, employee turnover intentions, and their respective levels of surface

acting intra-organizationally. Demographic statistics such as gender, age, firm size, firm

industry, business segment, employment experience, business title, and education level were

collected. Additionally, striving to utilize the perceived political environment as a control

variable, I asked a few questions utilizing a questionnaire from the academic literature to

measure employee perspectives regarding the degree to which they perceive their work culture to

be a political environment (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

To retrieve respondents, I leveraged the online crowdsourcing platform, CloudResearch, to recruit the individuals who passed the necessary screening criteria and matched the target population. Screening criteria accounted for ensuring that respondents operated in the B2B segment, had a customer-facing job function, worked in the IT sector, were full-time employees, and worked at organizations with at least 100 employees. Regarding the sample, I utilized 270 response submissions. Given that my study included 6 variables and a conventional rule-of-thumb for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is that the dataset to be analyzed should contain a minimum of 20 observations for every variable (Kline, 2015), I concluded I had a sufficient sample size.

IV.3 Instrumentation Measures

IV.3.1 Independent Variables

This study included two independent variables, error management culture, and error aversion culture. Both variables encompassed five-point Likert scales developed by Van Dyck et al. (2005). Respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed with statements describing the error practices exhibited by their respective employers by indicating strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The error management culture scale consisted of 16 items and included statements such as "for us, errors are very useful for improving the work process." The error aversion culture scale included 11 items and included statements such as "in this organization, people feel stressed when making mistakes."

IV.3.2 Dependent Variables

The two dependent variables included turnover intentions and surface acting, both of which were measured using five-point Likert scales with ranges of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Turnover intention was measured leveraging the TIS-6 scale developed by Roodt in

2004; this scale was validated by the well-cited turnover intentions scale study conducted by

Bothma and Roodt in 2013. Additionally, the TIS-6 has been utilized successfully by numerous

scholars (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Masood et al., 2020; Su, 2021). The scale consists of six

statements and respondents were asked to specify the degree to which they agreed with each

statement. Statements such as "I often consider leaving my job" were included.

Surface acting was measured using a five-statement scale developed by Grandey in 2003.

The scale was modified following the approach of Shumski Thomas et al. (2018) and Ozcelik

(2013) to account for intra-organizational surface acting, as opposed to capturing surface

externally with customers. Statements such as "I put on an act in order to deal with colleagues in

an appropriate way" were included.

IV.3.3 *Moderating Variables*

Information about organizational tenure was collected from respondents by asking how

many months they have worked for their current employer. Role hierarchy was assessed by

asking respondents to specify if they were individual contributors, lower management, middle

management, or upper management. Definitions of each role were included in the study to

ensure that respondents adhered to the same interpretation.

IV.3.4 *Control Variables*

Control variables were utilized in this study to account for potential rival explanations.

Specifically, respondents were asked to answer questions pertaining to their gender, educational

level, race/ethnicity, age, firm size, and work experience. In addition, to control for the

perceived political environment, respondents were asked to specify the degree (strongly agree to

strongly disagree) with which they agreed with five statements from a Likert scale. Statements

such as "favoritism, rather than merit, determines who gets ahead" were included. The specific

scale utilized was created by Ferris and Kacmar in 1992 from their highly cited study,

"Perceptions of Organizational Politics." While organizational politics is perceived by some to

be a multidimensional construct (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992), this scale was specifically selected to

keep the overall survey length manageable and minimize survey fatigue by respondents.

V   CHAPTER V: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

V.1   Measurement Model Introduction

Following the completion of data collection, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was

conducted in AMOS v28.0 to confirm the measurement model's goodness of fit. Further, tests

were completed to assess both the univariate and multivariate normality of the data, as well as

verify acceptable convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity. In addition to

calculating Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) for the latent

variables within the full model, the results were also calculated individually for the independent

and dependent variables.

V.2   Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Utilizing the maximum-likelihood method of estimation in AMOS version 28, a

confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted and analyzed. Figure 5.1 below provides an

illustration of the final measurement model from AMOS. Striving to ensure acceptable

convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity amongst the latent variables, the model

was fine-tuned through iterations. Following successful modifications to the constructs, which

will be detailed in the subsequent section, acceptable goodness of fit metrics was produced for

the measurement model (Table 5.1).
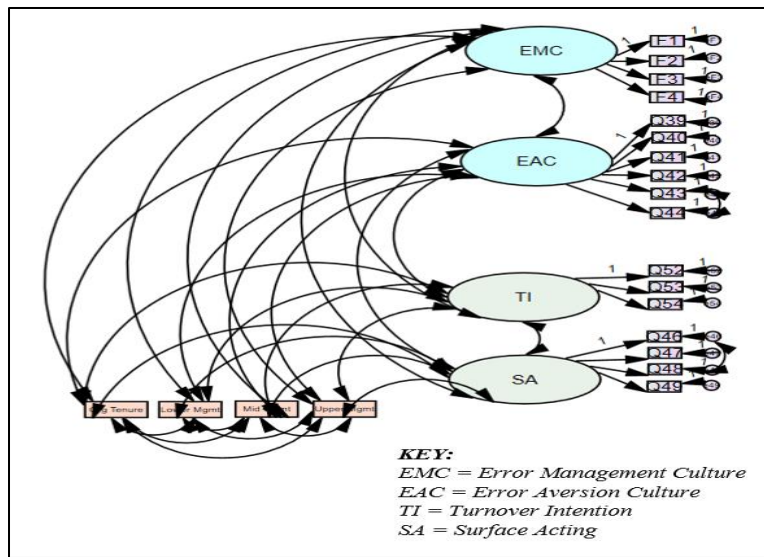
Figure V.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis – AMOS

V.2.1   Convergent Validity, Reliability, and Discriminant Validity

Error management was measured utilizing a 16-item scale. To achieve acceptable convergent validity, item parceling was used. Parceling entails averaging two or more items to create single parcels and then utilizing the parcels (rather than the items) as indicators for the latent variable (Matsunaga, 2008). This process is commonly used in research and can lead to increased reliability (Bandalos & Finney, 2001). Further, it can lessen the impacts of constructs with numerous items relative to sample size; it is justified in research centered on examining the relationships between constructs (Little et al., 2002).

Leveraging the factors created in 2016 by Guchait et al., the error management items were averaged into four different parcels representing "learning from errors" (questions 18, 24, 25, 26); "analyzing errors" (questions 19-23); "error competence" (questions 27-29); and "error communication" (questions 30-33). The item parceling resulted in producing acceptable results. The average variance extracted (AVE), used to measure convergent validity, produced a value of .54. As noted by many scholars, the target AVE values are .50 or above (Hair et al., 2009), although many also deem values of .40 or above to be acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981;

Psailla & Wagner, 2007).

      Reliability was assessed using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha measures. Generally accepted thresholds for composite reliability are values at or above .70 (Hair et al., 2010). However, other scholars have deemed values at .60 or above to be considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998). The error management construct generated a composite reliability of .82, producing an acceptable fit. Cronbach's alpha generally has a target of .70 or higher (Hair et al., 2009), although others have argued that lower thresholds of .6 are acceptable (DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Vaske, 2008). The Cronbach's alpha value for error management culture was .76, yielding an acceptable fit.

      Error aversion culture was measured utilizing an 11-item scale. From this scale, 6 of the items loaded sufficiently with standard regression weights above at or above .70 (questions 39-44). The remaining items (questions 34-38) were removed as the loadings yielded values below .30. Scholars have recommended that items with loadings below .40 always be removed from the measurement model (Hair et al., 2021). Following these changes, error aversion culture generated accepted values for all measures (AVE: .61, Composite Reliability: .90, Cronbach's Alpha: .87).

      Turnover intentions were measured using a 6-item scale. In line with the process followed for error aversion culture, questions with poor loadings were removed (questions 51, 55, 56) and questions with adequate loadings were retained (questions 52-54). As a result, the turnover intentions construct generated acceptable values, although they were on the lower end of the recommended thresholds (AVE: .40, Composite Reliability: .66, Cronbach's Alpha: .65). As noted earlier, scholars have argued that constructs producing AVE values above .4 and reliability measure above .6 are still considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Psailla &

Vagner, 2007; Hair et al., 1998; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; DeVellis, 2003; Vaske, 2008). As such, I elected to proceed with including the turnover intentions construct in the measurement model.

Surface Acting included a 5-item scale. Four of the items (questions 46-49) had loadings in the range between .67 to .79. One item (question 45) generated a loading of .63. Following the recommendation by Hair Jr, Joseph F., et al. (2021), I removed the lowest loading item (question 45) because it improved the overall reliability and convergent validity of the construct. After these changes, surface acting yielded acceptable values for all measures (AVE: .52, Composite Reliability: .81, Cronbach's Alpha: .83).

The political environment was measured using a 5-item scale. The intent of surveying respondents with this Likert scale was to utilize the political environment construct as a control variable during hypothesis testing. All items initially generated low loadings producing unacceptable average variance extracted and reliability. To enhance the fit, I deleted two items with the lowest loadings and it still did not produce acceptable results (AVE: .27, Composite Reliability: .47).

In terms of possible explanations for the poor fit, it is certainly possible that respondents struggled to adequately interpret or respond to two of the reverse-scored questions. Previous research has touched on the challenges of Likert scales with reverse-coded items (Weijters et al., 2010; Woods, 2006). Yet another potential explanation is that this scale has been employed primarily pre-pandemic, prior to COVID-19. While this study did not inquire about remote work habits of respondents, it is generally understood that trends toward remote work accelerated during and after the pandemic. Past research has found evidence to suggest that employees who work remotely may be immune or sheltered from organizational politics (Beauregard et al.,

2019; Fonner & Roloff, 2010; Golden, 2006). Depending on the remote work habits of respondents, previous literature would suggest that this may have impacted the loadings on the scale. Nevertheless, as a result of the poor fit, I elected to exclude using the political environment construct in the full measurement model as a control variable.

After calculating convergent validity and reliability for all constructs, I then proceeded to measure discriminant validity by calculating the maximum shared variance (MSV). Discriminant validity is measured to verify that the observed variables do indeed measure the latent variable and that the items in the scale relate to one specific factor with less relation to the other factors (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). The results for the MSV calculations are illustrated in table 5.1 below:

Table V.1: Maximum Shared Variance

Constructs	AVE	CR	MSV	EMC	EAC	TI	SA	RoleHier	Org Tenure
EMC	0.540	0.820	0.099	**0.735**					
EAC	0.610	0.900	0.450	(0.314)	**0.781**				
TI	0.400	0.660	0.183	(0.097)	0.428	**0.632**			
SA	0.519	0.810	0.450	(0.167)	0.671	0.305	**0.720**		
RoleHier	1.000	1.000	0.017	0.101	0.131	0.129	0.022	**1.000**	
Org Tenure	1.000	1.000	0.021	(0.090)	(0.132)	(0.067)	(0.144)	0.083	**1.000**

Notes:

1. Bold Figures Along Diagonal = SQRT(AVE)

2. Based on Bivariate Pearson Correlations

The bolded values along the diagonal of the table (.735, .781, .632, .720, 1, 1) represent the square root of the AVE for each construct. The results from the table suggest adequate discriminant validity. Specifically, the maximum shared variance (MSV) is lower than the average variance extracted (AVE) and the inter-construct correlations (shaded in blue) are lower than the square root of AVE (Hair et al., 2009).

V.2.2   Goodness of Fit Statistics

After all of the constructs were deemed to have sufficient convergent validity, reliability,

and discriminant validity, the full measurement model results were calculated in AMOS. The

resulting tests below all generated either acceptable or good fits as per the academic literature.

Table 5.2 below provides the goodness of fit metrics for the full measurement model.

Table V.2: Goodness of Fit

Goodness of Fit Metrics	Target	Result	Fit	Reference
Chi-Square/DF	< 3	1.49	Good	Kline (1998)
SRMR	< .05	.04	Good	Diamantopoulos & Siguaw (2000)
GFI	> .95	.93	Acceptable	Hu & Bentler (1999)
AGFI	> .9	.90	Acceptable	Tabachnick & Fidell (2007);
TLI	> .95	.96	Good	Hu & Bentler (1999)
CFI	> .95	.97	Good	Hu & Bentler (1999)
RMSEA	< . 06	.04	Good	MacCallum et al. (1996)
Pclose	> .5	.86	Good	Rajesh (2021)

V.2.3   Assessment of Normality

After confirming that the full measurement model produced adequate goodness of fit, the

next step was to test for nonnormality in the data distribution. An essential assumption with

structural equation modeling (SEM) is that the data has a normal distribution (Collier, 2020).

First, the univariate normality of the data was tested by examining the skewness and kurtosis of

the individual variables. Table 5.3 provides the results for both metrics. As one can reference

from the table, all variable values fell within the acceptable ranges for skewness (between the

range of -2 and 2) and kurtosis (between the range of -7 and 7) (Collier, 2020). The results

would suggest univariate data normality.

Table V.3: Univariate Normality

Full Model				
Variable	min	max	skew	kurtosis
Q163	0.0	1.0	1.4	-0.1
Q162	0.0	1.0	0.4	-1.9
Q161	0.0	1.0	0.7	-1.4
Q11	1.0	280.0	2.0	5.0
Q54	1.0	5.0	0.2	-0.7
Q53	1.0	5.0	-0.2	-0.9
Q52	1.0	5.0	-0.1	-0.9
Q49	1.0	5.0	0.3	-0.4
Q48	1.0	5.0	0.2	-0.7
Q47	1.0	5.0	0.3	-0.7
Q46	1.0	5.0	0.2	-0.7
Q42	1.0	5.0	0.7	-0.3
Q44	1.0	5.0	0.9	0.2
Q43	1.0	5.0	0.9	0.2
Q41	1.0	5.0	1.0	0.3
Q40	1.0	5.0	0.9	0.3
Q39	1.0	5.0	0.9	0.2
F3	2.0	5.0	-0.8	0.5
F4	3.0	5.0	-0.4	-0.5
F2	2.4	5.0	-0.7	1.0
F1	2.0	5.0	-0.7	1.1

Following the test for univariate data normality, I then conducted a test to measure the multivariate normality of the data. Univariate normality is an important condition to meet prior to conducting tests for multivariate normality (Byrne, 2016). Multivariate normality tests, especially in studies such as this one when there is more than one dependent variable, are important because they further mitigate the likelihood of type I and type II errors and can account for the intercorrelations amongst dependent variables (Haase & Ellis, 1987).

The first step to measure multivariate normality was to conduct Mardia's test (1985) using AMOS. Mardia's test results generating a score above 5 can suggest that the data are multivariate nonnormal (Byrne, 2016), although such results are not necessarily conclusive (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2015). In this study, Mardia's test result produced a value of 27.9, which indicated a potentially unacceptable departure from multivariate normality, even though the results would suggest that the data appear to be univariate normal.

In line with Collier's (2020) recommendation, I then proceeded to perform two bootstrap tests to address the potential multivariate nonnormality. First, I conducted a bootstrap using maximum likelihood estimation (ML), with bias-corrected intervals of 95% confidence and a sample of 5,000. The results for the ML bootstrap test are provided in table 5.4 below.

Table V.4: ML Bootstrap Test

Maximum Likelihood Bootstrap						
Parameter			**Estimate**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**P**
F1	<---	ErrorManagementCulture	0.75257	0.66285	0.81703	0.00099
F2	<---	ErrorManagementCulture	0.7576	0.66401	0.83595	0.0002
F4	<---	ErrorManagementCulture	0.76973	0.68597	0.84901	0.00029
F3	<---	ErrorManagementCulture	0.64562	0.53604	0.73936	0.00044
Q39	<---	ErrorAversionCulture	0.79269	0.72864	0.84588	0.00044
Q40	<---	ErrorAversionCulture	0.73504	0.65576	0.79722	0.00067
Q41	<---	ErrorAversionCulture	0.78215	0.72415	0.83626	0.00016
Q43	<---	ErrorAversionCulture	0.85273	0.79702	0.89189	0.00053
Q44	<---	ErrorAversionCulture	0.8108	0.6931	0.87484	0.00155
Q42	<---	ErrorAversionCulture	0.68914	0.59508	0.75856	0.00076
Q46	<---	SurfaceActing	0.69394	0.60395	0.76875	0.00076
Q47	<---	SurfaceActing	0.72035	0.6311	0.79374	0.00058
Q48	<---	SurfaceActing	0.67403	0.58156	0.7477	0.00103
Q49	<---	SurfaceActing	0.78814	0.69079	0.86473	0.00052
Q52	<---	TurnoverIntentions	0.50594	0.33945	0.66214	0.0002
Q53	<---	TurnoverIntentions	0.64189	0.49101	0.80572	0.00046
Q54	<---	TurnoverIntentions	0.72558	0.54173	0.89718	0.00057

One can note from the results that all the estimates fell within a confidence interval that does not include 0 and all the P-Values < .05 for each bootstrap confidence interval, suggesting statistical significance. Thus, as per Collier (2020), the results would suggest that the estimates are valid.

Second, I performed the Bollen-Stine ML bootstrap test utilizing 5,000 samples. The intent of this test is to evaluate if the data, when using the bootstrap samples as the data indicate, fit the model (Collier, 2020). The first thing to check after running the test is to determine if the mean chi-square value and initial model fit chi-square values fall within the calculated distribution range. In this case, the mean chi-square value was 373 and the initial model fit chi-square produced 479. Both values fell within the calculated distribution range of 220 to 554. The next statistic to review is the Bollen-Stine estimated p-value. The target is to generate a p-value greater than .05. The test for my model produced a p-value of .082, suggesting that the model still maintains an acceptable fit utilizing the bootstrap samples (Collier, 2020).

V.2.4   Common Method Bias

Prior to testing the study's hypotheses, one final test was conducted to measure for common method bias. Common method bias can occur when the measurement device

inadvertently introduces systematic variance and, in doing, so biases the estimated strength of the relationships between the constructs (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015). A common test to perform when assessing common method bias is Harman's Single Factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Utilizing SPSS, all items (across all of the study's variables) were reduced to one factor using the principal components analysis method. If the result of the test illustrates that one factor makes up 50% or more of the variance across all of the study's variables, then common method bias may be present (Fuller et al., 2016). The Harman test conducted for this study produced an 18% variance for one factor, suggesting no common method bias.

V.3   Hypotheses Testing Overview

Once the confirmatory factor analysis and all associated tests were completed, I imputed the factor score values in AMOS for the measurement model and imported the data file directly into IBM® SPSS® Amos™. To test the direct effects of hypotheses 1-4, I utilized SPSS version 28.0 and calculated linear, hierarchal regressions. The regressions for each test were performed in two blocks. The first block included the control variables (education level, race, gender, and firm size) and the dependent variable. The second block included the control variables, the independent variables, and the dependent variable. The R-Squared Change was then analyzed to determine the amount of variance that could be explained between the independent and dependent variables, independent of the control variables' contribution to the variance.

The conditional effects of hypotheses 5-6 were tested using the Hayes PROCESS Procedure designed for IBM SPSS Version. Specifically, Model 1 was employed to test for moderation between error aversion culture and surface acting. The moderators utilized included organizational tenure and role hierarchy.

V.4   **Direct Effects Results**

V.4.1   Hypotheses 1 and 2: Error Culture's Relationship to Turnover Intentions

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, error management culture and error aversion culture served as the independent variables, and turnover intentions served as the dependent variable. H1 stated that higher perceptions of error management culture would lead to weaker turnover intentions, while H2 stated that higher perceptions of error aversion culture would lead to stronger turnover intentions. Following the process described above, the regressions were performed in two blocks. The results showed that the model overall (block 2) was statistically significant ($R2\Delta$=0.182, F Change=29.328., Sig F. Change=<.001). The R-Squared Change of .182 shows that after accounting for the control variables, the independent variables explain 18.2% of the variance.

For the independent variables in block 2, error management culture did not have a statistically significant relationship to turnover intentions (Sig=.356). With respect to error aversion culture, the results showed that error aversion culture had a statistically significant, positive relationship to turnover intentions (Sig=<.001, β=.477). The results suggested that a 1 unit increase in error aversion culture led to a .477 unit increase in employee turnover intentions. Following a review of the regression results, I concluded that both hypotheses one and two receive support. As hypothesized, perceptions of higher error management culture lead to weaker turnover intentions, while perceptions of higher error aversion culture lead to stronger turnover intentions. The results would suggest that error aversion culture increases turnover intentions, while error management culture has little to no effect, as evidenced by the statistically insignificant relationship.

V.4.2   Hypothesis 3 and 4: Error Culture's Relationship to Surface Acting

To test hypotheses 3 and 4, error management culture and error aversion culture served as the independent variables, and intra-organizational surface acting served as the dependent variable. H3 stated that perceptions of higher error management culture would lead to weaker intra-organizational surface acting, and H4 predicted that perceptions of higher error aversion culture would lead to stronger intra-organizational surface acting. The results indicate that the model (block 2) was statistically significant ($R2\Delta$=.425, F Change=106.623., Sig F. Change=<.001). The R-Squared Change suggest that independent of the control variables, the independent variables contribute to 42.5% of the variance.

The independent variables produced results consistent with H1 and H2. Error management culture produced a statistically insignificant relationship to intra-organizational surface acting (Sig=.528). Error aversion culture, on the other hand, generated a statistically significant, positive relationship to turnover intentions (Sig=<.001, β=.715). These results suggested that a 1 unit increase in error aversion culture led to a .715 unit increase in intra-organizational surface acting.

Following an assessment of the regression results, I concluded that both hypotheses three and four receive support. As hypothesized, error aversion culture has a strong relationship to intra-organizational surface acting while error management culture's relationship was statistically insignificant. The results would suggest that error aversion culture increases intra-organizational surface acting, while error management culture does not have any impact.

V.5   Moderating Effects Results

V.5.1   Hypothesis 5: Moderating Effect of Organizational Tenure

Hypothesis 5 included error aversion culture as the independent variable, intra-

organizational surface acting as the dependent variable, and organizational tenure as the moderating variable. Hypothesis 5 predicted that organizational tenure would moderate the relationship between error aversion culture and intra-organizational surface acting such that higher organizational tenure would weaken the relationship. The overall results for the model were statistically significant (R^2=.7236, $R^2\Delta$=0.5237, F=14.465, P=.0000). These results demonstrate that error aversion culture, along with the moderating effect of organizational tenure, explain 52.37% of the contribution to variance.

The interaction term (error aversion culture X organizational tenure) was statistically significant as well ($R^2\Delta$=0.0134, F=7.033, P=.0085, LLCI=-.0055, ULCI=-.0008). The coefficient of the moderation was negative (β=-.0032), suggesting that, as organizational tenure increases, the impact of error aversion culture on intra-organizational surface acting weakens. This can be visualized by referencing figure 5.2 below.

In figure 5.2, OSA represents intra-organizational surface acting, EAC represents error aversion culture and Q11 represents organizational tenure (number of months worked at current employer). The graph is presented by showing the moderation effect at the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles which fall into 8 months, 39.5 months, and 81.28 months of organizational tenure, respectively. As one can note from the slope, and consistent with the hypothesis 2 results, as error aversion culture increases (x-axis), intra-organizational surface acting (y-axis) increases as well. However, it is important to recognize that the slope of the lines weakens as the organizational tenure increases. For example, the slope for the 16th percentile is steeper than the slopes of the 50th and 84th percentiles. Furthermore, the slope for the 84th percentile is the weakest.

Figure V.2: Interaction Term at 16th, 50th, and 84th Percentiles
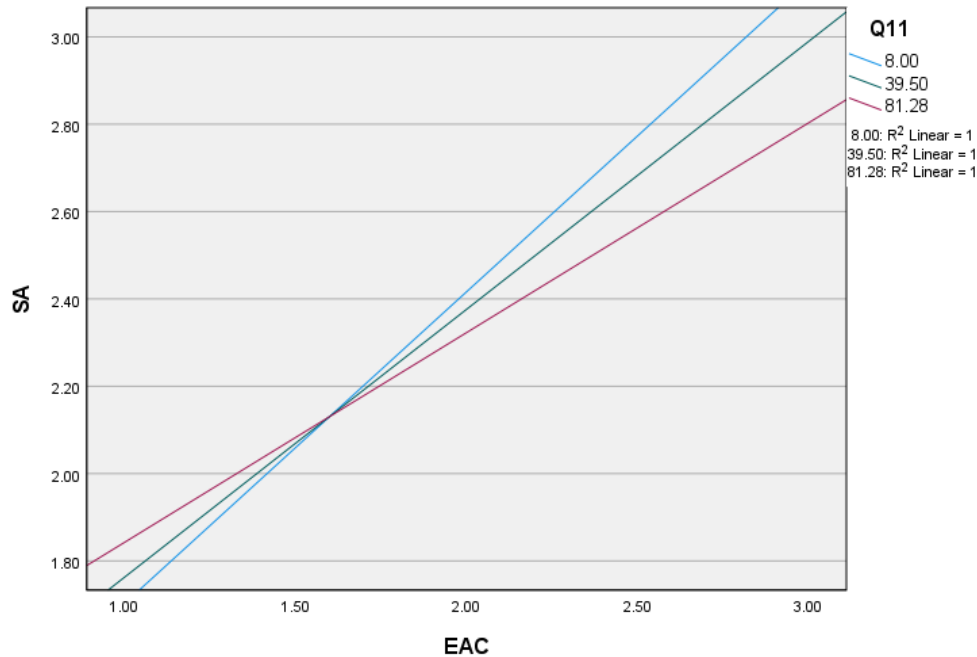
Figure V.2: Interaction Term at 16th, 50th, and 84th Percentiles

In summary, I conclude that hypothesis 5 receives support as the model and interaction term were statistically significant. In this case, the results showed that the moderation effect explained 1.34% (R2Δ=.0134) of the contribution to variance.

V.5.2   Hypothesis 6: Moderating Effect of Role Hierarchy

Hypothesis 6 captured error aversion culture as the independent variable, intra-organizational surface acting as the dependent variable, and role hierarchy as the moderating variable. Hypothesis 6 stated that role hierarchy would moderate the relationship between error aversion culture and intra-organizational surface acting such that higher role hierarchy would strengthen the relationship. The overall results for the model were statistically significant (R2=.7202, R2Δ=0.5187, F=11.524, P=.0000).

The three interaction terms (error aversion culture X role hierarchy) represented the moderating effects of lower management, middle management, and upper management respectively. All three interaction terms were statistically insignificant; the results are included

in table 5.5 below. The P values were above .05 and the lower and upper confidence interval

ranges fell between 0.

Table V.5: Interaction Terms for Lower, Middle, and Upper Management

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.7404	.7781	2.2369	.0262	.2080	3.2729
EAC	.4162	.2758	1.5088	.1326	-.1271	.9594
W1	.0017	.1798	.0095	.9924	-.3523	.3558
W2	.0686	.1799	.3813	.7033	-.2857	.4228
W3	-.1067	.1836	-.5812	.5616	-.4684	.2549
Int_1	.2552	.2884	.8850	.3770	-.3128	.8232
Int_2	.2327	.2881	.8078	.4200	-.3348	.8002
Int_3	.2414	.2895	.8336	.4053	-.3289	.8117

Thus, I conclude that hypothesis 6 does not receive support. The results would suggest

that the impact of error aversion culture on intra-organizational surface acting is not influenced

by an employee's hierarchal role within the organization.

V.6   Tests for Multicollinearity

Additional tests were run in conjunction with the regression analyses to check for

multicollinearity. Multicollinearity can occur if highly interrelated predictors are observed

together in a regression model (Thompson et. al, 2017). To diagnose multicollinearity, I

examined the tolerance, VIF (variance inflation factor), and condition indices utilizing SPSS.

All values in the model for each measure yielded results that would indicate no multicollinearity

problems: $VIF < 5$, tolerance > 0.20, (Hair et al., 2013) and condition indices < 30 (Thompson et.

al, 2017). For more detail, please reference Appendix B to view multicollinearity measures, as

well as the coefficients for hypotheses tests 1-4.

VI CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

VI.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the relationship between organizational error culture, turnover intentions, and intra-organizational surface acting. Given the high customer expectations and associated pressures experienced by B2B organizations, as well as the challenges associated with employee turnover at IT companies, this study was intentionally designed in the context of B2B organizations operating within the IT sector. To investigate the topic of interest, I posed the following three questions:

RQ1:   What is the relationship between organizational error culture and the turnover intentions of the employee?

RQ2:   What is the relationship between organizational error culture and the level of intra-organizational surface acting exhibited by the employee?

RQ3:   How do the employee's organizational tenure and hierarchal level moderate the relationships in research question 2?

To answer these research questions, I organized a quantitative study, surveyed respondents, and proposed six hypotheses. A summary of the results is listed in table 6.1.

Table VI.1: Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Error Culture, Turnover Intentions & Intraorganizational Surface Acting	Relationship	Supported?
H1	Higher employee perceptions of error management culture will lead to weaker turnover intentions.	*Statistically Insignificant*	✔
H2	Higher employee perceptions of error aversion culture will lead to stronger turnover intentions.	*Statistically Significant, Positive Relationship*	✔
H3	Higher employee perceptions of error management culture will lead to weaker intra-organizational surface acting.	*Statistically Insignificant*	✔
H4	Higher employee perceptions of error aversion culture will lead to stronger intra-organizational surface acting.	*Statistically Significant, Positive Relationship*	✔
H5	Organizational tenure will moderate the relationship between error aversion culture and intraorganizational surface acting such that higher organizational tenure weakens the relationship.	*Statistically Significant , Moderation*	✔
H6	Role hierarchy will moderate the relationship between error aversion culture and intraorganizational surface acting such that higher role hierarchy strengthens the relationship.	*Statistically Insignificant*	⊗

I will provide an interpretation and discussion with respect to the hypothesis results for each research question, as well as the supporting literature's position in the respective topics addressed. Then, I will discuss practitioner implications, theoretical implications, suggestions for future research, and limitations of the study.

VI.2 RQ1: Error Culture's Impact on Turnover Intentions

Error management culture's relationship to turnover intentions was statistically insignificant. This result is somewhat surprising as past research has suggested that error management culture can lead to a decrease in turnover intentions (Guchait et al., 2016). Further, academic studies have previously emphasized the positive benefits of encouraging that culture. Research has reinforced the idea that such a culture can also reduce work stress and anxiety as well as increasing levels of gratitude expressed by employees (Wang et al., 2020a). One could reasonably surmise that error management cultures which can produce positive employee emotions may, in turn, lead to employees' experiencing a decreased desire to leave. In this instance, error management culture did not decrease turnover intentions, but neither did it

increase those intentions. There is a decided dearth in the literature of studies addressing this issue. Nevertheless, my belief, as stated in the hypothesis, was that higher perceptions of error management culture would lead to a weaker relationship to turnover intentions.

With respect to an error aversion culture, the evidence suggests that it can increase an employee's turnover intention (β=.477). As covered during the literature review, an error aversion culture can produce fear of failure, reputational pressures, concerns with the work environment, and perceived lack of control, and, as such, can reduce workplace motivations and transparent communications (Brown et al., 1994; Edmondson, 1999; Maurer et al., 2017; Van Dyck et al., 2005, 2010). As hypothesized, the stronger relationship to turnover intentions was expected because of the impacts highlighted above.

Taking steps to reduce turnover intentions should matter to organizations and my results would suggest that an error aversion culture can be a contributing factor. As discussed earlier, higher turnover intentions are not only considered an accurate predictor of actual turnover (Chau et al., 2009; Sun & Wang, 2016; Tett & Meyer, 1993), but employees experiencing this also have low job satisfaction (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006) and increased stress (Qureshi et al., 2012). Further, employees with higher turnover intentions may also exhibit problematic organizational citizenship and higher deviant behaviors (Mai et al., 2016; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Coyne & Ong, 2007; Xiong & Wen, 2020). In short, employees with high turnover intentions may actually end up resigning. And, even for those employees who do not actually resign, the literature would suggest that, at a minimum, they are unhappy and their work performance may suffer.

For B2B organizations specifically, these results should be of interest. B2B organizations develop strong relationships with their customers and those relationships evolve over time

(Hollman et al., 2015). Additionally, B2B customers value consistency and in some cases, may prize it over service and/or products of higher quality (Lam et al., 2004). Keeping customer relationships intact is the lifeblood for B2B organizations; when B2B firms experience high rates of employee turnover, they are ultimately jeopardizing their critical, long-term relationships with those customers. Losing personnel puts the company at risk of disrupting the consistency of service delivery with their customers and creates potential gaps in managing the relationship.

Notwithstanding error aversion culture's direct influence on turnover intentions, it must also be recognized that it is certainly possible that organizations employing an error aversion culture may also exhibit other characteristics contributing to higher turnover intentions. Factors such as product or service instability, poor economic conditions, demanding customers, leadership turnover, and mergers/acquisition activity, to name a few, could also be factors impacting employee turnover intentions. This research supports the idea that assessing how an organization's error culture may impact employee retention could be a valuable exercise. Specifically, if an organization finds that its operational practices more closely align with an error aversion culture, it should consider assessing the effect of that culture on its employees.

VI.3 RQ2: Error Culture's Impact on Intra-organizational Surface Acting

Error management culture had a statistically insignificant relationship to intra-organizational surface acting. Error aversion culture, on the other hand, had a statistically significant, positive relationship (β=.715). These results were expected. While I am unaware of any previous studies that have addressed the direct relationship between error culture and surface acting, the literature supports the notion that organizational culture can impact an employee's surface acting. For example, previous studies have touched on how elements of organizational culture such as politics (Andrews et al., 2016) and perceptions of organizational support (Hur et

al., 2015) can influence an employee's tendency to surface act.

It is important to revisit the definitions of the two error culture types. Error management cultures embrace sharing errors, communicating, and learning from them, while an error aversion culture emphasizes error avoidance and associated consequences (Van Dyck et al., 2005). This research would suggest that an error management culture, through its more positive embedded values, does not influence an employee's propensity to surface act (no statistically significant relationship), even when making a mistake. From the other end of the spectrum, the error aversion approach may cause an employee to increase surface acting in response to a high-pressure environment and perhaps when an error is made.

In addition to surface acting's positive relationship with turnover intentions (Andrews et al., 2016; Chau et al., 2009; Goodwin et al., 2011), other negative outcomes such as an increase in emotional exhaustion (Ozcelik, 2013) and decreases in job performance and job satisfaction (Hur et al., 2015) have been noted as well. Overall, the literature has supported the idea that surface acting generally produces negative impacts on both employee well-being and firm performance.

B2B companies, in their endeavor to provide excellent customer service to long-term accounts, must make note of how they operationalize their error culture. The results from this study would suggest that error aversion culture practices can increase an employee's tendency to surface act; this would be problematic. While organizations are well-intentioned, perhaps, in their efforts to avoid errors and maximize operational excellence, those efforts at the same time could be causing employees to surface internally. Employees may be feeling pressure to avoid committing errors or respond to them with surface acting and subsequently burning out from the emotional exhaustion. As we know, the use of surface acting can impact job performance. It is

possible that in a B2B organization's endeavor to avoid errors, they are actually causing additional errors as a result of employee surface acting.

While there are other dynamics that may influence intra-organizational surface acting (politics, impression management, personality conflicts, etc.), the results from this study would suggest that an error aversion culture can increase surface acting. Error management culture did not have a direct impact on surface acting; thus, it may be the safer approach to implement to produce better employee and firm outcomes, or, at the very least, minimize negative outcomes.

VI.4 RQ3: Moderation, Organizational Tenure, and Role

VI.4.1 Organizational Tenure as a Moderator

The results from the test of hypothesis 5 indicated a statistically significant moderation effect from organizational tenure. As hypothesized, as an employee's organizational tenure increased, the impact of error aversion culture on intra-organizational surface acting weakened. This result was expected.

After all, the literature has touched on how longer-tenured employees are more comfortable, confident, established, and plugged into their office environment while newer employees are in transition and learning the landscape of their new work culture (Gregersen, 1993; Ng & Feldman, 2010). This finding is relevant because it would suggest that longer-tenured employees may show a lesser likelihood to surface act in response to error culture. As such, organizations utilizing an error aversion culture should assess how their practices may impact their employees, particularly newer employees, that may be more sensitive to the organization's error culture. Furthermore, they might also consider altering their practices and expectations based on employment duration.

VI.4.2 *Role Hierarchy as a Moderator*

Of the 270 respondents, 5% were classified as individual contributors, 33% as lower management, 41% as middle management, and 21% as upper management. The results from the hypothesis 6 test did not generate statistically significant moderation effects from role hierarchy. This result was surprising as I had expected individuals from lower management, middle management, and upper management levels to be affected differently. Specifically, I had hypothesized that, as role hierarchy increases (e.g., from lower to middle management or middle to upper management) that the relationship between error aversion culture and intra-organizational surface acting would strengthen.

The literature has previously suggested that surface acting can increase with "higher ups" present (Shumski Thomas et al., 2018) and in contexts where there may be an increased level of politics (Andrews et al., 2016). My belief was that employees higher in the hierarchy might have an increased propensity to surface act for those very reasons. Perhaps one explanation for the hypothesis not receiving support would be due to the nature of the respondents. This study focused specifically on professionals with boundary roles, meaning they had some element of customer-facing responsibilities. It is certainly possible that individuals in these job roles may be more susceptible to the impacts of errors (and thus surface act) since, ultimately, they may have to explain errors made during direct interaction with customers.

Even so, this finding reinforces that regardless of status or job level within the organization, all employees could have the inclination to surface act in response to an error aversion culture. This provides additional support for encouraging organizations to assess the nature of their error culture.

VI.5 Practitioner Implications

Circling back to the beginning of this study, the question was raised, do organizations, in their endeavor for operational perfection, consider how their error culture practices may impact the well-being of their employees? The results from this study support the idea that an organization's error culture can influence both employees' desires to leave and the propensity to surface act. As we have discussed, both are viewed as unfavorable outcomes for the employee and their respective employer alike.

Therefore, this study can be of utility for practitioners, particularly B2B organizations focusing on operational excellence and for companies operating within the IT sector struggling to combat high employee attrition. It is no coincidence that the scope of this study was focused on individuals working within B2B, IT. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will outline some considerations and recommendations for practitioner organizations.

First, the results of this research indicate that organizations interested in improving employee sentiment and attrition should assess their error culture. This could be conducted through an internal, anonymous employee survey, employee exit interviews by human resources, or hiring an outside consultant, to name a few. The error culture questionnaires leveraged in this study could be tailored to be of greater relevance to the respective companies. The management team could then analyze the results of the employee feedback and determine how their operational rituals align with error management and error aversion culture practices. If the results trend more toward an error aversion culture, the respective companies should modify their practices to adopt a more error management-oriented approach.

Second, companies should educate management regarding error culture types and the associated consequences discussed in the academic literature. Raising awareness of the impact on employees may lead management to tweak their protocols and responses to mistakes in the

workplace. For example, it is important to highlight that organizations may simply be unaware that they are even implementing an error aversion culture in the first place. Conducting an internal assessment as described above could be the first step.

As noted during the literature review, organizations that operationalize learning as a key objective are more likely to adopt an error management approach (Van Dyck et al., 2005, 2010). Therefore, companies should conduct an assessment specifically to evaluate their organization's emphasis on learning. Measures to increase learning goal orientation are one avenue that can promote an error management approach. Additionally, encouraging innovative thinking is another way to cultivate an error management culture (Fischer et al., 2018). Firms should examine their appetite for innovation and determine if they have sufficiently operationalized innovative thinking in their organization. It is important to keep in mind that innovative thinking is not always tied to technology. Innovative thinking around service practices, operational tasks, and other non-technical initiatives should be considered as well.

Third, organizations need to revisit the types of errors prevalent within their companies and evaluate how each error is handled individually. Not all errors should necessarily be treated equally. Classification of all error types and a clear protocol for how they should be addressed may encourage organizations to be more thoughtful about the type of error culture they have and the type they want to employ. Additionally, this exercise should help leaders become more thoughtful and disciplined as they respond to errors and coach their respective employees.

For example, some errors, depending on the severity, may warrant shared learnings such as after-action reviews (AARs), root cause analyses, and internal incident reports. The purpose of these sessions would be to discuss what occurred, how the organization can learn from it, and the next steps for improvement. The intent of the sessions would not be to punish, embarrass or

"make an example" out of (error aversion practices) the responsible employee(s). Other errors, such as a simple human mistake (typo, prematurely closing a service ticket, inadvertent email send, etc.) may require that the employee be notified about the error and that he or she acknowledges that mistake so that they can correct it. However, these instances would likely not require a performance-based, corrective action conversation.

Fourth, improving employee retention is an endeavor that arguably most, if not all, organizations are aiming to achieve. However, a concept that may not be discussed much outside of academia is surface acting. As such, tackling surface acting levels in an organization may not be on the radar for most companies. The evidence from this study would suggest that error culture can influence employee surface acting and that surface acting can negatively impact employee well-being and increase intentions to leave.

Organizations should enlighten their leaders regarding the concept of surface acting and the potential effects it can have on their team members and the company. In particular, if a leader can recognize that something may be off with a direct report, or that the employee's emotions may not naturally match the actions or words expressed, the leader could potentially infer that the employee is holding something back. If a leader has this awareness, he or she might have an opportunity to intervene in the moment and invite the employee to have a candid check-in conversation. Through this conversation, the leader could uncover some concerns and be rewarded with the opportunity to address them and subsequently improve the employee's job satisfaction.

Fifth, on a related note, organizations should evaluate how they operationalize error response based on the duration and experience of the employee. The results support the notion that newer employees may be more susceptible to surface acting in response to an error aversion

culture, while more tenured employees may be less likely to do so. Organizations need to be thoughtful and purposeful with respect to how errors and their responses to them are handled, particularly for those individuals who may be newer to the organization.

Sixth, and finally, one additional avenue for addressing surface acting levels within the organization could be for organizations to evaluate the leadership styles employed by their leaders. Previous literature (Kwon et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019) has discovered that transformational leadership can influence the level of surface acting exhibited by employees. Therefore, in addition to assessing organizational error culture, companies should also take the pulse of their respective levels of transformational leadership.

VI.6 Theoretical Implications

This study has strived to provide several contributions to the academic literature. Each contribution will receive further attention in the following paragraphs.

First, I addressed a gap in the literature by examining the direct relationship between error culture and employee turnover intentions. My research uniquely focuses on U.S.-based employees, working in the IT sector for B2B companies. Additionally, I tested to verify if the negative relationship between error management culture and turnover intentions would be consistent with findings from previous studies (Guchait et al., 2020).

Second, to my knowledge, by investigating the direct relationship between error culture and surface acting, I intersected these two streams of literature for the first time. Surface acting was introduced in this study as a new outcome variable of error culture. This illuminates how error culture, depending on the type, can either increase or decrease the levels of surface acting performed by an employee.

Third, I have answered the call from scholars to further investigate intra-organizational

surface acting (Ozcelik, 2013). Surface acting has historically been investigated largely through the lens of interactions between employees and their respective customers. The purpose of this study was to advance the discussion on surface acting between employees in the workplace and to reinforce why surface acting should be on the radar of employers.

Fourth, I tested to see if individual attributes (organizational tenure and role hierarchy) of employees would influence the relationship between error aversion culture and surface acting. It was discovered that employees with longer firm tenure may be slightly less prone to surface act in response to error aversion culture. Employee role hierarchy, on the other hand, had no effect.

Finally, and most importantly, this study advocates for the idea that error culture matters. The results of this research would suggest that it can impact an employee's desire to leave and overall employee sentiment. It is important to emphasize that these challenges are relevant, real, and well-publicized during this era of 'The Great Resignation' and 'Quiet Quitting'.

VI.7 Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this research is that all the data retrieved was self-reported by survey respondents. Through multiple tests, efforts were certainly employed to deliver a data model that met the various academic thresholds and to validate that the survey instrument itself captured accurate responses (common method bias test). Nevertheless, future research could leverage a qualitative case study approach to investigate several organizations. A combination of employee interviews, as well as actual organizational turnover data, could provide an additional means of performing this research.

In addition to a case study approach, a longitudinal study employing action-based research could investigate the effects of error culture types over time. Researchers could work with the companies to institute changes (transitioning from error aversion to error management

culture), experimenting with two control groups and studying firm and employee outcomes post-changes.

Second, the sample of respondents lacked diversity as 80% were represented by males and almost 94% had the race of Caucasian (reference Appendix A). While the regression tests included both gender and race as control variables, it would have been preferable to capture a more diverse sample. Additionally, only 5% of the sample was made up of individual contributors; the other 95% had some form of either lower, middle, or upper management responsibilities. Future research could aim to replicate this type of research utilizing specific diversity profiles, as well as individual contributors.

Third, the aim of this research was to examine what the relationships were between error culture, turnover intentions, and surface acting. While this study's results suggest statistically significant relationships amongst the constructs, it did not directly address why these concepts have connections. The literature can certainly point us to several possibilities, but future studies could strive to dig deeper into employee motivations. For example, the following questions could be posed. Why does error management culture decrease intra-organizational surface acting? Which specific elements of error management culture are most effective? Which are ineffective? Why does error aversion culture positively influence turnover intentions and surface acting? What are the driving motivators for these employees to surface act? Do these employees, in response to their error culture, surface act consciously or unconsciously?

Taking it one step further, an interesting avenue that could be studied in conjunction with error culture and surface acting is impression management, another form of emotional labor (Provis, 2010). Impression management has been described as a conscious, tactical action employed by individuals when they are attempting to influence or alter the perceptions that

others have of them (Cheng et al., 2022; Hwa, 2012; Reyers & Matusitz, 2012). To highlight an example, one taxonomy model of impression management was constructed by Jones and Pittman (1982) and included different types of impressions such as ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation.

Future research could pose various questions such as, does error culture invoke certain types of impression management? Are employees utilizing surface acting, deep acting, or both to perform impression management? This type of research may help uncover the employee motivations behind acting in response to their error culture. Findings from this research could further aid organizations in understanding how error culture impacts employee well-being, employing motivations, and employee response tactics. Such findings could help employers more effectively strategize against these challenges.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographics of Respondents

Gender	Count
Female	54
Male	216
Grand Total	**270**

Race/Ethnicity	Count
A race/ethnicity not listed here	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	5
Black or African American	9
Hispanic or Latino	2
White or Caucasian	253
Grand Total	**270**

Firm Size (# of Employees)	Count
100 to 249	79
1000 or more	11
250 to 499	119
500 to 999	61
Grand Total	**270**

Role Hierarchy	Count
Individual Contributor	14
Lower/Frontline Management	88
Middle Management	110
Upper Management	58
Grand Total	**270**

Appendix B: Measures of Multicollinearity

Test 1: Error Culture's Relationship to Turnover Intentions

Block 2: Control Variables and Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.087	0.357		3.041	0.003		
Q3=100 to 249	-0.022	0.067	-0.020	-0.322	0.748	0.799	1.251
Q3=1000 or more	-0.241	0.188	-0.097	-1.284	0.200	0.543	1.842
Q3=500 to 999	-0.009	0.076	-0.008	-0.118	0.906	0.739	1.352
Q7=Male	-0.018	0.071	-0.014	-0.249	0.803	0.936	1.068
Q8=A race/ethnicity not listed here	0.593	0.494	0.073	1.201	0.231	0.832	1.202
Q8=Asian or Pacific Islander	0.290	0.250	0.080	1.162	0.246	0.662	1.512
Q8=Black or African American	-0.250	0.168	-0.091	-1.486	0.139	0.822	1.217
Q8=Hispanic or Latino	-0.109	0.343	-0.019	-0.318	0.751	0.864	1.157
Q12=Associates Degree or Trade/Technical/Vocational Degree	-0.026	0.083	-0.018	-0.315	0.753	0.914	1.094
Q12=Doctorate Degree	-0.070	0.231	-0.017	-0.304	0.762	0.961	1.041
Q12=High School Graduate (Diploma or Equivalent)	-0.297	0.217	-0.081	-1.366	0.173	0.873	1.145
Q12=Master's Degree	0.014	0.085	0.010	0.164	0.870	0.864	1.157
Q12=Professional Degree (M.D., J.D., etc.)	-0.138	0.142	-0.056	-0.972	0.332	0.946	1.057
Q12=Some College Credit (No Degree)	-0.012	0.141	-0.005	-0.087	0.931	0.888	1.126
Q12=Some High School (No Diploma)	0.028	0.452	0.003	0.062	0.951	0.991	1.009
ErrorManagementCulture	0.088	0.095	0.057	0.924	0.356	0.826	1.211
ErrorAversionCulture	0.302	0.040	0.477	7.499	0.000	0.766	1.305

Test 2: Error Culture's Relationship to Intra-Organizational Surface Acting

Block 3: Control variables, independent variables and moderator variables included.	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.899	0.426		2.110	0.036		
Q3=100 to 249	-0.125	0.079	-0.079	-1.589	0.113	0.787	1.270
Q3=1000 or more	-0.199	0.229	-0.055	-0.871	0.385	0.494	2.026
Q3=500 to 999	-0.048	0.090	-0.028	-0.532	0.595	0.721	1.387
Q7=Male	-0.019	0.083	-0.011	-0.231	0.817	0.911	1.098
Q8=A race/ethnicity not listed here	-0.990	0.579	-0.084	-1.711	0.088	0.817	1.224
Q8=Asian or Pacific Islander	0.014	0.291	0.003	0.048	0.962	0.656	1.525
Q8=Black or African American	-0.451	0.197	-0.113	-2.283	0.023	0.805	1.242
Q8=Hispanic or Latino	0.091	0.401	0.011	0.228	0.820	0.856	1.169
Q12=Associates Degree or Trade/Technical/Vocational Degree	-0.024	0.100	-0.012	-0.244	0.807	0.849	1.178
Q12=Doctorate Degree	-0.589	0.269	-0.099	-2.185	0.030	0.954	1.048
Q12=High School Graduate (Diploma or Equivalent)	0.329	0.256	0.062	1.285	0.200	0.848	1.180
Q12=Master's Degree	0.105	0.098	0.051	1.065	0.288	0.862	1.160
Q12=Professional Degree (M.D., J.D., etc.)	0.115	0.166	0.032	0.691	0.490	0.933	1.072
Q12=Some College Credit (No Degree)	-0.098	0.165	-0.028	-0.593	0.554	0.871	1.148
Q12=Some High School (No Diploma)	0.386	0.526	0.033	0.733	0.464	0.988	1.012
ErrorManagementCulture	0.081	0.113	0.036	0.718	0.474	0.797	1.255
ErrorAversionCulture	0.689	0.049	0.745	14.177	0.000	0.713	1.402
Q16=Individual Contributor	-0.008	0.167	-0.003	-0.049	0.961	0.739	1.354
Q16=Lower/Frontline Management	-0.072	0.079	-0.047	-0.909	0.364	0.742	1.348
Q16=Upper Management	-0.214	0.091	-0.123	-2.345	0.020	0.717	1.395

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