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Employees' Information-Seeking Behaviors in Multicultural Contexts: Development of an Advanced Model Including Information Overload, Team-Level Factors, and Cultural Backgrounds

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Development of an Advanced Model Including Information Overload,

Team-Level Factors, and Cultural Backgrounds

by

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Employees' Information-Seeking Behaviors in Multicultural Contexts: Development of an Advanced Model Including Information Overload, Team-Level Factors, and Cultural Backgrounds

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The primary goal of the current study is to develop a more advanced model of information-seeking behaviors. For achieving this goal, it paid attention to two social phenomena characterizing contemporary society: informationalization and globalization. First, focusing on these two influential phenomena, this study investigated how individual-level factors—information overload, information ambiguity, and goal orientations—affected information-seeking behaviors among employees in a multinational corporation. Next, in addition to these individual predictors of information-seeking behaviors, this study explored the effects of two team-level factors—team task interdependence and team tenure—on the relationships between the main predictors and information-seeking behaviors. Last, paying more attention to the multicultural context,

this study investigated how these employees in a multinational corporation seek task and feedback information from two culturally different sources: American direct advisors and Korean expatriates. In order to more thoroughly investigate the roles of the cultural backgrounds of information sources, this study explored how American employees perceived the cultural backgrounds of the two culturally different sources and how such perceptions influenced those employees' information-seeking behaviors.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Organizational scientists have argued that employees' proactive behaviors are central to diverse personal and organizational outcomes (Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Crant, 2000). Such arguments come as critiques of traditional viewpoints that regard employees as passive receivers of information. In line with these arguments, researchers in organization and information science, over the last two decades, have increased their studies of organizational members' information-seeking behaviors (Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Macdonald, Brown, & Sulsky, 2008; Morrison, 2002). Morrison (2002) argues that a range of important organizational communication processes impact information-seeking behaviors. These issues include organizational socialization, knowledge management, and organizational change. By focusing on these issues, researchers have proposed theoretical models that allow them to empirically scrutinize information-seeking behaviors particularly in organizational settings. Consequently now, researchers have better understandings of the main causes, types, and outcomes of information-seeking behaviors in different organizational settings.

The main purpose of this study is not to empirically confirm an extant or new model of information-seeking behaviors. The ultimate goal is to more thoroughly explore the direct and indirect effects of multiple predictors and moderators on organizational members' information-seeking behaviors and develop an advanced model of information-seeking behaviors. This study achieves the goal in the following ways:

First, today's society can be characterized by informationalization, which represents the fast exchange of large scale information (Castells, 1996, 2000; Heiskanen,

2004; Kuusinen, 2004). Thus, information overload has been an important topic for studies reflecting on the influential phenomena in organizational science (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Furthermore, information overload is often closely related to various negative components—too many directions, lack of evaluation, stressfulness—that potentially lead people to seek information more actively. Nevertheless, previous studies of information-seeking behaviors have focused heavily upon the lack of information. Hence, by investigating information overload as an additional predictor of information-seeking behaviors, this study theoretically extends current understandings of such proactive behaviors.

Second, focusing on globalization, this study comes at the main goal, based not on a cross-cultural but on an inter-cultural perspective. Previous studies have paid a great deal of attention, using a cross-cultural perspective, to how national and organizational cultures moderate information-seeking behaviors (Duimering & Safayeni, 1998; Gomez & Sanchez, 2005; Henderson, 2005; Lovett, Perez-Nordtvedt, & Rasheed, 2009). That is, they have compared the information-seeking behaviors of two different cultural groups (e.g., Chinese vs. Canadian undergraduate students). However, with the rise of globalization, intercultural interactions are becoming more commonplace. Researchers who base their cross-cultural analyses on simple comparisons fail to explain the intercultural contexts that influence members' information-seeking behaviors. Thus, this study looks at the information-seeking behaviors of members of a Korean multinational corporation (MNC) located in the U.S. It investigates, in particular, the different ways in which American employees seek information from American direct supervisors and

Korean expatriates. This intercultural approach provides a deeper understanding of the more dynamic mechanisms involved in seeking information.

Finally, exploring the effects of predictors and moderators of information-seeking behavior, this study engages in multilevel analysis. In organizational science, many have argued for this type of analysis (Moates, Harris, Field & Armenakis, 2007; Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2005; Rouseesau, 1985; Schonfeld & Rindskopf, 2007). Because members of an organization are emotionally, perceptually, and normatively bound to their group or organization, their perceptions and behaviors need to be explained through group- or organization-level characteristics rather than through individual, personal traits (Hollingshead, Costa, & Beck, 2007; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2005). In light of this argument, this study explores two group-level factors: team task interdependence and team tenure. The greatest strength of this approach is that it allows scholars to scrutinize the hidden factors of information-seeking behaviors. These factors could not be detected by previous studies that depended on individual-level analysis.

By analyzing multilevel data from a Korean multinational corporation located in the U.S., this study generated a number of theoretically and practically meaningful findings, empirically validating an advanced multilevel model of information-seeking behaviors. Thus, it is expected to contribute to the literature of information-seeking behaviors, addressing key issues regarding intercultural perspectives and multilevel analyses.

Chapter 2 will present the theoretical backgrounds related to information-seeking behaviors, summarize previous findings, and discuss the limitations of previous studies

regarding such proactive behaviors. After that, it will present the multiple hypotheses and research questions corresponding to the newly developed model of information-seeking behaviors. Chapter 3 as a method section will elaborate the procedure of data collection and present the measurements for this study. In Chapter 4, the statistical results and hypotheses tests will be presented. Thorough interpretations of the significant results as well as the theoretical and practical implications will be presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

To date, scholars in various disciplines have developed numerous theories to explain the motivators and outcomes of information-seeking behaviors (Afifi & Weiner, 2004; Case, 2002). In spite of the strengths of each theory, which are based on different academic disciplines, limiting one's theoretical perspective to a certain academic discipline will be more helpful for conducting theoretically more comprehensive research (Afifi & Weiner, 2004). Thus, this study pays closer attention to theories of information-seeking behaviors which have been developed mainly by communication scholars. These theories include: uncertainty reduction theory, problematic integration theory, sense-making theory, uncertainty management theory, predicted outcome value, and comprehensive model of information seeking (Afifi & Weiner, 2004). Notably, most of these theories consider uncertainty as the main predictor, which is both positively and negatively related to information-seeking behaviors. In particular, three theories—uncertainty reduction theory, uncertainty management theory, and problematic integration theory—are largely dependent upon the concept of uncertainty, even though they have different views regarding the roles of uncertainty.

First, according to Berger and Calabrese (1975), uncertainty reduction theory (URT) is based on the assumption that "when strangers meet, their primary concern is one of uncertainty reduction or increasing predictability about the behavior of both themselves and others in the interaction" (p. 100). This traditional approach to URT is

very dependent upon the psychological process of self-protection, considering human behaviors to reduce uncertainty as an intuitive and instinctive response to uncertainty. Explaining URT, other scholars pay more attention to the perceptual processes of reasoning involved in reducing uncertainty (Bradac, 2001; Kramer, 1993, 1999). For example, Bradac (2001) conceptualizes uncertainty as,

> an interactant's subjective sense of the number of alternative predictions available when thinking about a partner's future behavior, for example, or the number of alternative explanations available when thinking about a partner's past behavior. A greater number of perceived alternatives should produce a greater sense of uncertainty and a stronger drive to reduce this uncertainty. Interactants make proactive and retroactive attributions about others' behaviors and their own behaviors as they attempt to reduce their uncertainty, according to the theory [URT] (p. 458).

According to this conceptualization of uncertainty, behaviors of uncertainty reduction are progressed through the perception of the existence of alternative predictions. The entire process of perceiving alternative predictions, deciding to reduce uncertainty, and seeking information needs to be considered as a reasoned action rather than intuitive and instinctive response to external stimuli. Although scholars of URT show somewhat different views of the uncertainty reduction process, a common assumption is that uncertainty is observable, quantifiable, computational, reducible, and more importantly, bad.

Next, problematic integration theory is based on the assumption that human communication is dependent upon two different orientations: probabilistic orientations and evaluative orientations. According to Babrow (2001), the former is related to the questions of "What does this seem to be? What are its characteristics? What seems to

have caused this? How is it likely to behave?" (p. 554). That is, probabilistic orientations are an actor's general understandings, perceptions, and thoughts about a target. Unlike probabilistic orientations, evaluative orientations lead an actor to evaluate the values of the target. In spite of the distinct characteristics of these two orientations, they are interdependent. In other words, when an actor is exposed to an event, s/he takes effort to figure out "What is and will be going on?" as well as "How valuable is it?" After these probabilistic and evaluative processes, s/he decides the ways in which s/he responds to the event. This implies the integration of those two orientations. Applying this concept to uncertainty, it is very plausible that, when an actor is exposed to uncertainty and devalues it, the actor is likely to reduce the uncertainty. However, according to Babrow (1992, 2001), the integration of those two orientations is often problematic. That is, high probability does not necessarily mean better values, and vice versa. In terms of uncertainty, this problematic integration often leads to less active reduction of uncertainty. For example, when there is a high possibility of negative outcomes, the actor often wants to maintain the uncertainty rather than clarify the highly possible negative outcomes. Thus, according to problematic integration theory, information-seeking behaviors are based on very complex relationships between tangible/perceptual and intangible/value-based aspects of an event.

Last, Brashers and his colleagues (Brashers, 2001; Brashers, Goldsmith, & Hsieh, 2002; Brashers, Neidig, Haas, Dobbs, Cardillo, & Russell, 2000) argue the necessity to pay more attention to values of uncertainty and ways of managing uncertainty. According to them, uncertainty has been traditionally and primarily considered a negative product of

the existence of complex and ambiguous alternative predictions, and thus it needs to be reduced. However, uncertainty per se is not necessarily negative. Rather, the value of uncertainty varies and is determined by different individual and contingent factors. Focusing on this point, Brashers and other scholars propose uncertainty management theory. They suggest that it is necessary to address questions about "(a) the variability in uncertainty experiences and meanings, (b) the functions of appraisal and emotion in uncertainty management, and (c) the range of behavioral and psychological responses to uncertainty" (p. 478). Based on this theory, it is very possible that an actor intentionally keeps oneself uncertain, not actively reducing uncertainty. For example, Brashers et al.'s (2000) study of patients with HIV/AIDS shows that patients maintain passive attitudes toward reducing uncertainty in order to keep themselves more optimistic. In this way, this theory places emphasis on the necessity to 'manage' rather than simply 'reduce' uncertainty.

Among these theories, this study is primarily founded on uncertainty reduction theory for the following reasons: First, although problematic integration theory has the strength of considering two different orientations—probabilistic and evaluative orientations—and their integration, it is very difficult to conduct empirical research based on this theory (Bradac, 2001). This is mainly because the evaluation of the value of uncertainty is often too contingent to intrinsic and extrinsic factors to empirically study how people respond to uncertainty. Although Babrow (1992, 2001) suggests four main forms of problematic integration—divergence, ambiguity, ambivalence, and impossibility—in order to categorize and clarify possible integrations of the two types of

orientations. He also argues the necessity to develop more categories of integration in order to gain better understandings of the theory. Unfortunately, the larger number of categories renders the empirical application more difficult because it most likely increases the methodological and analytical complexity. Especially, in the case of quantitative research, the increase of sub-factors is likely to increase Type I error, even though it helps increase the total variance explained by those factors. Thus, because the main purpose of this study is to develop an advanced information-seeking model by empirically testing the effects of additional individual- and group-level factors, problematic integration theory is not adequate.

Next, the strongest points provided by uncertainty management theory is that uncertainty can be positive and that people intentionally maintain uncertainty. As Brashers and his colleagues argue, this theory is adequate for information-seeking patterns, particularly when the potential outcomes are negative. In particular, studies focusing on health issues and information (e.g., HIV, cancer) show meaningful findings based on uncertainty management theory. However, as Bradac (2001) presents, when the potential outcomes are positive, the main argument of uncertainty management theory does not substantially differ from uncertainty reduction theory. This implies that, when it comes to studies that give attention to the general contexts in which positive outcomes from seeking information are expected, the application of uncertainty reduction theory is more appropriate. Therefore, in spite of the strength of uncertainty management theory, as this study pursues the building of an advanced model of information-seeking behaviors in general contexts, URT is deemed more adequate and thus applied to this study.

In addition to URT, this study considers the arguments regarding individual personalities. That is, people often seek information actively not because they intend to overcome currently bad situations, but because they have the desire to make given situations better. The main assumption of this approach is that people are not passive, nor are they simply respondents to given situations; rather they are active actors seeking to improve given situations and create new ones. Considering this point, scholars have paid attention to various intrinsic motivators such as those regarding self-development, self-efficacy, self-consciousness, and organizational/individual performances (Brown, Ganesan, & Challagalla, 2001; Levy, Albright, Cawley, & Williams, 1995). As Afifi and Weiner (2004) present, individuals' personalities need to be considered as direct factors influencing information-seeking behaviors, especially when such personalities are directly related to the extent of how actively one seeks information. For example, Afifi and Weiner (2004) focus on self-efficacy as a direct factor motivating the active seeking of information, proposing that a lack of perceived efficacy tends to push an individual to seek information to increase her/his self-efficacy. As other studies also strongly argue, intrinsic motivators based on self-evaluation as well as self-development rather than external stimuli matter significantly (Tidwell & Sias, 2005). Considering this significant role of intrinsic factors that affect information-seeking behaviors, this study pays attention to goal orientation—one of the most often studied intrinsic motivator of seeking information (Park, Schmidt, Scheu, & DeShon, 2007; VandeWalle, 2003; VandeWalle, Ganesan, & Challagalla, 2000). The following section will present the general model of

information-seeking behaviors as well as summarize the general findings in regards the diverse factors influencing such proactive behaviors.

GENERAL MODEL OF INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIORS

Definition of Information

As mentioned above, various scopes of information have been studied. Based on the diverse theoretical lenses, scholars conceptualize and define information in different ways. Information and organization scientists focusing on knowledge management define "information" by differentiating it from knowledge. Based on Machlup's (1983) definition of information, Nonaka (1994) differentiates information from knowledge, stating that "Although the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' are often used interchangeably, there is a clear distinction between information and knowledge……information is a flow of messages, while knowledge is created and organized by the very flow of information, anchored on the commitment and beliefs of its holder" (p. 15). Further, other scholars often consider knowledge as a more personalized type of information (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Fahey & Prusak, 1998). Along similar lines, Afifi and Weiner (2004) define information as, "stimuli from a person's environment that contribute to his or her knowledge or belief" (p. 169). In spite of the various definitions, a consensus regarding defining and conceptualizing information is that information is more fundamental and primitive than knowledge; information becomes knowledge through a personalization process based on the information-receiver's schemata. This study is based on this definition of information.

Information-Seeking Tactics

The arguments of Ashford (1986) and Morrison (2002) show us that information-seeking behaviors reflect organizational members' proactive attitudes. Organizational members generally seek information for three reasons: to accomplish given tasks, to improve their organizational lives, and to get promoted within their organizations. In terms of these behaviors, most studies rely on either Ashford's (1986) or Miller and Jablin's (1991) categorizations. Based on how actively members seek information, Ashford (1986) proposed two different types of information-seeking behaviors: *monitoring* and *inquiry*. Monitoring refers to those behaviors where members mostly observe their supervisors or coworkers, not directly requesting information. Inquiry refers to those behaviors where members directly ask information sources to provide what is requested.

In addition to these two types of information seeking, Miller and Jablin (1991) proposed seven tactics of seeking information: overt questioning, indirect questioning, third parties, disguising conversations, testing limits, observing, and surveillance (see Table 1). By paying more attention to how members seek information, these seven tactics basically fall into either one of Ashford's (1986) two categories. Although clear-cut categorization is difficult to achieve, in general, the first five tactics can be considered as modes of inquiry, and the remaining two can be categorized as modes of monitoring. Thus, the two main types of information-seeking behaviors considered in the literature are inquiry and monitoring.

Direct Predictors

Over the last two decades, scholars have focused on the predictors of the proactive behaviors of seeking information. These behaviors have been observed to have two main predictors: perceived uncertainties and goal orientations (see Figure 1). First, Morrison (2002) argued that the most influential factor triggering information-seeking behaviors is individuals' perceptions of uncertainties. Morrison's argument is based primarily on uncertainty reduction theory (URT). As reviewed above, this theory holds that individuals have general tendencies to actively seek information to overcome perceptual uncertainties (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Kramer, 1999). For example, in their investigation of how individuals' levels of environmental control affect their information-seeking behaviors, Renn and Fedor (2001) found that the higher environmental control individuals have, the more likely they are to seek information. This predictor, environmental control, is a passive factor, which is sensitive to outside conditions and externally given to individuals.

The second main predictor, goal orientations, is usually regarded as a positive factor that encourages individuals to seek information for the purpose of improving themselves or their job performance (Park et al., 2007; VandeWalle, 2003; VandeWalle, Ganesan, & Challagalla, 2000). The central argument surrounding goal orientations is that as members become more oriented toward team- or organization-level goals, they tend to more actively seek information to either accomplish the given goals or to improve themselves. For instance, VandeWalle et al. (2000) empirically confirmed the strong direct effect of learning goal orientation on employees' behaviors of seeking feedback

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information. In these ways, researchers have traditionally considered the two main motivators of seeking information to be perceived uncertainties and goal orientations.

Information Types and Sources

In addition to those direct predictors, studies have investigated how information types and sources are related to information-seeking behaviors. Different scholars classify information types differently from one another. Miller and Jablin (1991) propose three: referent, appraisal, and relational information. Morrison (1993a) identifies four types of information: technical, referent, social, normative, and performance information. Morrison (1995) later added political and organizational information. *Referent* and *technical* information refer to task-based information; *appraisal* and *performance* information refers to feedback-based information, which conveys how successful employees are at accomplishing given tasks. *Normative* and *social* information refer to organizational values, norms, and cultures. *Organizational* information refers to organizational procedures and structures. *Political* information refers to power relationships. The influence of information types on information-seeking behaviors have been empirically confirmed by previous studies. Morrison (1995), for example, found that employees were more likely to ask for technical and referent information and less likely to ask for social and normative information.

Morrison (2002) later argued that organizational members have personal preferences for the different kinds of information sources; those sources being mainly supervisors or co-workers. Researchers have also considered friends and written

Figure 1. Information-Seeking Model

Types of Information

Referent
Appraisal
Relational

Information Sources

Supervisors/Co-workers
Third Parties Within and
Outside of Organization
Documents

Direct Predictors

Uncertainties
Goal orientations

Information-Seeking Tactics

Inquiry, monitoring, testing limits,
disguising, indirect conversations,
surveillance, using third parties,
observing, overt questioning

Outcomes

Role Clarity
Job Satisfaction

Contingent Factors

Leadership types
Cultural dimensions

documents to be important sources of information (Callister, Kramer, & Turban, 1999; Morrison, 1993a; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Several studies show that members' willingness to seek information is significantly affected by the targets of information-seeking (Callister et al., 1999; Cross, Borgatti, & Parker, 2001; Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004; Williams et al., 1999). Morrison (1993b) found that organizational members tend to seek information by monitoring their supervisors rather than by asking directly. Members with lengthy organizational tenure are especially more likely to seek information by monitoring their supervisors.

In investigating information sources, researchers have focused on the particular dimensions that determine the characteristics of information sources (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Fedor et al., 1992; Fedor, Eder, & Buckley, 1989; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000). Particular attention has been paid to the following four dimensions of information sources: perceived expertise, perceived accessibility, reward power, quality of relationship with information sources. *Perceived expertise* of the information source refers to "the extent to which a source is believed to possess accurate and useful knowledge" (Morrison & Vancouver, 2000, p. 124). Members are more likely to seek information from sources of higher expertise (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Fedor et al., 1992; Fedor, Eder, & Buckley, 1989; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). *Perceived accessibility* is conceptualized by Morrison and Vancouver (2000) as "the anticipated ease with which one would be able to locate and utilize a particular source" (p. 124). Members more often seek information from sources that can be easily accessed than from sources of low accessibility. *Reward power* refers to a "source's

ability to affect the outcomes that a feedback seeker may receive" (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995, p. 278). If an information seeker has high expectations for positive feedback-information, s/he is likely to seek information from sources of high reward power. Last, focusing on supervisor-subordinate communication relations, the quality of relationship with information sources has been regarded a crucial dimension characterizing information sources (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995).

Moderating Factors

The relationships between various predictors and information-seeking behaviors can be moderated by a number of factors, including *leadership types* and *cultural aspects*. In terms of leadership types, many studies focus on leader-member exchanges (LMX). Such studies look at the relationships between information-seekers' perceptions of LMX quality and their information-seeking behaviors. These studies assume that a better quality of LMX will positively predict the frequency of information seeking (Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2007; Lam, Huan, Snape, 2007; Lee T., Lee D., Lee H., & Park, 2005; Lee H., Park S., Lee T., & Lee D., 2007). Chen et al. (2007), for example, confirmed through dyadic analyses of 238 supervisor-subordinate dyads that LMX quality had a significant effect on employees' behaviors of seeking negative feedback. Other studies have looked at leadership types, especially transactional and transformational types (Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003; Levy, Cober, & Miller, 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2000). These studies assumed that transformational leaders encourage members to improve their skills, knowledge, and social relationships, and that transactional leaders emphasize tasks being

accomplished. Confirming such assumptions, Levy et al. (2002) and VandeWalle (2000) found that members were more likely to seek information from transformational leaders than transactional ones.

The second factor that can moderate relationships between various predictors and information-seeking behaviors is the cultural aspect, especially national culture. Morrison (2002) claims that people seek information according to cultural backgrounds. Indeed, values in seeking information differ among cultures. For example, Morrison, Chen, and Salgado (2004) found that individuals with high power distance were less likely to seek information from their supervisors than those with low power distance. Individuals with high power distance tended to consider information seeking from supervisors as a loss of face that means increased social costs. As such, previous studies have often considered contingent factors as moderators that influence the relationships regarding the diverse predictors of information-seeking behaviors. Figure 1 summarizes the relationships among those diverse motivators, moderators, and information-seeking behaviors.

LIMITATIONS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

These important relationships have been empirically confirmed across different organizational settings. However, there still remain limitations to such findings. First, past studies have generally regarded the main cause of uncertainty to be related to one's lack of information. However, it should be additionally considered that contemporary society is characterized by immense, fast-paced, and complicated flows of information (Castells, 1996, 2000; Heiskanen, 2004; Kuusinen, 2004). The timeless time and

compressed time (Castells, 1996) created by advanced information and communication technologies (AICTs) has led to simultaneity in exchanging information across physically dispersed areas. This increase in information exchange has produced immense amounts of information. Ultimately, it has led to information-overload, sometimes referred to as "data smog"' (Shenk, 1997).

In organizational science, scholars have investigated this information overload in the context of organizational settings (Edmunds & Morris, 2000; Eppler and Mengis, 2004; Herbig & Kramer, 1994; Klausegger, Sinkovics, & Zou, 2007; Kock, 2000; Meyer, 1998; Schultze & Vandenbosch, 1998). When they relate information quantity to its quality, researchers suggest that the perceived overload of ambiguous information is more likely to increase uncertainty. Despite this close connection between information overload/ambiguity and uncertainty, there is a lack of research on this issue. This might be because, as Gallagher and Sias (2009) argue, previous studies have focused too much on new hires' or transferees' information-seeking behaviors. This current study addresses this gap in the literature and explores how information-seeking behaviors are affected by information overload and information ambiguity.

As mentioned earlier, many scholars have emphasized the necessity of investigating how culture affects individuals' information-seeking behaviors (Ardichvili, Maurer, Wentling, & Stuedemann, 2006; Gupta, Govindarajan, & Malhotra, 1999; Macdonald et al., 2008; Morrison, Chen, & Salgado, 2004; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Studies offering empirical findings in regards to cultural effects have depended largely on comparing two culturally different groups. Such findings are indeed

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meaningful in establishing the significance of culture. These findings, however, fail to explain behaviors in intercultural contexts where two or more cultures simultaneously occupy the same temporal and physical space (Baldwin & Hunt, 2002). Cross-cultural studies merely show the differences between two culturally different groups with regard to certain outcomes. They cannot explain what may happen when culturally different people interact with one another.

This means that cross-cultural studies seldom explore how cultural differences actually affect behaviors in contexts where members from different cultures actively interact with one another. Recently, however, scholars have begun paying more attention to intercultural perspectives (Aritz & Walker, 2010; Franklin, 2007; Gudykunst & Kim, 1992). One reason for the newfound interest in this perspective is the speed at which cultures are being affected by globalization. This study, in response to this trend, adopts an intercultural perspective. In particular, it focuses on members' information-seeking behaviors in a multinational corporation where foreign expatriates and residential employees continuously interact with one another to accomplish given tasks. Specifically, this study investigates how differently American employees seek information from two different information sources—American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates—in a Korean electronics company located in the U.S.

One final limitation to the existing literature is the lack of multilevel analyses. Indeed, the need for using multilevel analyses has been a methodological issue consistently emphasized in organization studies. A multilevel approach acknowledges that individuals' behaviors and perceptions are influenced by collective-level (i.e.,

organizational, departmental) factors. For example, it may be acceptable for employees to dress casually in a company's design department though prohibited in the same company's finance department. Such collective differences have influenced researchers to emphasize multilevel analysis as an important methodological approach to studying phenomena in groups, teams, and organizations. Nevertheless, little research on information-seeking behaviors actually makes use of such approach. An exceptional study might be Huang, Barbour, Su, and Contractor's (2010), which focuses on proposing and testing a multilevel model in understanding organizational members' information retrieval from digital repositories. Although this study implies the existence and potential effects of group-level factors, it does not test those effects. That is, the authors use a random-coefficient model without considering the effects of group-level factors on the relationships between individual-level factors and the outcomes. Thus, there still exists a need to conduct research based on a 'fully conditional model' that considers group-level effects. Acknowledging the significance of multilevel approaches to studying organizational phenomena (Hollingshead, Costa, & Beck, 2007; O'Reilly, 1991), this study focuses on understanding the effects of two group-level factors: task interdependence and team tenure.

HYPOTHESES

The majority of previous studies have focused on identifying the predictors of information seeking and the specific types of information sought. For example, Park et al. (2007) investigate how goal orientation affected individuals' behaviors of seeking

feedback information. This work utilized an experimental design of a computer-simulated work environment. By limiting their research focus to such a specific predictor and a certain type of information, Park et al.'s study can be considered to be a thorough exploration of information-seeking mechanisms. This current study also aims for a focused exploration of specific parts of the general model, though applied in a field setting. It mainly focuses on two types of information-seeking behaviors (inquiry and monitoring), two types of information (task and feedback information), and two types of information sources (direct supervisors and Korean expatriates).

This narrow focus is helpful for providing researchers with more concise and clear explanations about the specific relationships among multiple variables. Furthermore, this concentrated focus still covers information-seeking tactics, information types, and information sources in the following ways: First, aside from a small number of studies, especially following Miller and Jablin's (1991) information-seeking model, the majority of previous studies have regarded inquiry and monitoring as the main types of information seeking. As noted above, even Miller and Jablin's seven tactics can also be generally re-categorized into either inquiry or monitoring. Thus, this study also focuses on the inquiry and monitoring of information.

Second, although diverse types of information exist, task-oriented information and feedback-oriented information are the most critical for organizational and personal performances (Macdonald et al., 2008; Morrison, 1995). For instance, as Morrison (1995) found, task-oriented (technical and referent) information and feedback-oriented (appraisal) information were the two types of information most frequently sought. Thus,

paying more attention to job-relevant information, this study focuses on these two types of information.

Last, this study considers supervisors as the main information source. Indeed, supervisor-subordinate relationships have been one of the most critical topics in organization research (Lee & Jablin, 2000; Richmond & McCroskey, 2000). Especially taking into considering that organizational members are most likely to seek feedback information from their immediate supervisors, it is reasonable to focus on the information-seeking behaviors that occur between subordinate and supervisor.

Based on this focused approach, this study integrates two different sets of factors: individual-level and team-level factors. The following section of this chapter will discuss the main concepts of each factor in more detail and will present the hypotheses and research questions.

Individual-Level Factors

As previously discussed, diverse personal factors can both directly and indirectly influence individuals' information-seeking behaviors. This study mainly focuses on two sets of predictors: passive and active predictors. Passive predictors, which are derived mainly from uncertainty reduction theory, include outside factors that force individuals to seek information in order to overcome uncertainties. These factors include information overload and information ambiguity. Active predictors depend more on an individual's will to seek job-related information for either better job performance or self-development.

These factors include two types of goal orientations—performance and learning goal orientations.

Information Overload

Information overload has been conceptualized in various ways. Generally, researchers regard it as an over-manageable amount of received information (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). According to Grise and Gallupe (1999) and O'Reilly (1980), information overload is determined by information-processing capacity and information processing requirement. Basically, when the amount of information exceeds a person's capacity to process the information, s/he is very likely to perceive information overload. Covering previous research across diverse disciplines including management, accounting, and psychology, Eppler and Mengis suggested a theoretical model composed of the causes, symptoms, and outcomes of information overload. In terms of the causes of information overload, the authors proposed five different types: (1) the person, (2) the tasks or processes, (3) the organizational design, (4) the information technology, and (5) the information itself. According to Eppler and Mengis, these causes are interrelated to one another and lead individuals to perceive information overload. Accordingly, previous studies (Kausegger, Sinkovics, & Zou, 2007; Sparrow, 1999) have often paid attention to perception of information overload.

In measuring information overload, studies have taken one of two approaches that assume the perceptual nature of information overload. The first depends largely on the actual perception of being overloaded (Klausegger, Sinkovics, & Zou, 2007; Kock, 2000;

Sparrow, 1999). In other words, information overload is measured by scales rating the extent of which an individual perceives oneself as being overloaded with informaion. The second depends on a comparison between received- and expected-information (Pich, Loch, & Meyer, 2002; Rosenfeld, Richman, & May, 2004; Sheer & Cline, 1995; Susskind, 2007; Zhu, May, & Rosenfeld, 2004). Numerous studies following the first approach rely on direct measures of information overload. Studies adopting the second approach rely on information adequacy, which refers to the optimal point at which received-information and expected-information is equal to each other. Thus, when received-information exceeds expected-information, information overload is reached. Many regard the ICA Communication Audit Questionnaire (Downs, 1988) as a typical example of this latter approach. While these two approaches differ somewhat conceptually, they both rely mainly on quantities of information.

Regarding the quantities of information, too much or too little information often creates uncertainties (Jacoby, 1977; Robertson, 1980; Schneider 1987; Sparrow, 1999). Researchers generally agree that a lack of information brings various ambiguities to the job, tasks, and roles (Pich et al., 2002; Rosenfeld, Richman, & May, 2004; Sheer & Cline, 1995). A surplus of information, however, does not necessarily bring clarification. An early study by Jacoby (1977) argues the necessity of regarding information overload as a causal factor in the creation of uncertainties. Jacoby argued that too much information makes it difficult for people to fairly assess the value of or to accurately interpret the meaning of the information. Several empirical studies have observed outcomes from information overload that seem closely related to the creation of uncertainties. These

outcomes include ignorance of valuable information (Bawden, Holtham, & Courtney, 1999; Edmunds & Morris, 2000; Schneider, 1987), lack of time to evaluate information (Sparrow, 1999), and misinterpretation of information (Sparrow, 1999; Walsh, 1995). As such, too little and too much information both can cause uncertainty.

In addition, uncertainty has been casted as the main cause of information-seeking behaviors in both theoretical and empirical research that has been based on uncertainty reduction theory (URT) (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Baldwin & Hunt, 2002; Callister et al., 1999; Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Kramer, 1999; Morrison et al., 2004; Teboul, 1994). In various models (Ashford, 1986; Miller & Jablin, 1993; Morrison, 2002), researchers have considered uncertainty to be a main factor predicting information-seeking behaviors. The original research by Berger and Calabrese (1975) presented uncertainty in human interactions, focusing on initial interactions. According to Berger and Calabrese, the main cause of uncertainty is a lack of non-verbal and verbal communication between two actors. Berger and Calabrese argue that actors begin to seek more information to reduce uncertainty. Thus, considering the relationship between uncertainties and information overload, it is reasonable to argue that the process of perceiving information overload falls in a cyclical and retrospective pattern of seeking more information. In other words, information-seeking behaviors need to be regarded as one of the most feasible behaviors of overcoming such ambiguities and uncertainties created by overloaded information.

This cyclical relationship among information overload, information ambiguities, and information-seeking behaviors implies the mediating effects of information ambiguities on the relationship between information overload and information-seeking

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behaviors. However, it should be considered that there exists a high correlation between information overload and information ambiguity (Sparrow, 1999). Furthermore, a pilot test for the current study also showed a very high correlation between those two variables and information-seeking behaviors. Based on the concept of mediating effect (Lee & Lim, 2007), these high correlations among information overload, information ambiguity, and information-seeking behaviors imply the necessity to consider information overload and information ambiguity as two separate independent variables of information-seeking behaviors rather than assuming the mediating effect of information ambiguity. Thus, considering such high correlations, the current study first hypothesizes the direct effects of these two variables on information-seeking behaviors:

H1a: Members' perception of information overload of feedback information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.

H1b: Members' perception of information overload of task information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.

H1c: Members' perception of information ambiguity of feedback information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.

H1d: Members' perception of information ambiguity of task information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.

Goal Orientations

As economic conditions worsen across the country, competition among employees increases, raising stress levels in both the workplace and the home. The

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American Psychological Association's (APA) survey, "Stress in America 2009," reported that over sixty percent of Americans considered work as a significant cause of their high stress. Even more striking, fifty-one percent of employed Americans experienced a significant loss in productivity because of stress in the workplace. Under such stressful and competitive conditions, employees are having difficulty keeping their employment or promoting themselves within their companies. Thus, human resources departments have begun emphasizing employee self-improvement to gain a competitive edge. To maintain their jobs, employees must improve their work and related skills. They must learn new techniques, gather useful knowledge, and contribute to creating organizational benefits. Indeed, we find entire sections of bookstores devoted to workplace motivation and self-development.

Previous studies looked at more intrinsic factors that affect individuals' desire to improve themselves. These studies focused on goal orientations. According to Hirst, Knippenberg, and Zhou (2008), goal orientation implies "both self-development beliefs and how these beliefs lead individuals to interpret and engage with their environment" (p. 281). Scholars have defined two types of goal orientation: learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation. VandeWalle (1997; 2003) argues that the two are merely opposite ends of a continuum. Nevertheless, most scholars regard them as separate factors.

Learning goal orientation (LGO) mainly focuses on an individual's acquisition of new knowledge and skills for given tasks or self-development (VandeWalle, 2003). Acquiring new knowledge and skills is enabled by the individual's information-seeking

behavior. Studies have found positive relationships between LGO and information-seeking behaviors (Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2000). When studies relate organizational members' LGO to task accomplishment, most have found that LGO positively predicts both technical and feedback information (Park et al., 2007). For example, a meta-analysis of Payne, Youngcourt, and Beaubien (2007) found a positive correlation between LGO and feedback-seeking behaviors. Based on those conceptual links and empirical findings, the following hypotheses are established:

>*H2a:* The higher their learning goal orientation, the more actively will members seek task information.

>*H2b:* The higher their learning goal orientation, the more actively will members seek feedback information.

Performance goal orientation (PGO) involves individuals' desires "to gain favorable judgments of their competence or avoid negative judgments of their competence" (Dweck, 1986, p. 1040). In addition, performance goal orientation has two sub-categories: *avoidance performance goal orientation (AVGO)* and *approach performance goal orientation (APPGO)*. The latter is often referred to as *proving performance goal orientation*. VandeWalle (1997) states that, "approving goal orientation is a focus on demonstrating one's competence and the gaining of favorable judgments from others" and that, "an avoiding goal orientation is a focus on avoiding negation of one's competence and the avoiding of negative judgments from others" (p. 1000). Many scholars propose that these two types of performance goal orientations negatively affect information-seeking behaviors (VandeWalle, 1997). The findings of the studies are

generally mixed. Payne et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis found a significant negative correlation between AVGO and feedback seeking. The correlation between APPGO and feedback seeking was too small (rho = -0.1) to be statistically significant. Thus, based on these findings, this study investigates the following hypotheses:

> **H3a:** The higher their *avoiding goal orientation*, the less actively will members seek feedback information through inquiry.

> **H3b:** The higher their *avoiding goal orientation*, the less actively will members seek feedback information through monitoring.

Team-Level Factors

In the field of organization science, multilevel analysis has captured the attention of scholars. According to Raudenbush and Bryk (2005), individual-level analysis based on ordinary least squares (OLS) rarely considers the team-, division-, and organization-level commonalities shared by members. This leads to researchers neglecting members' dependency on their team, division, and organization. Ultimately it overlooks the variability of collective-level explanatory variables. Thus, as Raudenbush and Bryk contend, traditional OLS analysis—due to its lack of attention to collective-level variances— increases Type-I errors. Alternatively, the authors propose a more collective-level analysis (i.e., organization-level factors) referred to as *hierarchical linear modeling (HLM)*. The main statistical power of this method is that it can detect the variance that is explained by collective-level factors. HLM allows scholars to discover patterns in

instances where collective-level factors affect the direct effects that individual-level independent factors have on outcome variables.

In regards to the unit of analysis of collective-level factors, this study focuses on team-level factors. Two reasons account for this: First, the highly competitive, unstable, and rapidly-changing work environment pushes contemporary organizations to flexibly respond to many given situations (Ballard, Tschan, & Waller, 2008; Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford, & Melner, 1999; Jouini, Dallery, & Nait-Abdallah, 2008; Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). Thus, a common strategy for gaining flexibility is to renovate bureaucratic/hierarchical structures, turning them into lean, flat structures. Because of this trend, there has been a rapid increase in team-based organizations. Organizations that are heavily dependent on cross-functional teams, multi-national teams, and even virtual teams are emblematic of this increasing need for team-based work.

Next, as Sias (2009) argues, the supervisor-subordinate relationship is the most fundamental and crucial for accomplishing given tasks, achieving goals, and ultimately yielding organizational benefits. Indeed, a great deal of research focuses on supervisor-subordinate relationships (Kcamar, Wayne, & Wright, 2009; Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2010; Treven, 2007). This also implies that a major portion of information sharing occurs at a team level. In particular, studies focusing on LMX pay attention to information sharing in supervisor-subordinate relationships. Thus, this study focuses mainly on two team-level factors: team task interdependence and team tenure.

Team Task Interdependence

Organizational members mostly accomplish given tasks through a team-based working process. Considering this basic working process, organization science scholars have studied task interdependence in teams. According to Wageman and Gordon (2005), task interdependence in teams is "the degree to which a piece of work requires multiple individuals to exchange help and resources interactively to complete the work" (p. 678). This is closely and positively related to various individual-level and team-level outcomes such as job satisfaction (van der Vegt et al., 2001), citizenship behaviors (Allen, Sargent, & Bradley, 2003), and group processes (Stewart & Barrick, 2000). Furthermore, studies have found that task interdependence has a positive effect on information sharing within teams (Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2000; Tushman & Nadler, 1978). It is quite reasonable to understand that a more interdependent team would more likely share information to accomplish given tasks than a less interdependent team.

Based on such findings, it is logical to relate task interdependence to team members' information-seeking behaviors. First, when a task needs to be accomplished through team members' cooperation and when individuals perceive information ambiguity regarding the task, they are more likely to actively seek task and feedback information. It is also plausible that when team members experience information overload, they will seek information to overcome uncertainties. Such arguments lead to the following hypotheses:

H4a: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between information overload and employees' behaviors of seeking task information.

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H4b: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between information ambiguity and employees' behaviors of seeking task information.

Furthermore, previous studies suggested that, when organizational members have long-term goals based on team-oriented collaboration, they are more likely to seek information and feedback to achieve the goals (Yanagizawa, 2008). In other words, to accomplish their tasks requiring team collaboration, team members need to figure out "Who is responsible for certain parts of the tasks? What information and skills are necessary?" and finally, "How will each member's work be integrated into the final product?" This implies a positive influence of team interdependence on behaviors of seeking information (Cross, Rice, & Parker, 2001). Furthermore, members who are likely to seek new knowledge and learn new skills to accomplish given tasks (i.e., members with high LGO) tend to more actively seek task information (Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2000). In terms of feedback information, it is also plausible that members with high LGO will seek feedback information. This is mainly because feedback information is often used for employees' self-development. Thus, based on these arguments, the following hypothesis could be established:

H4c: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between LGO and information-seeking behaviors.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, high task interdependence is based on close interactions among team members (Wageman & Gordon, 2005). Considering the concept of social costs, these close, interpersonal interactions will increase the chances that team

members are more often and more thoroughly evaluated by their supervisor. This implies a potential increase of negative evaluations from supervisors. Based on the concept of social costs, it is reasonable to argue that organizational members with high AVGO may seek feedback information from their supervisors more passively when they are involved in active interpersonal interactions. Thus, based on this argument, the following hypothesis can be established:

> *H4d:* Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between AVGO and employees' behaviors of seeking feedback information.

Team Tenure

A majority of previous studies have paid preponderant attention to newcomers' or transferees' information-seeking behaviors (Gallagher & Sias, 2009). According to previous studies (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993, 2002) because newcomers experience fewer uncertainties over time, they are less likely to seek information actively. Particularly, as Morrison's (1993) study shows, newcomers grow to become less likely to seek task information. Considering the ongoing learning process of task knowledge throughout employees' organizational lives, the decrease of uncertainties regarding task information is very predictable. With the similar reason, employees tend to less frequently seek feedback information over time (Ashford, 1986).

This pattern of the decrease of seeking task and feedback information can be explained by the concept of social costs. As a body of studies of organizational training and orientation present (Davis, 2005; Ragsdale & Mueller, 2005; Wanous & Reichers,

2000), newcomers are required to learn the necessary skills to complete tasks and to become adjusted and acclimated to their organization in a relatively short period of time (usually one to six months). Thus, their mistakes and poor performances are mostly acceptable during such entry periods. However, after that time, their lack of skills and difficulties in acclimating to their workplaces become problematic and significantly decreases the perceived quality of those employees. Thus, based on the concept of social costs, after longer periods within the organization, it is natural for employees to actively observe and control their attitudes and behaviors in order to avoid being perceived as unqualified. Considering this mechanism, it is comprehensible that these employees will not actively seek task and feedback information to prevent themselves from being perceived as unqualified members. The studies based on social costs and impression management (Callister et al., 1999; Levey et al., 1995; Macdonald et al., 2008) strongly support this argument.

In this way, previous studies have presented strong negative relationships between organizational and job tenures and information-seeking behaviors. Based on these previous findings, it is plausible that information-seeking behaviors are more passive in a team with relatively longer team tenure than in a team with shorter team tenure. Therefore, the following hypotheses are tested:

> *H5a:* Team tenure will negatively affect the relationship between information overload and employees' information-seeking behaviors.

> *H5b:* Team tenure will negatively affect the relationship between information ambiguity and employees' information-seeking behaviors.

H5c: Team tenure will negatively affect the relationship between learning goal orientation and employees' information-seeking behaviors.

H5d: Team tenure will positively affect the relationship between avoiding performance goal orientation and employees' information-seeking behaviors.

Cultural Differences in Information-Seeking Behaviors

With the contemporary changes experienced in spatio-temporal boundaries, the boundaries of institutions and organization have also extended globally, across nations (Bresman, Birkinshaw, & Nobel, 2010; Chang & Taylor, 1999; Nobel & Birkinshaw, 1998). One of the notable outcomes of these porous and inter-permeable national boundaries is the increase of multinational corporations (MNCs) (Dong, Zou, & Taylor, 2008; Jaeger, 1983; Nobel & Birkinshaw, 1998; Williams & Triest, 2009). This increase of MNCs has received much attention from scholars in organizational science mainly due to their differences in structure when compared to traditional domestic organizations; and these corporations offer scholars the opportunity to understand unique organizational settings (Gomez & Sanchez, 2005; Roth & Kostova, 2003). Previous studies have discussed a variety of issues related to MNCs, such as authority delegation from home country to subsidiary country (Dong, Zou, & Taylor, 2008; Nobel & Birkinshaw, 1998; Williams & Triest, 2009), the balancing of different cultures (Gomez & Sanchez, 2005; Lovett, Perez-Nordtvedt, & Rasheed, 2009), and management of organizational conflicts (Duimering & Safayeni, 1998; Henderson, 2005) that occur within MNCs.

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Besides the small number of studies that have focused on information-seeking 'between' home-country headquarters and the managers/executives of subsidiary companies abroad (Barner, 2003; Gupta et al., 1999), there has been very little research concerning information-seeking behaviors 'within' MNCs (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007). Gupta et al.'s (1999) study is a good example of the research that has been conducted from the former approach. These authors addressed the relationships between home-country headquarters and representatives of subsidiary companies. A considerable finding of this study was that while the extent of communication (closeness) between headquarters and subsidiary companies positively affected subsidiary executives' behaviors seeking information through monitoring, there was no significant effect of communication level on inquiry. It can be interpreted that executives' frequent communication with the headquarters might have provided more opportunities to receive necessary information without having to proactively seek such information. Thus, those executives might have just engaged in monitoring rather than in inquiry, which involves more social costs than monitoring. As this example shows, previous studies of information-seeking behaviors in MNCs have often focused on the information flows that occur between headquarters and subsidiary countries within the context of managerial control systems.

Except Anseel and Lievens' study (2007), there has been a lack of studies investigating information-seeking behaviors within MNCs. This means that there is a lack of studies exploring information-seeking behaviors among employees of different cultural backgrounds that work within the same organizational boundaries. This also implies the

necessity to conduct more research that addresses fundamental questions such as, "Do domestic employees actually perceive that they are culturally different from foreign expatriates? Do domestic employees prefer to seek information from other domestic employees because of these perceived cultural differences?", and similarly, "Do these perceived cultural differences bring domestic employees to avoid seeking information from foreign expatriates?" These questions are meaningful for fully understanding the effects of cultural differences *on* information-seeking behaviors rather than cultural differences *in* these behaviors.

Definition of Culture

Culture is defined in diverse ways (Hofstede, 1980; House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001; Rhoner, 1984; Schein, 2004; Smith, 2006). It often corresponds to values, meanings, rituals, and lifestyles. Culture involves the norms that are historically learned and commonly shared by members in a collective entity. Hofstede (1980) defines culture as a "collective program of the mind" that leads people to evaluate and perceive an event in certain ways. In their report on the GLOBE project, House, Javidan, and Dorfman (2001) define culture as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations" (pp. 494-495). Schein (2004), defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct

way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 17). While these definitions pertain to commonly shared values, some studies have understood culture as meaning. Smith (2006), for example, criticizes Hofstede's and GLOBE's emphasis on culture as value. Smith contends that culture should be understood as collective meaning, citing Rhoner's (1984) definition: "the totality of equivalent and complementary learned meanings maintained by a human population, or by identifiable segments of a population, and transmitted from one generation to the next" (p. 119, cited in Smith, 2006).

Here, it should be considered that when scholars define culture in terms of meaning, they are likely to interpret information seeking as an issue of comprehension. On the other hand, when scholars define culture in terms of values, they are more likely to consider information seeking as an issue of practice, by providing an individual with commonly shared standards to evaluate information-seeking behaviors. Therefore, as the main goal of this study is to explore the relationships between perceptual motivators (i.e., information overload) and behavioral outcomes (i.e., information-seeking behaviors), the study relies on the value-based definition of culture. More specifically, this study is based on the notion that culture is a set of basic assumptions that guide people to behave, perceive, and think in certain ways.

In general, because cultural value systems are deeply internalized, it is difficult for people to perceive specific dimensions of their own culture (Glimson & James, 2002). Furthermore, culture imbued in the self leads people to behave in pre-determined ways. However, when people confront different cultures, they are likely to become conscious of their own cultural aspects. Applying the concept of sense-making (Luscher & Lewis,

2008), this moment can be considered the beginning of an individual's making sense of their own cultural dimensions. According to Luscher and Lewis, at the moment a person experiences shock or surprise from a target, the personal frames they would normally use to interpret the target become inapplicable. To respond to the target as well as to handle the perceived shock and surprise, the individual begins to make sense of the target as well as the causes of the shock and surprise. Based on this concept of sense-making, in contexts where people of one culture interact with those of another culture, individuals continue to perceive specific aspects of their own and others' cultures and to compare them with one another. Through these sense-making and comparison processes, people decide the ways in which they should most appropriately behave in the new conditions. This implies the significance of investigating the ways in which perceptions regarding cultural differences influence information-seeking behaviors.

Considering the significance of the perceptual aspects of culture particularly in multicultural contexts, the current study considers information-seekers' perceptions of the information-givers' cultural backgrounds. Based on the concept of social costs, this perception of an information-giver's cultural background must play a crucial role in evaluating the social costs from seeking information. That is, in deciding to seek information, an individual must estimate the potential costs of doing so, by recognizing and understanding the cultural standards of the information-giver. Here is a hypothetical example regarding a subordinate who has two supervisors. While the subordinate perceives Supervisor A as a person from a culture that considers information-seeking as a loss of face, he/she perceives Supervisor B as coming from a cultural background that

encourages the active seeking of information. It is very plausible that the subordinate will rely on Supervisor B for information than on Supervisor A. The subordinate might fear a greater loss of face by seeking information from Supervisor A. In this way, an information-seeker's perception of the information-giver's cultural background is expected to significantly influence their decision to seek information.

Corresponding to the two different information sources considered in the study, the study addresses two different sets of perceived culture: a) American employees' perceptions of American direct supervisors' cultural backgrounds and b) American employees' perceptions of Korean expatriates' cultural backgrounds.

Two Cultural Dimensions

Previous research that comprehends culture in terms of values suggests various dimensions to culture. According to Smith (2006), Hofstede's (2001) five cultural dimensions are most frequently used in studies that examine the effects of culture on social and organizational phenomena. These cultural dimensions are *power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism* vs. *collectivism, masculine* vs. *feminine cultures,* and *future orientation*. The strength of Hofstede's approach is its quantification of diverse cultural dimensions. Such measurements present scholars with opportunities to explore the causal relationships between cultural dimensions and diverse outcomes, thereby deciphering the meanings of cultural dimensions (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005; Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002). Along similar lines, in their efforts to find more valid and specific measurements of national and organizational cultures,

GLOBE established nine cultural dimensions (House et al., 2004). Seven of them—*power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism I, collectivism II, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, long-term orientation*—directly correspond to Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Two dimensions—*performance orientation* and *humane orientation*—are additions to Hofstede's original cultural dimensions.

Of the overlapping dimensions, this study mainly focuses on two: *power distance* and *uncertainty avoidance*. The remaining dimensions were not considered for of the following reasons: First, as the team-level factor of task interdependence is conceptually similar to team-level collectivism, the dimension of individualism *vs.* collectivism is not included. Second, as Miller and Karakowsky (2005) present, previous studies have rarely found significant gender differences in information-seeking behaviors or in the motivators of information seeking. Thus, the dimension of masculinity *vs.* femininity is not included in the present study. Last, future orientation is based on Confucian principles and usually applied to Asian people of the Far East. However, because this study examines American employees' information-seeking behaviors in multicultural contexts rather than comparing American employees with Asian employees, this particular dimension of culture becomes irrelevant. For these reasons, this study focuses only on the two cultural dimensions of power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

Power distance refers to the extent to which members accept imbalanced power relationships. Hofstede (1983) states that,

> People in large power distance societies accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place which needs no further justification. People in small power

distance societies strive for power equalization and demand justification for power inequalities (p. 83).

Many studies that apply Hofstede's approach to studying cultural dimensions have characterized the U.S. as a low power distance culture and Korea as a high power distance culture. These studies have often simply made comparisons between the research participants from the two countries. Here, a fundamental question regarding the categorization of cultures arises before looking further into the relationships between power distance and information-seeking behaviors. Regarding the two different information sources—American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates—a fundamental and crucial question is, "Do American employees really perceive that Korean expatriates display higher power distance than American supervisors?" To explore this question, the following hypothesis is established, based on previous assumptions regarding power distance.

H6: American employees perceive that Korean expatriates have more power distance than American direct supervisors.

In addition, according to Hofstede (1983), one-way vertical communication, primarily up-down communication, is dominant in high power distance cultures. Consequently, individuals of these cultural backgrounds tend to seek information passively. Previous studies (Ardichvili, et al., 2006; Macdonald et al., 2008; Morrison et al., 2004) have observed that because of high social costs—mainly the loss of face—people of high power distance cultures are less likely to seek information than people of

low power distance cultures. Addressing the two main information sources—American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates—the following research question is established:

> ***RQ1***: How does the perceived power distance of American direct supervisors and of Korean expatriates influence American employees' information-seeking patterns?

Next, this study considers uncertainty avoidance as another dimension of culture. Hofstede (1980) characterizes this as,

> the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater career stability, establishing more formal rules, not tolerating deviant ideas and behaviors, and believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise. (p. 45)

Based on the concept of uncertainty avoidance, it is reasonable to argue that individuals of high uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as Korea, are more likely to communicate with one another to overcome ambiguous situations than are their counterparts of low uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as the U.S. This implies a positive influence of uncertainty avoidance on information-seeking behaviors. Unlike power distance that is directly related to social costs, it is plausible that people of higher uncertainty avoidance cultures use both monitoring and inquiry of information tactics more actively than people of low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Therefore, the following hypothesis and research question can be established:

> ***H7***: American employees perceive that Korean expatriates have more uncertainty avoidance than American direct supervisors.

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RQ2: How does perceived uncertainty avoidance of American direct supervisors and of Korean expatriates influence American employees' information-seeking patterns?

Communication Relations in Multicultural Contexts

Considering these diverse information-seeking tactics, several studies have focused on the effects of information-seeking behaviors on various outcomes including role clarity (Levy et al., 2002; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007), task performance (VandeWalle, 2003), job satisfaction (Anseel , Lievens, & Levy, 2007; Ashford & Black, 1996; Zhu, May, & Rosenfeld, 2004), LMX quality (Lam et al., 2007) and intention to leave (Kramer et al., 1995l Morrison, 1993). For example, information-seeking behaviors that are actively performed positively predict members' relief of anxiety created by environmental uncertainty (Kramer, 1999; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993). Brown, Ganesan, and Challagalla (2001) also presented the positive effects of information-seeking behaviors on role clarity and work performance. In addition to the direct effects of information-seeking behaviors, Brown et al. (2001) found that employees' self-efficacy moderated the relationship between information-seeking behaviors and role clarity. In this study, they conceptualized self-efficacy as "beliefs regarding one's capacity to successfully perform a specific task" (p. 1046), based on Bandura's (1997) definition of self-information-seeking behaviors. The authors found that role clarity is higher among members with higher self-efficacy than among members with lower self-efficacy.

Here, it needs to be considered that one of the most serious problems in MNCs involves communication (Barner, 2003; Beverakis, Dick, & Cecez, 2008; Chang & Taylor, 1999; Gupta et al., 1999). That is, domestic employees and foreign expatriates in these organizations often experience lack of communication as well as dissatisfaction with interpersonal communication. These problems in communication are closely related to negative outcomes, such as low quality of performance. Thus, this study pays attention to this particular communicative outcome. Considering the positive effects of information-seeking behaviors on communication relations, this study establishes the following hypotheses:

H8: Employees' information-seeking behaviors will positively predict their communication relations with the two information sources, American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates.

H9: Information-seeking behaviors will positively mediate the relationships between the predictors of information-seeking behaviors and communication relations with the two information sources, American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates.

Chapter 3. Method

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Members of a Korean electronics company were invited to participate in a self-administered online survey. The company, located in central Texas, is a branch of the electronic company owned by a Korean conglomerate. Of the approximately 1,500 employees, about 50 are Korean expatriates working in the departments of finance, human resources (HR), strategic management, and engineering. The rest of the company is comprised of domestic employees. Most of the Korean expatriates rank as either senior or junior managers, and they are assigned roles that are distinctly different from those of domestic employees. Most of the Korean expatriates are engineers who mostly rank as middle managers. These engineers play the role of mediator. That is, according to the HR director, their main roles involve the transfer of specific technological knowledge to American employees and, more importantly, the advising of supervisors in their handling of critical technological problems. According to the HR director, it is possible for the factory to be managed by American supervisors and engineers only; however, when critical technological problems occur, Korean expatriates are primarily responsible for resolving the issues.

This company was selected because it met the criteria of being a multinational corporation that is composed of employers and employees from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, the study relied on a purposive sampling method to recruit participant. Without randomizing the sampling pool, all of the Korean expatriates and American

employees were considered as potential research participants. The researcher participated in a series of meetings, mainly with the Korean HR director, to present the main goals of the study and to explain the contents of the questionnaire. This study was accepted as research that supported the ultimate goals of the HR department. A formal invitation email was sent to all employees through the company's intranet and informed the employees that the study was being conducted in collaboration with the HR department. This formal route of distributing the invitation emails was helpful for capturing the attention and interest of the employees.

In order to collect team-level data to include in the hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), the level of team-heads was discussed with both the Korean and American HR directors. Considering the potential benefits to the company, the directors suggested that the study focus on team-heads with organizational titles, such as the director of "Failure Analysis." As the senior and junior managers held those titles, they were regarded as team-heads. Accordingly, 29 teams composed of a total of 499 office workers were identified.

In collecting team-level data, the main concern involved identifying a respondent's team while maintaining the anonymity of the individual respondent. In order to keep the responses anonymous, no questions that could be used to identify the respondents were included in the survey. Instead, corresponding to the 29 teams, the HR staff created 29 separate email lists, and the researcher created 29 separate surveys on the online survey tool, Qualtrics. All employees received an invitation email tailored to the teams they were a part of; the emails included a team-specific link to the questionnaire.

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Consequently, members of each team were able participate in an online survey that was assigned to their specific team. Through this process, members of 29 teams were invited to anonymously participate in the online survey. The duration of data collection was two weeks. During that period, two additional invitations, or reminders, were sent to all potential participants. In total, 189 employees across 23 teams completed the survey. The response rate was approximately 41%.

In order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, the company allowed the collection of only three demographic variables: gender, age, and place of birth. In terms of employees' organizational backgrounds, only two questions—organizational and team tenure—were allowed to be included into the survey. The majority of the respondents were male (87.1%) and were born in the U.S. (80.1%). In particular, the remaining 19.9% of respondents come from various countries including Mexico, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, and Germany. The average age was approximately 39 years. The mean duration of working for the company was 5.23 years ($SD = 4.5$). The mean duration of working for the current team was 2.97 years ($SD = 3.12$). In addition to these preliminary analyses of the entire participant sample, Table 2 presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for age, team tenure, and organizational tenure for each team.

INSTRUMENTATION

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was an appropriate method for verifying the theoretically-developed measurements (Kline, 1998). For this analysis, the statistical software package, AMOS 6.0 was used. Based on guidelines proposed by Lee and Lim

(2007), items with low standardized regression weights (less than .50) were removed from the analyses. Furthermore, according to Hu and Bentler (1999), it is recommended to provide both a relative fit index and an absolute fit index. This combination of two different types of indexes is helpful for reducing Type I and Type II errors. Especially, according to Hu and Bentler, the standardized root mean square (SRMR) is more adequate as an absolute fit index. Following these recommendations, this study used SRMR (good models < .08) as the absolute fit index and CFI and NFI (good models > .90) as relative fit indexes. This allowed the researcher to evaluate the model fits for a series of CFAs. When measures showed acceptable model fits, the average scores of the multiple items were calculated and used for further analyses.

Information-seeking behaviors. Information-seeking behaviors were operationalized as the extents to which a member uses one of two information-seeking tactics: inquiry and monitoring. It was measured by incorporating two information types: task information and feedback information. To measure inquiry and monitoring of feedback information, the study used a combined version of Callister et al.'s (1999) feedback-seeking scale and Ashford's (1986) feedback-seeking scale. This study's 5-point Likert-type scale is composed of five items. Corresponding to the two different information sources—American direct supervisor and Korean expatriates—two separate sets of measurements were created. First, two items measured inquiry of feedback from American direct supervisors: (a) I ask my direct supervisor how I am doing, and (b) I ask my direct supervisor if I am meeting all my job requirements. Three items were originally used for measuring monitoring of feedback from direct supervisors. However, in the

process of conducting CFA, one item, "I observe the characteristics of people who are rewarded by my direct supervisor and use this information," was removed from further calculation, because of the low standardized regression weight (smaller than .50). Thus, the following two items were used for the scale: (a) From watching my direct supervisor, I can tell how well I am performing my job, and (b) From watching my direct supervisor's reactions to what I do, I can tell how well my direct supervisor thinks I am doing. The same items were rephrased to measure inquiry and monitoring of feedback from Korean expatriates. In this case, all five items showed acceptable standardized regression weights (larger than 0.50). The final model including the four dimensions of seeking feedback information from the two different information sources showed an acceptable model fit (SRMR =.068, NFI = .938, CFI = .958).

Next, revising Ashford's (1986) feedback-seeking measurement, inquiry and monitoring of task information were measured by three items. Corresponding to the two different information sources, two separate sets of measurements for seeking task information were created. More specifically, participants were asked to read the following instructions: Please think about the last three months at work. To DETERMINE how to perform specific aspects of the tasks given to you, how frequently, in general, have you done each of the following? Then, they were given three items per information source to respond to (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 =Strongly agree). Those items included: (a) Ask my direct supervisor // Korean expatriates for task-related information; (b) Pay attention to how my direct supervisor // Korean expatriates guide(s) others to do for completing given tasks; and (c) Pay attention to how my direct supervisor // Korean

expatriates comment(s) about how others complete given tasks. While the first item served as a single-item measure for inquiry of task information, the latter two items were used to measure monitoring of task information from a direct supervisor or Korean expatriates. The final model including the six items showed an acceptable model fit (SRMR = .021, NFI = .978, CFI = .981).

*Goal orientations***.** VandeWalle's (1997) Likert-type scale was used to measure the three types of goal orientation. Learning goal orientation (LGO) was measured through four items: (a) I prefer challenging and difficult tasks so that I'll learn a great deal, (b) I truly enjoy learning for the sake of learning, (c) I like tasks that really force me to think hard, and (d) I'm willing to take difficult tasks if I can learn a lot by taking them. Avoiding performance goal orientation (AVPGO) was measured through five items: (a) I would rather avoid a difficult task than perform poorly, (b) I would rather take familiar tasks to avoid performing poorly, (c) I am more concerned about avoiding a low performance than I am about learning, (d) I prefer to avoid situations where I could risk performing poorly, and (e) I accept tasks at which I feel that I will probably do well. Because of the low standardized regression weight, the last item was removed (SRMR = .071, NFI = .981, CFI = .989).

Information overload and ambiguity. Information overload and information ambiguity were measured through a modified version of Chung and Goldhaber's (1991) 5-point Likert-type scale. Information overload was measured by asking participants to answer how strongly they agree with each of the following three items (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 =Strongly agree): (a) I feel that I generally am given too many phone calls,

emails, meetings, and face-to-face conversations; (b) I receive more information than I need to do my work effectively; and (c) I receive more information than I can process. Corresponding to the two different types of information—task information and feedback information—two different sets of items measured information overload: (a) I feel that I generally am given too many phone calls, emails, meetings, and face-to-face conversations in regards to tasks; and (b) I receive more feedback than I can process. Information ambiguity was measured through the following three items: (a) I receive a lot of information that requires too much explaining to be useful, (b) the information I need to explain to others is often confusing or ambiguous, and (c) I have more discussions than I would like about confusing or ambiguous information. As with the measurement of information overload, two sets of items were created to measure information ambiguity in regards to the two types of information, but in the process of CFA, two items (one item from each set) were removed from further calculation (SRMR = .051, NFI = .922, CFI = .965).

Power distance. Power distance was measured through Lee, Pillutla, and Law's (2000) modified version of Hofstede's original scale (1980). This is a 5-point Likert scale composed of three items (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 =Strongly agree), of which an example is: "In my opinion, when a performance appraisal made by my supervisor does not fit with subordinates' expectations, team members should feel free to discuss it with the supervisor (reverse coded)." This study considered participants' perceptions of the power distance for their direct supervisor as well as Korean expatriates. Perceptions of supervisors' and expatriates' power distance were measured through a modified version

of Lee et al.'s (2000) scale of power distance with the following items: (a) When there are conflicts between my supervisor's // Korean expatriates' appraisal and team members' expectations, my supervisor // Korean expatriates' is(are) open to team members' opinions (reverse coded); (b) My supervisor // Korean expatriates' emphasize(s) the need to bypass hierarchical lines to build efficient work relationships (reverse coded), and (c) My supervisor // Korean expatriates' is(are) open to new members' critical attitudes toward him/her (reverse coded). The final model showed an acceptable model fit (SRMR = .036, NFI = .978, CFI = .958).

Uncertainty avoidance. A modified version of Jung and Kellaris' (2004) 5-point Likert scale was used to measure uncertainty avoidance. This scale is composed of six items. Examples of these items include: (a) I prefer structured situations to unstructured situations, and (b) I prefer specific instructions to broad guidelines. This study measured perceptions of supervisors' and expatriates' uncertainty avoidance through the six items from Jung and Kellaris' scale that were modified to measure an individual's perception of supervisor's uncertainty avoidance. In the process of conducting CFA, three out of six items were removed from further calculation because of low standardized regression weights. An example of the three remaining items include: My direct supervisor tends to get anxious easily when s/he doesn't know a potential outcome. Similarly, of the six items from Jung and Kellaris' scale that were modified to measure an individual's perception of expatriates' uncertainty avoidance, two were removed. An example of the remaining items is: Korean expatriates, who work closely with me, are not content with

ambiguous situations. The final model showed an acceptable model fit (SRMR = .066, NFI = .915, CFI = .933).

Team task interdependence. Pearce and Gregersen's (1991) Likert-type scale was used to measure task interdependence. This scale is composed of the following four items: (a) I work closely with other team members in doing my work, (b) I frequently must coordinate my efforts with other team members, (c) my own performance depends on receiving accurate information from other team members, and (d) the way I perform my job has a significant impact on other team members. The final model showed an acceptable model fit (SRMR = .046, NFI = .944, CFI = .954). Team task interdependence was obtained by averaging team members' task interdependence scores for each team.

Team tenure. To obtain team tenure as a team-level variable, team members' individual team tenures were collected through the single item, "How many years have you worked for the current team?" Then, each team's team tenure was gained by averaging team members' team tenures.

Communication relation[1]. Three items that measure communication relationships with co-workers from Downs' (1987) Communication Audit were reworded to measure the communication relationships with two different information sources—direct supervisors and Korean expatriates. Scott et al.'s (1999) study shows a high reliability score (Cronback's alpha with the value of larger than 0.80) for this measurement. The items are as follows: (a) I am generally satisfied with my communication with my direct

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[1] As the survey items show, communication relation can be interpreted as communication satisfaction. However, for more legitimate application of the original measurement, the original name of the measurement was used rather than replacing it with communication satisfaction.

supervisor // Korean expatriates; (b) I enjoy my interactions with my direct supervisor //

Korean expatriates; and (c) I feel good about my conversations with my direct supervisor

// Korean expatriates, who work closely with me. The final CFA model showed an

acceptable model fit (SRMR = .044, NFI = .974, CFI = .981). In sum, CFA results

verified the measurements of these factors. In addition, all of the measurements obtained

acceptable reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha of larger than 0.70).

ANALYSES OF DATA

To test the direct effects of information overload, information ambiguity, and goal

orientations on information-seeking behaviors, hierarchical regression analyses were

conducted, controlling for three variables—organizational tenure, team tenure, and

gender. This statistical analysis was selected particularly because it provides pure effects

of independent variables. To test hypotheses related to team-level factors, two different

hierarchical linear models were analyzed through the statistical software program, HLM

6.0. These models are random-coefficient models (multiple individual-level predictors

but no group-level predictors) and fully-conditional models (both individual- and group-

level predictors). Because HLM is essentially based on multiple regression analyses,

regression coefficients and variances explained by individual-level and group-level

predictors were obtained by analyzing these two different types of models. To test the

mediating effects of information-seeking behaviors, path analyses are conducted through

AMOS 6.0.

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Chapter 4. Results

HYPOTHESES TESTS

H1a and H1b hypothesized a positive effect of information overload (IO) on information-seeking behaviors. H1c and H1d hypothesized that information ambiguity (IA) would positively predict information-seeking behaviors. To test these hypotheses, a series of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. For the analyses, three variables were controlled: organizational tenure (years of working for the company), team tenure (years of working for the current team), and gender. In the case of gender, a dummy variable (male = 1, female = 0) was included into the analyses. These three control variables were entered into Block 1. Information overload (IO) and information ambiguity (IA) were entered into the second block. In total, considering the eight combinations of information-seeking patterns as dependent variables, eight hierarchical regression analyses were conducted.

First, as Table 3 shows, while IO strongly and positively predicts the inquiry and monitoring of feedback information from both direct supervisor and Korean expatriates, it moderately predicts the inquiry of task information from direct supervisor. Specifically, after controlling for the three variables, the addition of IO into the regression model significantly increases the explained variance in inquiry ($\Delta R^2 = .056$, ΔF (2, 168) = 5.350, $p = .006$) and monitoring ($\Delta R^2 = .082$, ΔF (2, 168) = 7.630, $p = .001$) of feedback information from direct supervisors (see Table 4 and Table 5). Similarly, after entering IO into the second block, the change of the explained variance in inquiry ($\Delta R^2 = .155$, ΔF

(2, 168) = 11.359, $p < .001$) and monitoring ($\Delta R^2 = .044$, ΔF (2, 168) = 4.062, $p = .019$) of feedback information from Korean expatriates become strongly significant (see Table 6 and Table 7). This implies that H1a is fully supported.

Regarding H1b, IO ($\beta = .197$) positively and significantly predicts only the inquiry of task information from direct supervisor. However, the addition of IO into the regression model did not significantly increase the explained variance in the dependent variable was not statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .023$, ΔF (2, 168) = 2.055, $p > .10$). Thus, in spite of the significant finding, H1b is rejected.

Next, H1c and H1d are related to the relationships between information ambiguity (IA) and behaviors of seeking the two types of information. However, as Table 3 shows, there is no significant effect of IA on behaviors of seeking feedback information. Thus, H1c is rejected. However, with regard to task information, IA significantly predicts the inquiry ($\beta = .252$) and monitoring ($\beta = .237$) of task information from Korean expatriates. Furthermore, as Table 8 and Table 9 show, the addition of IA into the second block significantly increases the explained variance in both inquiry ($\Delta R^2 = .040$, ΔF (2, 167) = 3.657, $p = .028$) and monitoring ($\Delta R^2 = .044$, ΔF (2, 167) = 4.030, $p = .020$) of task information from Korean expatriates, partially supporting H1d.

H2a and H2b hypothesized positive effects of learning goal orientation (LGO) on information-seeking behaviors. To test these hypotheses, three variables—organizational and team tenures and gender—were controlled. Corresponding to the eight patterns of information-seeking behaviors, eight hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Table 10 summarizes the significant results of the eight analyses. In general, after

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controlling for the three variables, LGO significantly and positively predicts seven types of information-seeking behaviors, supporting H2a and H2b.

First, LGO strongly and positively predicts participants' inquiry of feedback information from their direct supervisors. That is, as Table 11 shows, the addition of LGO ($\beta = .454$) into the model significantly increases the amount of explained variance in this specific information-seeking behavior ($\Delta R^2 = .066$, ΔF (2, 168) = 6.418, $p = .002$). Second, as Table 12 displays, by adding LGO into the regression model, the explained variance in inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates significantly increases ($\Delta R^2 = .054$, ΔF (2, 168) = 5.015, $p = .008$).

Third, after controlling for the three variables, LGO predicts positively and strongly significantly the monitoring of feedback information from both direct supervisor ($\beta = .365$) and Korean expatriates ($\beta = .461$). Regarding these two outcome variables, the addition of LGO significantly increases the explained variance in monitoring direct supervisor ($\Delta R^2 = .045$, ΔF (2, 168) = 3.967, $p = .021$) as well as monitoring Korean expatriates ($\Delta R^2 = .064$, ΔF (2, 168) = 5.981, $p = .003$) (see Table 13 and Table 14).

Next, regarding the behaviors of seeking task information, LGO predicts moderately significantly both inquiry ($\beta = .317$) and monitoring ($\beta = .370$) of task information from Korean expatriates. These two effects are statistically significant at the level of $p < .05$. The addition of LGO into the regression model significantly increases the explained variance in inquiry ($\Delta R^2 = .023$, ΔF (1, 168) = 4.263, $p = .040$) and monitoring ($\Delta R^2 = .036$, ΔF (1, 168) = 6.730, $p = .010$) of task information from Korean expatriates (see Table 15 and Table 16). Last, controlling for the three variables, it is

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found that LGO (β = .220) weakly and significantly predicts monitoring of task information from the direct supervisor. As Table 17 shows, the change of the explained variance in the dependent variable is also statistically weakly significant at the level of p < 0.10 (ΔR^2 = .020, ΔF (1, 169) = 3.485, p = .064). Considering these statistically significant findings, it is reasonable to argue that H2a is partially supported and that H2b is fully supported.

While H3a hypothesized negative effects of AVGO on inquiry of feedback information, H3b hypothesized its positive effects on monitoring of feedback information. Unlike the initial hypothesis, there is a positive and moderately significant effect of AVGO on the inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates. This partially supports H3a. The addition of AVGO significantly increases the explained variance in the inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates (ΔR^2 = .054, ΔF (2, 168) = 5.015, p = .008). Similarly, partially supporting H3b, it is observed that AVGO positively and significantly predicts the monitoring of feedback information from Korean expatriates. After adding AVGO into the regression model, the explained of variance in the dependent variable significantly increases (ΔR^2 = .064, ΔF (2, 168) = 5.981, p = .003). With regard to information sources, there is no significant effect of AVGO on behaviors of seeking feedback information from a direct supervisor.

HLM Analysis

To test the hypotheses regarding the multilevel analysis, sixteen HLM equations were created. This is due to the study having two different sets of independent variables,

two types of information sources, two different types of information, and two different information-seeking behaviors (2 x 2 x 2 x 2). This results in sixteen HLM equations. For example, with regard to the dependent variable, inquiry of feedback information from direct supervisor, the following two different equations were developed and tested. While Model 1 considers two goal orientations as individual-level variables and team interdependence and team tenure as two team-level variables, Model 2 considers information overload and information ambiguity as two individual-level predictors.

Model 1

Level 1
$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} (LGO) + \beta_{2j} (AVGO) + r_{ij}$
(Y_{ij} =Inquiry of feedback from direct supervisor)

Level 2
$\beta_{0j} = \beta_{00} + u_{0j}$
$\beta_{1j} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11} (\text{Team Task Interdependence}) + \beta_{12} (\text{Team Tenure}) + u_{1j}$
$\beta_{2j} = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21} (\text{Team Task Interdependence}) + \beta_{22} (\text{Team Tenure}) + u_{2j}$

Model 2

Level 1
$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} (IO \text{ of Feedback}) + \beta_{2j} (IA \text{ of Feedback}) + r_{ij}$
(Y_{ij} =Inquiry of feedback from direct supervisor)

Level 2
$\beta_{0j} = \beta_{00} + u_{0j}$
$\beta_{1j} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11} (\text{Team Task Interdependence}) + \beta_{12} (\text{Team Tenure}) + u_{1j}$
$\beta_{2j} = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21} (\text{Team Task Interdependence}) + \beta_{22} (\text{Team Tenure}) + u_{2j}$

Accordingly, sixteen HLM equations were analyzed through HLM 6.08. Through the HLM analyses, five models with significant effects of level 2 variables are found (see Table 18). Regarding the four hypotheses (H4a, H4b, H4c, H4d) related to task

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interdependence (TI), H4a, H4c, and H4d are partially supported. Rejecting H4b is necessary; HLM results show no significant effect of TI on the relationships between information ambiguity and information-seeking behaviors. HLM results also partially support H5a, H5c, and H5d that hypothesized the negative effects of team tenure (TT) on the relationships between three individual-level predictors—LGO, AVGO, and IO—and information-seeking behaviors. However, there is no significant effect of TT on the relationships between IA and information-seeking behaviors. Thus, H5b is not supported. Each of the five HLM models is detailed in Table 18.

First, as Table 19 shows, while team tenure (TT) ($\beta = -.211$) as a level 2 variable negatively influences the relationship between LGO and the inquiry of feedback information from direct supervisor (IQ-FI-DS), there is no significant effect of task interdependence (TID) on the relationship. This means that, as TT goes up by one, the rate of LGO's effect on IQ-FI-DS decreases by -0.211. The introduction of these two level 2 variables accounts for 21.6 percent—[(0.190-0.159)/0.190]—additional variance in the rate of LGO's effect on IQ-FI-DS. HLM results also show that, while TI ($\beta = .668$) positively and significantly affects the relationship between AVGO and IQ-FI-DS, TT ($\beta = -.187$) negatively and strongly influences the same relationship. That is, as TI goes up by one, the rate of AVGO's effect on IQ-FI-DS increases by .668. The addition of these two level 2 variables accounts for 10.1 percent additional variance in the rate of AVGO's effect on IQ-FI-DS.

Second, Table 20 shows the HLM results regarding the inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates (IQ-FI-KE). As the table displays, there is no

significant effect of level 2 variables—TI and TT—on the relationship between LGO and IQ-FI-KE. However, there are significant effects of these level 2 variables on the same level 1 relationship. Specifically, while TI positively and significantly (β = .832) affects the relationship between AVGO and IQ-FI-KE, TT's significant effect (β = -.159) is negative. The addition of these two level 2 variables accounts for 17.1 percent additional variance in the rate of AVGO's effect on IQ-FI-KE. This finding implies that, as members work for the same team for longer periods, their AVGO's effect on the inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates decreases.

Third, as Table 21 shows, while there is no significant effect of TI and TT on the relationship between LGO and the monitoring of feedback information from direct supervisor (MO-FI-DS), there are significant effects of these level 2 variables on the same level 1 relationship. In other words, while TI positively and significantly (β = .718) affects the relationship between AVGO and MO-FI-DS, TT significant and negatively (β = -.153) affects the same relationship. The introduction of these two level 2 variables accounts for 84 percent additional variance in the rate of AVGO's effect on MO-FI-DS.

Regarding task information, there is only one HLM model with level 2 variable's significant effect on the level 1 regression slope. As Table 22 shows, an HLM model having LGO as a level 1 predictor, TI and TT as level 2 variables, and the inquiry of task information from direct supervisor (IQ-TI-DS) as the level 1 dependent variable was created. As the result of the random-coefficient model without level 2 variables shows (see Table 22), LGO positively and significantly (β = .424) predicts IQ-TI-DS. However, while there is no significant effect of TT on the level 1 regression slope, TI positively and

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significantly influences the rate of LGO's effect on IQ-TI-DS. That is, as TI increases by one, the effect of LGO on IQ-TI-DS also increases by 1.051. This introduction of TI and TT accounts for 57.9 percent additional variance in the level 1 regression slope.

Finally, with regard to two level 1 predictors—information overload (IO) and information ambiguity (IA)—there is only one HLM model with significant effects of level 2 variables on the level 1 regression slope. As Table 23 shows, while there is no significant effect of level 2 variables on the relationship between IA and the monitoring of feedback information from direct supervisors (MO-FI-DS), TI and TT have significant effects on the rates of IO's effect on MO-FI-DS. TI positively (β = .725) influences the regression slope for IO's effect on MO-FI-DS. TT (β = -.404) negatively and strongly affects the relationship between IO and MO-FI-DS. Through the addition of these two level 2 variables into the model, 75 percent additional variance in the rate of IO's effect on MO-FI-DS is explained.

H6 and H7 focused on how American employees perceive Korean expatriates' cultural backgrounds in terms of two cultural dimensions: power distance and uncertainty avoidance. That is, while H6 hypothesizes that employees perceive Korean expatriates as having higher power distance than American direct supervisors, H7 hypothesizes that these employees perceive American direct supervisors as showing higher uncertainty avoidance than Korean expatriates. To test these hypotheses, two paired-samples t-tests were conducted. Supporting H6, American employees perceive Korean expatriates (M = 3.740) as having higher power distance than American direct supervisors (M = 3.041). This difference is statistically strongly significant at the level of p < .001 (see Table 24

and Table 25). In addition, supporting H7, American employees perceive Korean expatriates as having higher uncertainty avoidance (M = 3.302) than American direct supervisors (M = 3.026). This result is statistically strongly significant at the level of p < .01.

RQ1 and RQ2 focused on how differently American employees' perceive the two different cultural backgrounds (power distance and uncertainty avoidance) of the two different information sources (American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates). To explore this research question, a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted. As Table 26 shows, American employees' perceptions of the cultural backgrounds for both American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates are strongly and negatively correlated to their information-seeking behaviors. This implies that as American employees perceive the information-givers as characterized by higher power distance, they are less likely to seek both task and feedback information. However, regarding the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance, there is no significant result.

In order to more thoroughly explore the potential and pure direct effects of perceived cultural backgrounds of information-givers, a series of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. For example, the first column of Table 27 shows the pure effects of perceived power distance and uncertainty avoidance on American employees' inquiry of feedback information from American direct supervisors, controlling for the effects of two variables—organizational tenure and team tenure. As Table 27 shows, employees' perception of power distance for Korean expatriates (standardized β= -0.206) more strongly and negatively predicted their inquiry of feedback information from

Korean expatriates compared to the effect of perceived power distance for American direct supervisors (standardized β= 0.004) on the inquiry of feedback information from those supervisors. In general, as Table 27 presents, it is reasonable to summarize that, while perceived power distance strongly and negatively predicted American employees' behaviors of seeking information from Korean expatriates, there were minimal effects of perceived power distance on the behaviors of seeking information from American direct supervisors. An exception was the significant and negative effect of perceived power distance (standardized β= -0.375) on American employees' monitoring of feedback information from American direct supervisors.

H8 hypothesized the positive direct effect of information-seeking behaviors on communication relation. To test this hypothesis, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. As Table 28 shows, after controlling for organizational tenure, team tenure, and gender, monitoring of feedback information (MO-FI) ($\beta = .443$) and inquiry of task information (IQ-TI) ($\beta = .163$) predicts positively and strongly communication relation with direct supervisors (CR-DS). Furthermore, the addition of the four types of information-seeking behaviors significantly increases the explained variance in CR-DS ($\Delta R^2 = .225$, $\Delta F (4, 165) = 11.321$, $p < .001$).

Table 29 displays the results of the hierarchical regression analysis for the effects of information-seeking behaviors on communication relation with Korean expatriates (CR-KE). After controlling for the three control variables, monitoring of feedback information (MO-FI) ($\beta = .267$) and task information (IQ-TI) ($\beta = .137$) predicts positively and significantly CR-KE. The addition of the four types of information-seeking

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behaviors also significantly increases the explained variance in CR-KE ($\Delta R^2 = .262$, ΔF (4, 164) = 16.179, $p < .001$). Based on these results, it is reasonable to argue that H8 is partially supported.

Extending H8 to the larger model which includes the predictors of information-seeking behaviors, H9 hypothesizes the positive mediating effects of information-seeking behaviors on the relationships between the six predictors of information-seeking behaviors and communication relation. To exploit this hypothesis, two separate structural equation models for CR-DS and CR-KE were created. Figure 3 shows the initial model of the SEM for CR-DS.

Figure 2. Initial SEM Model for Direct Supervisor
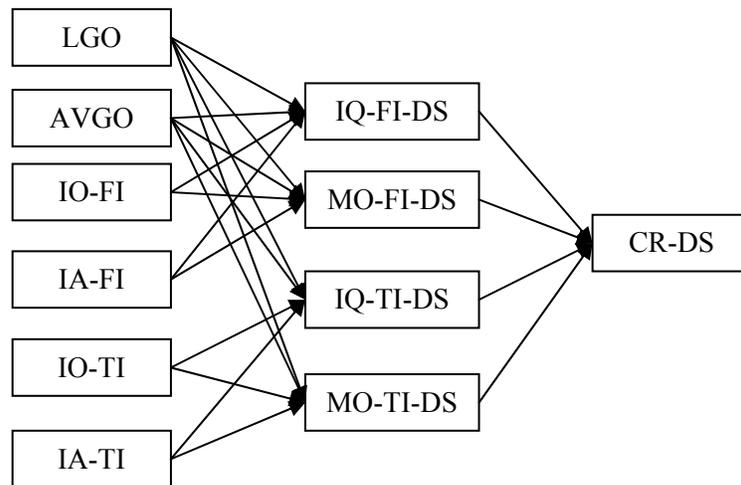
First, the model including communication relation with direct supervisors (CR-DS) was tested by AMOS 6.0. To find the final model with acceptable model fits, all of insignificant paths at the level of $p < .05$ were removed from the initial model. After a series of modifications of the initial model, the final model with acceptable model fit was

obtained ($\chi^2 = 21.615$, $p < .005$, SRMR = .094, NFI = .991, CFI = .993). SEM results also show significant indirect effects of LGO ($\beta = .187$) and IO-FI ($\beta = .019$). Figure 4 presents the final model. In this model, two types of information-seeking behaviors significantly mediate the relationships between the two predictors (LGO, IO-FI) and communication relation with direct supervisors. As Figure 4 shows, the monitoring of feedback information from direct supervisors significantly mediates the relationships between learning goal orientation and communication relation with direct supervisors and between information overload of feedback information and the same outcome variable. There is no significant mediating effect regarding information-ambiguity and AVGO.

Figure 3. SEM for Communication Relations with Direct Supervisors
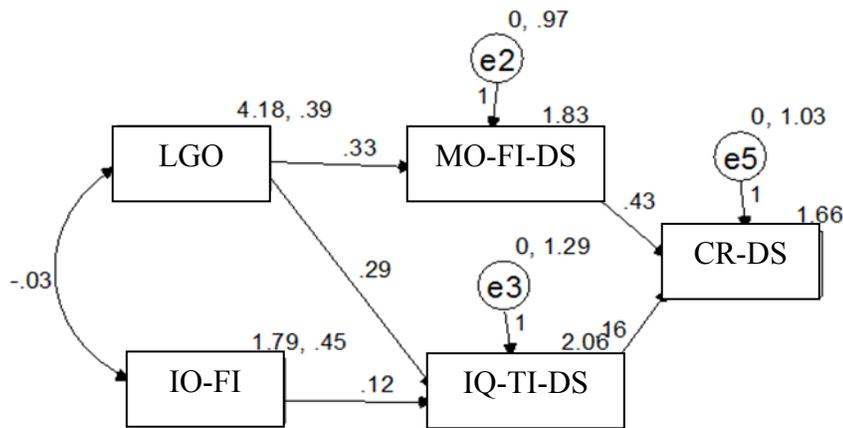
Next, another initial model considering CR-KE as the final outcome variable was tested. In spite of removing all of the insignificant paths, the absolute model fit index (SRMR) reached an unacceptable value, larger than .10. Thus, following suggestions by Kline (1998) as well as Lee and Lim (2007), modification indices were considered to

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improve the model fit. After modifying the model by including the covariance among errors of the three information-seeking behaviors, the final model with acceptable model fits could be developed ($\chi^2 = 13.493$, $p < .005$, SRMR = .05, NFI = .996, CFI = .998). As Figure 5 displays, the three information-seeking behaviors significantly mediate the relationships between the three predictors (LGO, IA-FI, IA-TI) and communication relation with Korean expatriates. SEM results show significant indirect effects of LGO ($\beta = .222$), IA-FI ($\beta = .054$), and IA-TI ($\beta = .075$). These results from the two path analyses partially support H9.

Figure 4. SEM for Communication Relations with Korean Expatriates
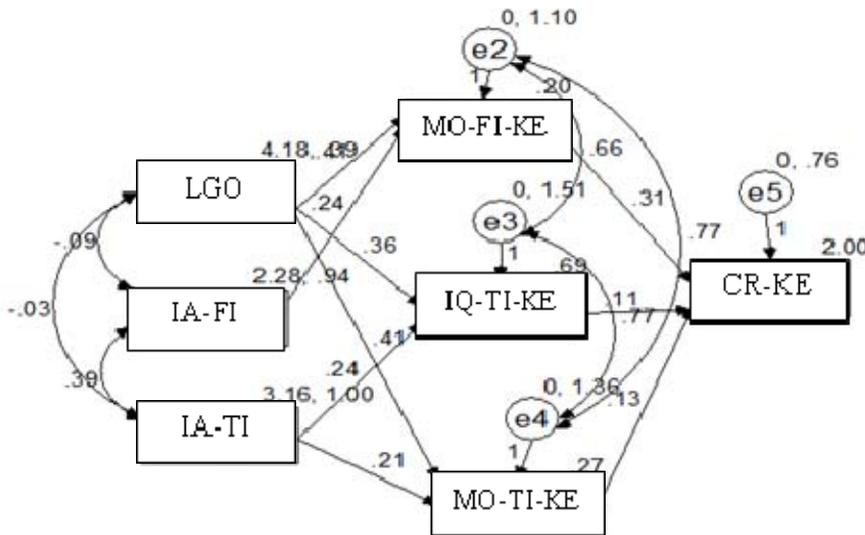
SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES TESTS

In order to test the proposed hypotheses, diverse advanced statistical analyses—hierarchical regression analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM)—were conducted. Results from the statistical analyses show a number of statistically significant findings, mostly supporting the proposed hypotheses. Table 30 presents a summary of the hypotheses tests.

Chapter 5. Discussion

During the past several decades, criticizing the assumption that individuals are passive information-receivers, scholars in the disciplines of organizational science as well as communication have taken great efforts to approach information-seeking as proactive behaviors (Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Crant, 2000). Such previous research has produced diverse models explaining the processes of information-seeking behaviors and has been devoted to testing them empirically (Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Macdonald, Brown, & Sulsky, 2008; Morrison, 2002). The existing theoretical models and empirical findings have provided scholars with deeper understandings of the mechanisms that govern these proactive behaviors in various organizational settings. Nevertheless, much research is still called for in order to explain the complex dynamics that guide information-seeking behaviors within the context of a society substantially characterized by globalization and informationalization.

Therefore, with the main goal of developing a more advanced model of information-seeking behaviors (see Figure 2), this study analyzed multilevel data collected from employees working for a Korean multinational corporation located in the U.S. Through diverse advanced statistical analyses including hierarchical regression analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), this current study identified multiple theoretically and practically meaningful findings. This chapter will first present detailed interpretations of the significant findings, and then discuss the larger theoretical and practical implications of the findings. A discussion of the study's limitations and future research directions will follow.

Figure 5. Hierarchical Model of Information-Seeking Behaviors

Team Level

Team-Level Moderators

Team Task Interdependence
Team Tenure

Individual Level

Individual-Level Predictors

Information Overload
Information Ambiguity
Goal Orientations
Perceived Cultural
Backgrounds (*Uncertainty Avoidance & Power Distance*)

Information-Seeking Behaviors

Inquiry
vs.

Outcome of Information-Seeking Behaviors

Communication Relations

Culturally Different Information Sources

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INTERPRETATIONS OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Individual-Level Factors

Unlike previous studies that have considered 'lack' of information as the main cause of information-seeking behaviors, the present study examined 'overload' of information as a main cause of seeking information. For this investigation, information overload was conceptualized and operationalized as the amount of information that exceeds one's capacity to manage it, focusing on the quantitative aspect of information (Grise & Gallupe, 1999; O'Reilly, 1980). As Table 3 displayed, the results of hierarchical regression analyses showed that, while information overload strongly and positively predicted both inquiry and monitoring of seeking feedback from direct supervisors as well as Korean expatriates, these effects were minimal in terms of task information. In other words, although employees actively seek 'feedback' information when they perceive an overload of such information, they are not likely to seek 'task' information even when they perceive an overload of it.

This might be explained by the characteristics of different types of information. While task information is relatively more straightforward, content-oriented, and value-free, feedback information is much more interpretive, meaning-oriented, and value-based (Morrison, 1993). This implies that while the accumulation of task information tends to become more helpful for clarifying given tasks, an increasing amount of feedback information might hinder clarified understandings of the feedback. When people receive contradictory feedback information—both positive and negative evaluations—over time,

this accumulation of information rarely helps information-receivers to understand the information in a clear manner. Rather, it is more likely to obscure the meanings of the given information. Previous studies of information-seeking behaviors have not been able to capture this delicate mechanism that explains the relationships among information types, accumulation of information, and information-seeking patterns mainly due to their strong emphasis on information "underload." Therefore, these findings contribute to the current discussion of information-seeking behaviors by identifying the significant roles of the excess of information and information type in the seeking of information.

Second, unlike information overload, information ambiguity was not significantly related to feedback information. In other words, even when people perceive feedback information to be ambiguous, they are not likely to seek feedback information. However, information ambiguity did predict the inquiry and monitoring of task information from Korean expatriates. This result might be explained through the concept of uncertainty management theory (UMT). According to UMT, when a negative outcome is expected, people become less likely to seek information, intentionally avoiding the clarification of the potential negative outcomes (Brashers, 2001; Brashers, Goldsmith, & Hsieh, 2002; Brashers, Neidig, Haas, Dobbs, Cardillo, & Russell, 2000). Here, it should be considered that the ambiguity of information may potentially create fear or stress (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Furthermore, considering politeness theory and the concept of face threatening act (FTA) (Cupach & Carson, 2002), it is natural for people to avoid the damaging of others' reputations, avoiding the threatening of others' positive faces. Accordingly, it is very plausible for an information-giver to provide an information-seeker with negative

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feedback information in ambiguous ways rather than stating the information in a direct and straightforward manner. This implies that the ambiguity of feedback information may be interpreted by the information-receiver that the evaluation is most likely negative. Further based on UMT, it is probable that when people experience ambiguity of feedback information, they are not likely to seek information. This finding reconfirms the theoretical connections between UMT and information-seeking behaviors.

Third, learning goal orientation (LGO) significantly and strongly predicted the monitoring and inquiry of both feedback and task information from Korean expatriates and direct supervisors, except for seeking of task information from direct supervisors. These findings provide additional support for existing understandings of the positive relationships between LGO and information-seeking behaviors (Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2000). As many previous studies have found, LGO is a key source of motivation for seeking information actively. LGO positively predicts proactive behaviors of seeking 'task' information because this type of information is directly related to the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills (VandeWalle et al., 2000). In terms of 'feedback' information, it is highly plausible that information-seekers with higher LGO are more likely to gather feedback to obtain more knowledge as well as skills. This is because the main function of feedback information is to evaluate people's current achievement of knowledge and skills and to provide them with specific directions for further accomplishments. Based on these arguments, the current study's finding of the positive relationship between LGO and information-seeking behaviors is easily understandable. Furthermore, by investigating this issue in a multicultural organizational

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setting, this study contributes to the extension of the literature of LGO and information-seeking behaviors to more diverse contexts.

Next, one of the most interesting findings was the positive direction of the effect of avoidance performance goal orientation (AVGO) on information-seeking behaviors. As elaborated above, AVGO refers to the extent to which people want to avoid negative judgment from others. Most existing studies on AVGO (Payne et al., 2007; VandeWalle, 1997) show empirical evidence of AVGO having a negative effect on information-seeking behaviors, particularly feedback information. Based on the concept of social costs, this negative relationship is understandable. In other words, seeking feedback information is often considered a loss of face, especially for old timers of relatively high organizational tenure. The current study hypothesized negative effects of AVGO on information-seeking behaviors based on this theoretical and empirical evidence.

However, unlike this expectation, AVGO positively predicted the inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates, after controlling for organizational tenure and team tenure. In other words, employees who are particularly concerned about others' judgments tend to seek feedback information from Korean expatriates more actively. This result might also imply that the inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates did not incur significantly large amounts of social cost. This result can be understood through the nature of the relationship between the employees and Korean expatriates: although employees are ranked as either section chief or as deputy department head, the majority of Korean expatriates are engineers who play the role of mediator. In other words, these Korean expatriates are not directly responsible for supervising the American

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employees. Rather, the expatriates' main responsibility is to facilitate task performance that is based on close ties between American supervisor and his/her subordinates. According to the HR director, expatriates are the technical advisers who possess the critical knowledge needed to solve technical problems. The evaluation of team members' performance is conducted not by the Korean expatriates but by the American supervisors. Based on these differing roles of the direct supervisors and expatriates, it is understandable that team members who are concerned about other's judgment but desire more feedback information are more likely to seek feedback information from the expatriates and less or no more likely to seek such information from their direct supervisors.

The following explanation is also highly plausible. As several previous studies on multinational corporations present, one of the key components to an MNC's success is the building and maintenance of harmony between domestic employees and foreign expatriates (Duimering & Safayeni, 1998; Henderson, 2005). When considering the particular research site for this study, although the employees work together within an organizational boundary, it is possible that the American employees consider Korean expatriates as a third party, separating them off as from their own American circles. Here, it should also be considered that using a third party is a typical behavior of indirectly seeking information and minimizing social costs (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Thus, this potential mechanism may be the reason for the positive effect of AVGO on feedback-seeking from Korean expatriates observed in this study,

Team-Level Factors

One of the goals of this study was to examine the effects of collective level factors (team level factors in this study) on individuals' information-seeking behaviors; team task interdependence and team tenure were considered as the two team-level predictors. Through hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), the effects of these team-level predictors on the individual-level predictors' (i.e., the two goal orientations, information overload, and information ambiguity) effects on information-seeking behaviors were analyzed. Team task interdependence (TI) positively predicted only one effect regarding LGO. That is, in teams where members depended more upon other members to complete given tasks, those with higher LGO were more likely to seek task information from their direct supervisors than in teams with relatively lower TI. High task interdependence is achieved through adequate delegation of tasks, acquisition of necessary skills, and meaningful evaluations of members' performances (Langfred, 2007; Yuan, Fulk, & Contractor, 2010). All of these critical components of high TI are reliant on active information-sharing. Thus, in teams with higher TI, employees' proactive behaviors of seeking necessary information are more acceptable, and these members are more likely to be encouraged to actively seek information. Based on this argument, the positive effect of TI on the rate of LGO on inquiry of task information is very understandable.

TI also significantly and positively influenced the effects of AVGO on inquiry and monitoring of feedback information. Although the positive effects of AVGO on information-seeking behaviors were not expected, the unique contexts of the company— e.g., multinational corporation, foreign expatriates' roles as technical advisors—provide

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meaningful explanations of the findings. In addition, the positive effect of TI on the rate of AVGO on behaviors of seeking feedback information might be explained through the potential relationships between team task interdependence and team climate (Yuan, Fulk, & Monge, 2010). In other words, it is highly possible that teams with high task interdependence work under a team climate that rarely considers members' proactive behaviors of seeking feedback information as social costs; rather these teams may regard those behaviors as a contribution to completing team tasks. In such a climate, passive attitudes toward and behaviors of seeking information may be considered social costs and could be negatively judged by team members. Thus, it makes sense that, in teams with higher TI, members who show more concerns for avoiding negative judgments seek feedback information more actively than in teams with lower TI.

This finding is meaningful theoretically as well as methodologically. In fact, previous studies have paid little attention to the possibility that passive behaviors of seeking information can be judged negatively, even though negative judgment is contextually determined and applied to individuals' behaviors of seeking information. Furthermore, because previous studies have been primarily based on individual level analyses, they were unable to conduct adequate analyses of the original effects of contextual factors on individual-level motivators for seeking information. Unlike these previous studies, the present study addressed team contexts by focusing on team task interdependence as a collective level factor. Through HLM analysis, significant effects of the team level factor were observed. Consequently the findings related to TI's positive

effects emphasize the need to recognize the significance of collective and contextual factors.

TI also had a significant effect on the relationship between information overload (IO) and inquiry of feedback information from Korean expatriates. Based on the concept of task interdependence, it is necessary to reduce uncertainties regarding various organizational components (e.g., tasks, rules) in order for team members to complete tasks and to achieve goals that require higher cooperation among members. In regards to uncertainties, information overload should be considered a critical factor that increases various uncertainties by allowing given information to be interpreted in multiple directions (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Furthermore, because feedback information is evaluative and interpretive, it is plausible that excessive feedback information mostly creates uncertainties. Thus, in teams with higher TI, overloaded feedback information is more problematic than in teams with lower TI because it hinders effective decision-making as well as productive team performance. This argument supports the positive effect of TI on the relationship between IO and behaviors of seeking feedback information.

The other team-level factor, team tenure (TT), was hypothesized to have negative effects on the effects of individual-level motivators on seeking information. Through HLM analyses, several significant and negative effects of TT on these relationships were found. First, TT negatively influenced the effect of LGO on team members' inquiry of feedback information from direct supervisors. In other words, in teams with longer team tenure, the slope of LGO's effect on inquiry of feedback information from Korean

expatriates was more moderate than in teams with shorter team tenure. The concept of social costs is still useful for explaining this finding. As team members worked for a team for a longer period of time, they come to share a common belief that other members have enough knowledge and skills to complete individual and team tasks. This may lead the members to expect that their team members need not actively seek additional information. This expectancy of passive information-seeking behaviors may create an increase of social costs from seeking information in teams with higher team tenure. This finding suggests the significant roles of team characteristics in team members' information-seeking behaviors.

Next, TT also negatively influenced the effects of AVGO on inquiry and monitoring of feedback information. That is, in the teams with longer team tenure, members having more concerns with negative judgment were less likely to seek feedback information than in teams with relatively shorter team tenure. As elaborated previously, negative judgment is contextually determined, so AVGO is not necessarily negatively related to feedback seeking. That is, in some teams, passive information-seeking might be devalued and negatively judged. In these teams, members with AVGO tend to more actively seek feedback information to avoid potential negative judgment.

Nevertheless, information-seeking expectancies toward experienced employees should not be overlooked. That is, as elaborated above, less active information-seeking behaviors are more often expected from experienced employees having longer team tenure (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993, 2002). Based on these expectancies of passive information-seeking, it is reasonable to argue that, in teams with higher team

tenure, active behaviors of seeking information is more likely to violate team members' expectations and that this potential expectancy violation brings team members to less likely to seek information (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993).

This aspect of expectancy violation in terms of seeking information can also be applied to the negative influence of TT on information overload's effects on behaviors of seeking feedback information from Korean expatriates. In other words, even when team members experience an overload of feedback information and feel the need to seek more information so as to clarify the true meanings and values being conveyed in the feedback, their actual intention to seek more feedback information significantly decreases in teams with longer team tenures and accordingly with team-level expectancies of passive information-seeking behaviors. These findings are meaningful for addressing the necessity of investigating the interaction effects of team-level characteristics and individual-level communication expectancies on information-seeking behaviors.

Roles of Perceived Cultures in Information-Seeking

Considering the notable increase of multicultural contexts from globalization (Aritz & Walker, 2010; Franklin, 2007; Gudykunst & Kim, 1992), this study looked into the information-seeking behaviors in a multinational corporation where American and Korean cultures co-exist within an organizational boundary. The study examined how American employees differently perceive the cultural backgrounds—in terms of power distance and uncertainty avoidance—of their American direct supervisors and Korean

expatriates. Accordingly, two hypotheses regarding this issue were tested through paired samples t-tests.

The results of the t-tests showed that American employees perceived Korean expatriates as displaying higher power distance as well as higher uncertainty avoidance, compared to American direct supervisors. This finding is consistent with previous studies' categorization of Korean culture as a culture of high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1983, 2001; Lee, 2000). Interestingly, as the bivariate correlation results showed, the perceived power distance was significantly and negatively correlated to employees' behaviors of seeking task and feedback information. In other words, when information-seekers perceived information-givers as having high power distance, they were less likely to seek information from these givers because this behavior would increase social costs, such as loss of face.

Furthermore, considering the high correlations between perceived cultural backgrounds and information-seeking behaviors, the potential direct effects of perceived cultural backgrounds on employees' information-seeking behaviors were tested through a series of hierarchical regression analyses. After controlling for the effects of employees' organizational tenure and team tenure, perceived power distance significantly and negatively predicted American employees' behaviors of seeking information from Korean expatriates. Here, it needs to be considered that high power distance cultures are often characterized by top-down communication, hierarchical report systems, and obedience to superiors/bosses (Hofstede, 1983). Thus, in organizations with high power distance cultures, information is more likely to be disseminated from superiors to

subordinates rather than actively sought by subordinates (Merritt & Helmreich, 2004). Considering that Korea is identified as a high power distance country (Ashkanasy, 2002), it is highly possible that Korean expatriates rely one-way communication systems, which potentially conflict with American employees' preferences for or familiarity with two-way and horizontal communication styles. Thus, top-down information-dissemination systems and the potential conflicts between communication styles might have led American employees to seek information from Korean expatriates in a passive manner.

Thus, these findings imply the significant roles of perceived cultural backgrounds in determining information-seeking behaviors. In other words, this finding contributes to the literature of cultural distance and further exemplifies the need to re-conceptualize cultural distance. The broader theoretical and practical implications regarding perceived cultural backgrounds or dimensions will be discussed in more detail later.

Communication Relations as Outcome of Information-Seeking Behaviors

By examining the critical roles of communication in multicultural contexts (Barner, 2003; Beverakis, Dick, & Cecez, 2008; Gupta et al., 1999), this study focused on a key outcome of information-seeking behaviors: communication relations. Through hierarchical regression analyses and structural equation modeling (SEM), the effects of information-seeking behaviors on communication relations were analyzed.

First, after controlling for the three variables—gender, organizational tenure, and team tenure—the monitoring of feedback information and the inquiry of task information from direct supervisors positively and significantly predicted communication relations

with the information source. According to Ashford (1986) and Miller and Jablin (1991), while feedback information is value-based and opened to various interpretations, task information is content-based and straightforward. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that feedback information is more relevant to loss of face than task information. Based on these arguments, it makes sense that, the *inquiry of task information* significantly predicted communication relations, and the *monitoring of feedback information* significantly predicted communication relations. A similar pattern in the relationships between information-seeking behaviors and communication relations was also observed with Korean expatriates as information source.

In addition to these direct effects of information-seeking behaviors on communication relations, the study investigated the mediating effects of these behaviors on the relationships between information-seeking motivators and communication relations. Similar to the results from the hierarchical regression analyses, the monitoring of feedback information and the inquiry of task information played significant roles as mediators. Specifically, both behaviors significantly mediated the relationships between LGO and communication relations; employees with higher LGO are more likely to monitor feedback information and inquire task information from direct supervisors, and these proactive behaviors bring these employees to perceive having better communication relations with their supervisors. In addition, inquiry of task information also significantly mediated the relationship between information overload and communication relations. In the case of Korean expatriates as information source, the following three information-seeking behaviors played significant roles as mediators: monitoring of feedback

information, inquiry of task information, and monitoring of task information. However, unlike the case of direct supervisors as information source, those behaviors mediated the relationships between information ambiguity of feedback and task information and communication relations with Korean expatriates.

These two findings imply that American employees are motivated by different factors when seeking information. This might be due to the linguistic gaps between Korean expatriates and themselves. As numerous studies strongly argue (Barner, 2003; Beverakis, Dick, & Cecez, 2008; Gupta et al., 1999), the most critical and fundamental communicative problems come from foreign expatriates' limited ability to speak the domestic language. It is not uncommon for both domestic workers and foreign expatriates to experience ambiguous forms of communication. Thus, it is understandable that domestic employees seek more information in order to overcome communication problems produced from such ambiguities and to perform given tasks more effectively. Furthermore, these active information-seeking behaviors result in better communication relations with foreign expatriates.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Up to date, numerous scholars across diverse disciplines including management, information science, and communication have investigated the main predictors, moderators, as well as outcomes of information-seeking behaviors (Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Macdonald, Brown, & Sulsky, 2008; Miller, 1996; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 2002). Although these studies have presented very valuable theoretical models and

empirical findings that aid our understanding of information-seeking behaviors, an intensive review of the literature shows that there exist multiple limitations. First, previous studies of information-seeking behaviors have overlooked the potential effects of information overload on behaviors of seeking information. Next, they have not paid much attention to the influences of group-level factors on individual-level behaviors. Last, there has been little research that considers the cultural backgrounds of information-givers and their effects on information-seeking behaviors. Addressing these limitations, the current study developed a multi-level model of information-seeking behaviors and empirically tested the model through analysis of data collected from a multinational corporation. By rigorously testing established hypotheses and exploring research questions, this study contributes to the existing literature in a number of ways, which will be further elaborated below.

Information Overload Matters

First, the most significant theoretical implication of the study is that information overload really matters in processes of information seeking. Indeed, little research has investigated the potential relationships between information overload and information-seeking behaviors. There are two possible reasons for this lack of investigation: First, previous studies have mainly been guided by the assumption that uncertainty is closely related to a lack of information, overlooking the relationships between overloaded information and uncertainty. Second, as Morrison (2002) presents, previous studies have preponderantly focused on newcomers' information-seeking behaviors, assuming that

newcomers really need to seek information because they are exposed to diverse uncertainties during their early stages in an organization.

However, it should be considered that supported by the improvement of various AICTs, today's society is often referred to as an information society, characterized with immense and fast-paced exchanges of information. Accordingly, information overload has become a key issue in today's organizations (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Furthermore, according to previous studies, information overload is often related to diverse negative outcomes including stress, dissatisfaction, lowered decision effectiveness, and lack of critical evaluation of given information (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). Thus, instances increase where people seek more information for purposes of clarifying directions, conducting more thorough evaluations, making better decisions, and finally reducing stress. Considering these potential relationships between information overload and information-seeking behaviors, this present study hypothesized that information overload would positively predict information-seeking behaviors.

As the results of the hierarchical regression analyses showed, this study found significant effects of information overload on employees' behaviors of seeking, in particular, feedback information. In other words, as employees receive an increasing amount of feedback information, they are likely to seek more feedback information. Here, it should be considered that there was no significant interaction effect of information overload and information ambiguity on behaviors of seeking feedback information. Furthermore, the hierarchical regression results showed no significant effect of information ambiguity on employees' behaviors of seeking feedback information. These

two results notably imply that information overload plays a critical role in predicting employees' behaviors of seeking feedback information. Thus, the inclusion of information overload as a main predictor into the advanced model of information-seeking behaviors has been empirically validated. This will assist scholars to more thoroughly investigate the underlying mechanisms that govern information-seeking behaviors.

Multilevel Model is Necessary

As mentioned above, another limitation of previous studies on information-seeking behaviors is that there is little research concerned with the effects of collective-level factors on information-seeking behaviors (Huang et al., 2010). Even Huang et al.'s study based on a multilevel perspective does not fully scrutinize the group-level factors' effects on individual-level behaviors. Huang et al.'s study only proposes the necessity of applying multilevel analyses to studying information-seeking behaviors, without actually analyzing multilevel data. In this way, there has been little research that fully applies a multilevel perspective to information-seeking behaviors.

It must be considered that group members are not free from the influences of group-level components, which are often regarded as contextual factors (Moates, Harris, Field & Armenakis, 2007; Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2005; Rouseesau, 1985; Schonfeld & Rindskopf, 2007). Thus, in order to investigate the effects of such group-level factors on individuals' attitudes, behaviors, as well as emotions, many organization and group scientists have largely depended on the method of hierarchical linear modeling. More recently, communication scholars have begun to

recognize the significance and usefulness of such methodological modeling (Miller, Poole, & Seibold, 2011; Park, 2008; Park, Eveland, & Cudeck, 2008). Especially, multilevel analysis based on hierarchical linear modeling can be considered one of the most advanced and useful quantitative methods for organizational communication research (Miller et al., 2011).

Consequently, in order to develop a more advanced model, this current study included two team-level factors—team task interdependence and team tenure—into the general information-seeking model. The HLM results partially supported the claims that team task interdependence would positively impact employees' information-seeking behaviors and that team tenure would negatively impact such behaviors. These findings significantly validate the proposed model, which is approached from a multilevel perspective, reemphasizing the notion that group-level factors really do matter and that multilevel analyses are very necessary in order to fully comprehend individuals' information-seeking behaviors. Ultimately, these findings are expected to assist communication scholars identify different types of other group-level factors and further develop advanced models of information-seeking behaviors.

Cultural Backgrounds of Information-Givers are Influential

One of the most influential phenomena of contemporary society is globalization. As Stage (1999) argues, globalization is one of the topics that have been most widely studied in organizational science. In the area of communication, especially organizational communication, various issues relevant to globalization have been granted great amounts

of attention from scholars (Cheney, 2004). Acknowledging the significance of globalization in contemporary organizations, organizational scientists and communication scholars have theorized and empirically tested the cultural differences in information-seeking behaviors across diverse organizational settings (Ardichvili, et al., 2006; Macdonald et al., 2008; Morrison et al., 2004).

However, the main limitation of these studies is that they have not paid much attention to multicultural contexts in which people with different cultural backgrounds continuously interact with one another. In other words, previous studies have depended solely on cross-cultural comparisons. Furthermore, because these studies have focused mostly on information-seekers' cultural backgrounds, they provide knowledge of only cultural differences in information-seeking behaviors, but do not explain how cultural differences influence those behaviors. Considering these limitations, this study investigated how employees differently perceive the cultural backgrounds of two culturally different information-givers—American supervisors and Korean expatriates— and how such perceived cultural backgrounds affected employees' information-seeking behaviors.

The results of hierarchical regression analyses and pair-samples t-tests showed that American employees differently seek feedback and task information from the two culturally different sources. Especially, while information ambiguity positively predicted inquiry and monitoring of task information from Korean expatriates, there was no significant effect on behaviors of seeking such information from American direct supervisors. These significant results highlight the need to focus on significant

differences in information-seeking patterns, corresponding not to the cultural differences of information-seekers' cultural differences but to the cultural differences of information-givers. Such approach that emphasizes the cultural backgrounds of information-givers will contribute the studying of information-seeking behaviors that occur in multicultural contexts.

Furthermore, this study's findings regarding the significant effects of the perceived cultural backgrounds of information-givers on information-seeking behaviors are also quite meaningful. In particular, this significant role of perceived cultural backgrounds points to the need for re-conceptualizing and recalculating cultural distance, which has been often used to investigate the effects of cultural differences on personal and organizational outcomes (Shenkar, 2001). More specifically, to calculate cultural distance, previous studies have mostly relied on the subtraction of one country's score for a cultural dimension from another country's score for the identical dimension. A good example of this approach is Kogut and Singh's (1988) Euclidian distance. Its equation is:

$$CD_j = \sum_{i=1}^{4} \{(I_{ij} - I_{iN})^2 / V_i\}/4.$$

CD_j is the cultural distance between country j and the other country k, I_{ij} is country j's score on the ith cultural dimension, I_{ik} is county k's score on this dimension, and V_i is the variance of the score of the dimension. There are two main limitations to this calculation: First, because this calculation aims to create a combined score of cultural distance for certain aggregates, it does not allow researchers to investigate each of the cultural dimensions separately. Second, such calculation is not adequate for measuring the

cultural distance from interpersonal interactions between and among culturally different people. This is because the score of person A's perception of person's B's cultural background is not necessarily equal to the score of person B's cultural background. Here is a hypothetical example: When person A gives his/her own cultural background a score of 10, and person B gives him/herself a 5, the Euclidian distance—the cultural distance between A and B—would be 25. However, from the standpoint of person A, his/her cultural distance from B would be the distance between his/her own cultural background and his/her perception of B's cultural background. Therefore, if A rates his/her cultural background a 10 and rates his/her perception of B's cultural background a 2, then the score for cultural distance would be $(10-2)^2$, rather than $(10-5)^2$. This creates a larger cultural distance. Such perceptual aspect of cultural distance is quite applicable to interpersonal relationships.

In this way, this study identified the significant roles of the perceived aspects of cultural dimensions in information-seeking behaviors in specific, as well as cultural distance in general. Although it may be difficult to avoid criticism regarding the under-socialization of conceptualizing cultures, this approach emphasizing the perceptual aspects of cultures can give scholars opportunities to study more direct, measurable, and analyzable effects of cultures on the behavioral aspects of information-seeking.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In addition to the theoretical implications, the current study has multiple practical implications. First, this study found that diverse information-seeking behaviors positively

predicted communication relations with direct supervisors as well as expatriates. As elaborated above, communication relations between domestic employees and foreign expatriates are crucial for progressing personal and team tasks more effectively in MNCs. This suggests that practitioners working for MNCs need to create organizational environments in which information-seeking behaviors are more acceptable and encouraged. In particular, considering the positive effects of learning goal orientation information-seeking behaviors observed in this study, it is recommended that practitioners regularly build tangible goals rather than routinizing work systems. Those tangible goals potentially encourage employees to seek information more actively. Through these proactive behaviors, communication relations between domestic employees and foreign expatriates can be improved. Previous studies concerning the positive effects of goal-setting on leader-member exchange (LMX) (Renn & Fedor, 2001; Yanagizawa, 2008) further support this recommendation.

Another considerable finding is that perceived power distance negatively affected employees' information-seeking behaviors. As discussed above, these negative effects of perceived power distance can be explained through the increase of social costs from seeking information (Morrison et al., 2004). In other words, when information-seekers perceive information-givers as persons with higher power distance, they tend to believe that their information-seeking will involve higher social costs, especially loss of face. Thus, considering the positive relationships between information-seeking behaviors and communication relations, it is strongly recommended for practitioners to reduce

employees' perceived power distance of their information sources, particularly direct supervisors and foreign expatriates.

Here, it should be considered that power distance is originally a cultural dimension and is not easily changeable. Thus, it is difficult for individuals change their own power distance in a short period of time. However, it may be more realistic to manage employees' perceptions of social costs from seeking information. In order to do this, it is very necessary for information-givers, especially direct supervisors and expatriates to be more open to employees' actions of seeking information and to display positive attitudes toward these behaviors. These changes in information-givers' attitudes toward information-seeking behaviors can reduce the perceived social costs from seeking information, encourage employees to actively seek out the necessary information, and ultimately improve communication relations among company members.

Furthermore, it is quite considerable that the negative effects of perceived power distance on information-seeking behaviors were mostly significant when American employees sought information from Korean expatriates. This might have been due to Korean expatriates' preferences for or tendencies of top-down communication in disseminating information. Therefore, especially in multinational contexts where foreign expatriates from high power distance countries work with domestic employees of low power distance cultures, it is highly recommendable for practitioners to encourage those expatriates to actively listen to domestic employees' voices and encourage the employees to speak up. This will help domestic employees to seek the information they need more actively and ultimately to increase job performance.

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Third, this study investigated the effect of the team task interdependence as a team-level factor on the relationships between information-seeking motivators and behaviors. A notable finding was that team task interdependence positively influenced the relationship between avoiding performance goal orientation (AVGO) and behaviors of seeking feedback information. Furthermore, AVGO also positively predicted feedback-seeking behaviors. As elaborated above, this implies that in that particular context, employees' passive behaviors of seeking feedback information might be negatively judged. In particular, this positive relationship is stronger in teams with higher task interdependence than in teams with lower task interdependence. Regarding these findings, two practical recommendations are suggested. First, it is recommended that practitioners emphasize the negative aspects of passive behaviors of seeking information, especially feedback information. The main difference between this recommendation and the first recommendation is that, while the latter focuses on encouraging employees with higher learning goal orientation to seek information more actively, the former's main purpose is to encourage employees with higher AVGO to seek information more actively. Next, it is also recommended to increase team task interdependence. It will be most crucial to specify individual roles and to rigorously delegate authority that corresponds to those roles. Although these strategies may create more complicated team structures, it will benefit the company as whole by increasing team members' interconnections, encouraging members to more actively seek necessary information, and to achieve given goals more effectively.

Fourth, another notable finding was the negative effects of team tenure on the relationships between predictors and information-seeking behaviors. In other words, in teams where members had worked for the team for longer periods of time, employees tended to less likely seek feedback information, even when they experienced information overload and were willing to learn difficult tasks. It should be considered that information-seeking behaviors are one of the most critical components of successful organizational socialization (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004; Miller, 1996). As Miller and Jablin (1991) strongly argue, organizational members, especially those who have relatively shorter tenures, have a high need to actively seek necessary information in order to adjust to their teams, divisions, and organizations. Based on this close relationship between organizational socialization and information-seeking behaviors, the negative effects of team tenure as a team-level factor on members' information-seeking behaviors imply that members in teams with higher team tenures potentially experience relatively more difficulties of adjusting to their teams. This might be because there exist team-level norms or climates that discourage the new members to be passive in their seeking of information. Thus, it is strongly recommended that practitioners diagnose team climates and norms regarding information-seeking behaviors and encourage old timers and team leaders to be more open and flexible toward information-seeking behaviors.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Limitations

The present study identified a number of meaningful findings that contribute to the literature of information-seeking behaviors. In spite of those findings, this study has

several limitations. First, in terms of hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), although the numbers of participants within a group do not significantly impact the results of HLM analyses, the number of groups matters in validating the statistical results (Maas & Hox, 2004). Although there is still some disagreement regarding the minimum number of groups needed, thirty is often considered the very minimum for validating HLM results (Kreft, 1996; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2005). However, the number of groups included in this study was 23, and this small number may have affected the results regarding the effects of the level-2 variables. Nevertheless, it is still noteworthy that the 23 teams all come from a single organization. Therefore, the team-level results of the current study are relatively free from organizational-level noises. When data are collected from teams of multiple organizations, the team-level data are biased by organizational differences. In other words, the statistical results are biased by organizational-level factors such as location, size, and so on. Thus, in spite of the small number of teams, the effects of the team-level variables are validated in the particular context. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended for future research to collect multilevel data from at least more than 30 groups to gain statistically more valid results.

Next, because this current study was based on cross-sectional data collection, the causality of the predictors is not well understood. According to Baxter and Babbie (2004), to meet the assumptions of causality, independent variables should precede the dependent variables. In order to scrutinize true causal effects of various predictors—information overload, information ambiguity, and goal orientations—on information-seeking behaviors, it is necessary to conduct a longitudinal analysis.

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Third, as the descriptive analysis results show, this study had a much larger portion of participants that were men compared to women. In spite of a potential gender bias, this imbalance in gender composition is not unexpected, especially in high-tech organizations. As previous studies have shown (McKinney, Wilson, Brooks, O'Leary-Kelly, & Hardgrave, 2008; Trauth, Quesenberry, & Yeo, 2008), high-tech companies such as the current study's research site—a semiconductor company—are often male dominant. Thus, this sample has high external validity in terms of the gender composition. Nevertheless, even after adding the main predictors, the dummy variable of gender still significantly and positively predicted information-seeking behaviors. In other words, male employees tended to more actively seek feedback and task information, than did female employees. Based on these results, researchers need to more thoroughly investigate how gender roles may influence information-seeking behaviors.

Last, the influence of physical location on the data for this current study should be considered. The data for this study were collected from a Korean company located in a mid-sized city where the Korean population is not large. These data may be significantly different from similar companies located in cities with large Korean populations (i.e., Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta). This is mainly because of American employees' viewpoints of Koreans and Korean culture as well as Korean expatriates' closer contacts with other Korean immigrants. Based on the concept of ethnic enclave (Pheffer & Parra, 2009; Portes & Bach, 1985; Portes & Jenson, 1986; Portes & Shafer, 2007), it is highly plausible that Korean expatriates in Los Angeles (for example) may experience different processes of adjustment into American culture. Because they can very easily find Korean

neighbors, food, mass media content, and so on within the large Korean ethnic enclave in Los Angeles, those expatriates' acculturation process will be quite different from Korean expatriates in a mid-sized city with a small Korean population. Thus, considering the significant influence of location of the research sites, it is necessary in future research to collect data from multiple sites with different sized Korean enclaves.

Reprise

As stated above, the main purpose of this study was to develop a more advanced model of information-seeking behaviors which considers two dominant social phenomena in contemporary society—globalization and informationalization. The empirical model developed through this study gives scholars more opportunities to look into the effects of team-level factors on individual-level relationships and between various predictors (goal orientations, information overload, and information ambiguity) and different modes (inquiry and monitoring) of information-seeking behaviors. Although this newly developed model provides scholars with a much deeper understanding of information-seeking behaviors, it is important for future research to extend the model in the following ways.

First, previous studies of information-seeking behaviors have presented diverse tactics for seeking information, which are different from one another in terms of the extent of interpersonal contact involved (Holder, 1996; Miller & Jablin, 1993; Morrison, 1993, 2002). These studies have found that these tactics are bound by various personal (e.g., social costs/benefits and uncertainty) and contextual factors (e.g., cultural

differences). Based on the main findings of these previous studies, the current study also focused on two different tactics of seeking information: inquiry and monitoring. The present study's findings contribute to developing an advanced model of seeking information.

However, there still exists a necessity to explore the preferred communicative modes for conducting particular tactics. While there has been much research on information-seeking tactics, there has been little research on the actual modes or channels of performing the selected tactics. Without understanding employees' use of communicative modes, we remain with partial knowledge of the information-seeking process. Furthermore, supported by diverse AICTs, today's employees are equipped with various modes of seeking information (Ramirez et al., 2002). Nevertheless, like Waldeck, Seibold, and Flanagin's (2004) argument, the majority of previous studies about information-seeking behaviors have mostly focused on either direct and indirect face-to-face interactions or print documents, such as memos and organizational newsletters. This current study examined face-to-face interactions only. However, as Waldeck et al. (2004) strongly argued, information gained through different communication channels—face-to-face communication, traditional communication technologies, and AICTs —differently affect personal and organizational outcomes such as assimilation effectiveness. Thus, investigation of the communicative modes of seeking information is necessary for fully understanding the entire process of seeking information.

Second, this current study depended on a cost-benefit perspective to explain the motivations for information-seeking behaviors (Callister et al., 1999; Levey et al., 1995;

Macdonald et al., 2008). According to this perspective, information-seeking behaviors are directly related to actors' actual intentions to seek information. That is, when the perceived cost from seeking information is high, actors are less likely to do so. Therefore, this perspective was useful for explaining the different patterns of relationships between information-seeking motivators and behaviors, corresponding to different sources and types of information.

In addition to these conceptual uses of social costs, there exist two bodies of research that consider social costs as either a direct factor or mediator. The first body of research (Callister et al., 1999; Levey et al., 1995; Macdonald et al., 2008) has considered social cost as a direct factor of seeking information. For example, Miller and Jablin's (1991) information-seeking model regarded social cost as one of main factors, including uncertainty. The other body of research has paid attention to perceived cost as a factor mediating the relationship between information-seeking behaviors and diverse predictors such as goal orientations and uncertainties (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002). The main argument of these studies is that, when an actor is motivated to seek information, s/he begins to evaluate the costs and benefits from seeking information. After this evaluation process, the actor decides whether to actually seek information. Based on reasoned action theory (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988), this second approach is comprehensive enough to explain actual intentions of seeking information. According to the theory, a single action is triggered by an actor's reasoning to decide to actually act. Thus, it is understandable that the evaluation of costs and benefits from seeking information is the crucial part of the reasoning process of deciding

to actually seek information. Considering these potential direct and mediating effects of perceived social costs, it is strongly recommended that future research scrutinizes how information-seeking behaviors are directly affected by perceived social costs, how the relationships between information-seeking motivators and behaviors are mediated by perceived social costs, and finally how perceived social costs interact with group-level moderating factors such as task interdependence.

Third, this study was mainly based on uncertainty reduction theory (URT) assuming that uncertainty need to be reduced to clarify a given situation, find better direction, and make better decisions (Bradac, 2001; Kramer, 1993, 1999). Drawing from this theory, the current study hypothesized significant positive effects of information ambiguity on information-seeking behaviors. However, only a few significant effects of information ambiguity were found. Particularly, while there were significant effects of information ambiguity on employees' task-related information seeking, it did not significantly predict employees' feedback-related information seeking. This result implies that the information ambiguity is not always bad and that the value of ambiguity is contextually determined, related to various internal and external factors. This argument is similar to the main argument of uncertainty management theory (UMT) emphasizing the plausibility that individuals often have intentions to passively seek information in order to maintain some uncertainty (Brashers, 2001; Brashers, Goldsmith, & Hsieh, 2002; Brashers, Neidig, Haas, Dobbs, Cardillo, & Russell, 2000). This is especially true when individuals expect negative results (e.g., confirmation of AIDS). In these settings, they prefer keeping uncertainty over reducing it. These contextually determined values of

uncertainty address the necessity of a multi-theoretical approach to studying information-seeking behaviors. In particular, it is strongly recommended for future research to develop and test hypotheses based on both theories of uncertainty reduction as well as uncertainty management.

In addition to this multi-theoretical perspective, it is important to investigate potential non-linear relationships between information ambiguity and information-seeking behaviors. This study depended on three statistical analyses including hierarchical regression analysis, path analysis, and HLM. Notably, all of these analyses are mainly reliant on linear relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. Therefore, there is difficulty in checking for potential non-linear relationships between predictors and information-seeking behaviors. Especially, considering the complexity of information ambiguity, there is a strong possibility of non-linear relationships between information ambiguity and information-seeking behaviors. Especially, regarding ambiguity as a continuum, it is highly possible that people will tolerate ambiguity to a certain point. However, as soon as the ambiguity crosses a particular point, tolerance of ambiguity may begin to decrease geometrically. This rapid decrease in the tolerance of ambiguity may increase the need to seek more information to clarify the situation. Thus, future research regarding such non-linear relationships will be helpful in understanding these relationships.

Last, considering the significance of globalization in contemporary organizations, this study paid attention to how domestic employees may seek information differently from domestic supervisors and foreign expatriates. The findings of different patterns of

information seeking from two (culturally) different sources offers a significant contribution to the information-seeking, globalization, and intercultural communication literatures. A large portion of previous studies have focused on interpersonal, organizational, and cultural issues related to foreign expatriates rather than domestic employees (Bender & Fish, 2000; Riusala & Suutari, 2000; Sanchez, Spector, & Cooper, 2000; Shay & Baack, 2004; Yan, Zhu, & Hall, 2002). Particularly, expatriates' acculturation and adjustment to foreign countries has received huge attention from scholars (Sanchez, Spector, & Cooper, 2000; Shay & Baack, 2004). This is because expatriates' successful acculturation and adjustment is one of the key components of maximizing the benefits from cross-cultural interaction at work (Shay & Baack, 2004). Indeed, the development of effective strategies for expatriates' acculturation has been a huge issue for scholars as well as practitioners for the last two decades (Shay & Baack, 2004). Indeed, information-seeking behaviors have been considered a key component of this process of organizational adjustment and socialization (Morrison, 2002). Unless members acquire the necessary information, organizational adjustment and socialization can hardly be achieved. This implies that it is necessary for scholars to scrutinize foreign expatriates' information-seeking behaviors in order to more comprehensively understand their acculturation within foreign countries. It is strongly recommended for future research to examine how expatriates' information-seeking behaviors are related to diverse interpersonal and organizational outcomes.

The primary goal of the current study was to develop a more advanced model of information-seeking behaviors that corresponds to this globalized and informationalized society. To achieve this goal, this study empirically tested a newly developed multilevel model that considered information overload as an additional individual-level predictor, included two team-level factors, and explored the roles of information-givers' cultural backgrounds.

By analyzing multilevel data collected from employees in a Korean multinational corporation located in the U.S., this study found several significant results: (1) Information overload and information ambiguity positively predicted information-seeking behaviors; (2) Team task interdependence and team tenure as group-level factors positively influenced information-seeking motivators' effects on information-seeking behaviors; (3) American employees differently perceived the power distance and uncertainty avoidance of American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates; (4) Perceived power distance strongly and negatively predicted information-seeking behaviors; and (5) Information-seeking behaviors positively predicted communication relations.

These main significant findings empirically validated the advanced multilevel model of information-seeking behaviors. This empirically validated model will provide scholars with much deeper comprehensions of information-seeking behaviors and assist those scholars to conduct more systematic investigations of such proactive behaviors within contemporary organizations. In particular, the findings regarding the significant

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roles of team-level factors and information-givers' cultural backgrounds re-address and re-emphasize the necessity to thoroughly scrutinize the effects of contextual factors on individuals' information-seeking behaviors.

Tables

Table 1.

Miller and Jablin's Seven Tactics of Seeking Information

Information-Seeking Tactics	Concept
Overt Questioning	Directly ask information-givers to give information to the information-seekers
Indirect Questioning	In indirect ways, ask information-givers to send information to the information-seekers
Third Parties	Seek information from other sources that are not closely related to the information-seekers
Disguising Conversations	Have informal conversations with information-givers, hiding the intention to seek information
Testing Limits	Test information-givers' tolerance of certain issues to get necessary information
Observing	Observe what information-givers say and how they behave
Surveillance	Using hierarchical structures, keep surveillance on targets' behaviors

Table 2.
Summary of Descriptive Analysis for Each Team

Team	N	Average Age (Years)	Team Tenure M (SD)	Organizational Tenure M (SD)
1	6	31.5	2.17 (2.041)	2.75 (2.297)
2	7	34	4.14(4.315)	6.57 (5.373)
3	4	41	2.80 (4.805)	3.88 (6.758)
4	9	30.1	2.42 (1.744)	4.64 (4.783)
5	8	34.6	3.57 (3.587)	3.57 (3.587)
6	6	32.5	5.67 (5.0)	7.32 (4.343)
7	11	30.5	2.62 (2.680)	3.75 (2.414)
8	8	32.6	2.24 (3.329)	5.71 (5.937)
9	6	37.2	3.10 (4.629)	5.60 (6.035)
10	15	32.4	2.61 (2.071)	6.16 (4.658)
11	10	32	2.94 (4.152)	4.66 (4.926)
12	8	32.1	2.73 (3.534)	4.85 (4.655)
13	8	35.6	3.29 (3.624)	6.19 (5.946)
14	6	29.6	1.34 (1.331)	2.51 (2.997)
15	3	33.7	3.50 (2.121)	6.75 (2.475)
16	9	36.1	3.73 (2.584)	6.18 (5.017)
17	15	32.1	2.13 (1.674)	5.37 (4.470)
18	6	38.8	5.75 (3.221)	8.08 (5.024)
19	12	33.4	2.65 (2.648)	4.62 (4.411)
20	7	32	3.99 (5.533)	6.42 (6.294)
21	4	41	1.73 (.896)	2.88 (1.887)
22	3	35.3	1.75 (.901)	6.50 (3.50)
23	7	38.6	3.14 (1.909)	6.36 (4.543)

Table 3.

Summary of Significant Results from Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Information Overload and Information Ambiguity

	Feedback Information				Task Information			
	Inquiry		Monitoring		Inquiry		Monitoring	
	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates
Gender				.439†		.855**		.826**
Organizational Tenure	-.064**	-.034†						
Team Tenure								
Information Overload	.384**	.413***	.494***	.263†	.197*			
Information Ambiguity						.252*		.237*

Note: † $p \le .10$. * $p \le .05$. ** $p \le .01$. *** $p \le .001$.

Table 4.
Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Inquiry of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisors)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.233	1.005	.316	.068	.068
	Organizational Tenure	-.064	-3.199	.002		
	Team Tenure	.019	.655	.513		
Block 2	Gender	.126	.542	.588	.056**	.124
	Organizational Tenure	-.062	-3.111	.002		
	Team Tenure	.007	.238	.812		
	Overload of Feedback Information	.384	3.002	.003		
	Ambiguity of Feedback Information	-.015	-.164	.870		

Note: ** $p \leq .01$.

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Table 5.
Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Inquiry of Feedback Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.415	1.959	.052†	.037	.037
	Organizational Tenure	-.032	-1.759	.080†		
	Team Tenure	.023	.833	.406		
Block 2	Gender	.326	1.592	.113	.115***	.152
	Organizational Tenure	-.034	-1.929	.055		
	Team Tenure	.010	.379	.705		
	Overload of Feedback Information	.413	3.658	.000		
	Ambiguity of Feedback Information	.088	1.120	.264		

Note: *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 6.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisors)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.152	.652	.515	.010	.010
	Organizational Tenure	.021	1.064	.289		
	Team Tenure	-.015	-.492	.624		
Block 2	Gender	-.017	-.075	.940	.082***	.092
	Organizational Tenure	.029	1.465	.145		
	Team Tenure	-.031	-1.085	.280		
	Overload of Feedback Information	.494	3.902	.000		
	Ambiguity of Feedback Information	-.138	-1.565	.119		

Note: *** $p \leq .001$.

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Table 7.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Feedback Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.485	1.976	.050*	.038	.038
	Organizational Tenure	.024	1.149	.252		
	Team Tenure	.005	.164	.870		
Block 2	Gender	.439	1.777	.077	.044*	.083
	Organizational Tenure	.022	1.020	.309		
	Team Tenure	-.003	-.088	.930		
	Overload of Feedback Information	.263	1.933	.055		
	Ambiguity of Feedback Information	.097	1.022	.308		

Note: * $p \le .05$.

Table 8.
Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Inquiry of Task Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.794	2.744	.007	.051	.051
	Organizational Tenure	.015	.599	.550		
	Team Tenure	.011	.301	.763		
Block 2	Gender	.855	2.931	.004	.040*	.091
	Organizational Tenure	.003	.128	.898		
	Team Tenure	.021	.562	.575		
	Overload of Task Information	.044	.401	.689		
	Ambiguity of Task Information	.252	2.392	.018		

Note: * $p \leq .05$.

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Table 9.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Task Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.778	2.874	.005	.055	.055
	Organizational Tenure	.019	.792	.430		
	Team Tenure	-.046	-1.320	.189		
Block 2	Gender	.826	3.037	.003	.044*	.098
	Organizational Tenure	.007	.279	.780		
	Team Tenure	-.037	-1.081	.281		
	Overload of Task Information	.063	.622	.535		
	Ambiguity of Task Information	.237	2.410	.017		

Note: * $p \le .05$.

Table 10.
Summary of Significant Results from Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Goal Orientations

	Feedback Information				Task Information			
	Inquiry		Monitoring		Inquiry		Monitoring	
	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates
Gender		.385†		.430†		.745*		.719**
Organizational Tenure	-.064**	-.034†						
Team Tenure								
Learning Goal Orientation	.454***	.321**	.365**	.461***		.317*	.220†	.370*
Avoiding Performance Goal Orientation		.194*		.156†				

Note: † $p \le .10$. * $p \le .05$. ** $p \le .01$. *** $p \le .001$.

Table 11.
Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Inquiry of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisors)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.233	1.005	.316	.068	.068
	Org. Tenure	-.064	-3.199	.002		
	Team Tenure	.019	.655	.513		
Block 2	Gender	.170	.751	.454	.066**	.134
	Org. Tenure	-.063	-3.237	.001		
	Team Tenure	.028	.954	.341		
	LGO	.454	3.556	.000		
	AVGO	.066	.745	.457		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.
** $p \leq .01$.

Table 12.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Inquiry of Feedback Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.415	1.959	.052	.037	.037
	Org. Tenure	-.032	-1.759	.080		
	Team Tenure	.023	.833	.406		
Block 2	Gender	.385	1.852	.066	.054**	.190
	Org. Tenure	-.034	-1.885	.061		
	Team Tenure	.027	1.003	.317		
	LGO	.321	2.737	.007		
	AVGO	.194	2.399	.018		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.
** $p \le .01$.

Table 13.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisors)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.152	.652	.515	.010	.010
	Org. Tenure	.021	1.064	.289		
	Team Tenure	-.015	-.492	.624		
Block 2	Gender	.104	.454	.650	.045[*]	.054
	Org. Tenure	.022	1.092	.276		
	Team Tenure	-.009	-.291	.771		
	LGO	.365	2.814	.005		
	AVGO	.091	1.022	.308		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.
** $p \leq .01$.

Table 14.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Feedback Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.485	1.976	.050	.038	.038
	Org. Tenure	.024	1.149	.252		
	Team Tenure	.005	.164	.870		
Block 2	Gender	.430	1.793	.075	.064**	.102
	Org. Tenure	.024	1.163	.246		
	Team Tenure	.012	.404	.686		
	LGO	.461	3.407	.001		
	AVGO	.156	1.672	.096		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.
** $p \leq .01$.

Table 15.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Inquiry of Task Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.794	2.744	.007	.051	.051
	Org. Tenure	.015	.599	.550		
	Team Tenure	.011	.301	.763		
Block 2	Gender	.745	2.587	.011	.023[*]	.075
	Org. Tenure	.017	.667	.506		
	Team Tenure	.017	.473	.637		
	LGO	.317	2.065	.040		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. * $p \leq .05$.

Table 16.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Task Information from Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.778	2.874	.005	.055	.055
	Org. Tenure	.019	.792	.430		
	Team Tenure	-.046	-1.320	.189		
Block 2	Gender	.719	2.694	.008	.036[*]	.091
	Org. Tenure	.020	.884	.378		
	Team Tenure	-.038	-1.125	.262		
	LGO	.370	2.594	.010		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. * $p \leq .05$.

Table 17.
Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Monitoring of Task Information from Direct Supervisors)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.109	.495	.621	.021	.021
	Org. Tenure	-.001	-.042	.967		
	Team Tenure	-.044	-1.562	.120		
Block 2	Gender	.075	.342	.732	.020[†]	.041
	Org. Tenure	.000	.011	.991		
	Team Tenure	-.040	-1.416	.159		
	LGO	.220	1.867	.064		

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. † $p \leq 0.10$.

Table 18.

Summary of Significant Effects of Level 2 Variables

		Inquiry of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisors	Inquiry of Feedback Information from Korean Expatriates	Monitoring of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisors	Inquiry of Task Information from Direct Supervisors
Task Interdependence	LGO				1.051†
	AVGO	.668†	.832*	.718**	N/A
	IO		.725*		
Team Tenure	LGO	-.211**			
	AVGO	-.187**	-.159*	-.153*	N/A
	IO		-.404***		

Note: LGO=Learning goal orientation. AVGO=Avoiding performance goal orientation. IO=Information overload †
$p \leq 0.10.$ * $p \leq .05.$ ** $p \leq .01.$ *** $p \leq .001.$

Table 19.

HLM for Relationships between Goal Orientations and Inquiry of Feedback Information from Direct Supervisor

		Level 2 variable	Standardized coefficient	*p*-value	Variance components
Level 1					
	LGO		.554	.005	.1897
	AVGO		.046	.654	.0312
Level 2					
	LGO Slope	Task Interdependence	-.108	.803	.1487
		Team Tenure	-.211	.058	
	AVGO Slope	Task Interdependence	.668	.006	.0281
		Team Tenure	-.187	.003	

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.

Table 20.
HLM for Relationships between Goal Orientations and Inquiry of Feedback from Korean Expatriates

		Level 2 variable	Standardized coefficient	*p*-value	Variance components
Level 1					
	LGO		.287	.021	.0993
	AVGO		.207	.062	.1035
Level 2					
	LGO Slope	Task Interdependence	-.090	.806	.1031
		Team Tenure	-.065	.345	
	AVGO Slope	Task Interdependence	.832	.041	.0858
		Team Tenure	-.159	.036	

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.

Table 21.

HLM for Relationships between Goal Orientations and Monitoring of Feedback from Direct Supervisor

		Level 2 variable	Standardized coefficient	*p*-value	Variance components
Level 1					
	LGO		.444	.000	.0214
	AVGO		.156	.089	.0379
Level 2					
	LGO Slope	Task Interdependence	-.195	.623	.0275
		Team Tenure	.058	.415	
	AVGO Slope	Task Interdependence	.718	.013	.0061
		Team Tenure	-.153	.036	

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation. AVGO = Avoiding goal orientation.

Table 22.

HLM for Relationships between Goal Orientations and Inquiry of Task Information from Direct Supervisor

		Level 2 variable	Standardized coefficient	*p*-value	Variance components
Level 1					
	LGO		.424	.029	.2548
Level 2					
	LGO Slope	Task Interdependence	1.051	.093	.1074
		Team Tenure	-.013	.881	

Note: LGO = Learning goal orientation.

Table 23.

HLM for Relationships between Information Overload/Ambiguity and Monitoring of Feedback from Direct Supervisor

	Level 2 variable	Standardized coefficient	*p*-value	Variance components
Level 1				
IO		.222	.019	.0284
IA		-.111	.216	.0401
Level 2				
IO Slope	Task Interdependence	.725	.029	.0071
	Team Tenure	-.404	.000	
IA Slope	Task Interdependence	.039	.894	.0169
	Team Tenure	.154	.226	

Note: IO = Information overload. IA = Information ambiguity.

Table 24.
Paired Samples T-Test

	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Power Distance	-.69892	1.05985	-8.994	185	< .001
Uncertainty Avoidance	-.27641	1.24584	-3.001	182	.003

Table 25.

Means and Standard Deviations for Cultural Dimensions and Information-Seeking Behaviors

	M	*SD*
Perceived power distance for direct supervisor	3.041	.922
Perceived power distance for Korean expatriates	3.740	.894
Perceived uncertainty avoidance for direct supervisor	3.026	1.049
Perceived uncertainty avoidance for Korean expatriates	3.302	.861

Table 26.

Correlations between Perceived Cultural Dimensions and Information-Seeking Behaviors

	Feedback Information				Task Information			
	Inquiry		Monitoring		Inquiry		Monitoring	
	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates	Direct Supervisors	Korean Expatriates
Power Distance	-.054	-.338**	-.191*	-.186*	-.228**	-.353***	-.227**	-.327***
Uncertainty Avoidance	-.115	-.088	-.159	-.096	.043	.024	-.044	.122

*Note: * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.*

Table 27.

Comparisons of Standardized Regression Coefficients of Cultural Dimensions' Effects

	Inquiry of Feedback Information		Monitoring of Feedback Information		Inquiry of Task Information		Monitoring of Task Information	
	DS	KE	DS	KE	DS	KE	DS	KE
Power Distance	.004	-.206**	-.357***	-.302**	-.152	-.213**	-.147	-.345***
Uncertainty Avoidance	-.079	.008	-.050	.162*	-.042	.076	-.021	.071

Note: PD=Perceived power distance. UA=Perceived uncertainty avoidance. IQ=Inquiry. MO=Monitoring. FI=Feedback information. TI=Task information. DS=Direct supervisor. KE=Korean expatriates. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001.

Table 28.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Communication Relation with Direct Supervisor)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.319	1.209	.228	.012	.012
	Organizational Tenure	-.005	-.233	.816		
	Team Tenure	.022	.653	.515		
Block 2	Gender	.302	1.259	.210	.225***	.213
	Organizational Tenure	-.015	-.721	.472		
	Team Tenure	.037	1.245	.215		
	Inquiry of Feedback Information	-.085	-1.011	.313		
	Monitoring of Feedback Information	.443	5.168	< .001		
	Inquiry of Task Information	.163	1.987	.049		
	Monitoring of Task Information	.058	.608	.544		

Note: *** $p \leq .001$.

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Table 29.

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Model (DV: Communication Relation with Korean Expatriates)

		β	t	p-value	ΔR^2	R^2
Block 1	Gender	.653	2.755	.007	.073	.073
	Organizational Tenure	.022	1.114	.267		
	Team Tenure	.025	.845	.399		
Block 2	Gender	.330	1.584	.115	.262***	.335
	Organizational Tenure	.014	.792	.429		
	Team Tenure	.027	1.048	.296		
	Inquiry of Feedback Information	.076	.818	.415		
	Monitoring of Feedback Information	.267	3.050	.003		
	Inquiry of Task Information	.103	1.556	.122		
	Monitoring of Task Information	.137	1.765	.079		

Note: *** $p \le .001$.

Table 30.
Summary of Hypotheses Tests

Information overload	
H1a: Members' perception of information overload of feedback information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.	Fully supported
H1b: Members' perception of information overload of task information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.	Rejected
Information ambiguity	
H1c: Members' perception of information ambiguity of feedback information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.	Rejected
H1d: Members' perception of information ambiguity of task information will positively predict their information-seeking behaviors.	Partially supported
Goal orientations	
H2a: The higher their learning goal orientation, the more actively will members seek task information.	Fully supported
H2b: The higher their learning goal orientation, the more actively will members seek feedback information.	Fully supported
H3a: The higher their avoiding goal orientation, the less actively will members seek feedback information through inquiry.	Partially supported
H3b: The higher their avoiding goal orientation, the less actively will members seek feedback information through monitoring.	Partially supported
Team task interdependence	
H4a: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between information overload and employees' behaviors of seeking task information.	Partially supported
H4b: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between information ambiguity and employees' behaviors of seeking task information.	Rejected
H4c: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between LGO and information-seeking behaviors.	Partially supported
H4d: Team task interdependence will positively affect the relationship between AVGO and employees' behaviors of seeking feedback information.	Partially supported

Table 30. (continued)

Team tenure	
H5a: Team tenure will negatively affect the relationship between information overload and employees' information-seeking behaviors.	Partially supported
H5b: Team tenure will negatively affect the relationship between information ambiguity and employees' information-seeking behaviors.	Rejected
H5c: Team tenure will negatively affect the relationship between learning goal orientation and employees' information-seeking behaviors.	Partially supported
H5d: Team tenure will positively affect the relationship between avoiding performance goal orientation and employees' information-seeking behaviors.	Partially supported
Cultural backgrounds	
H6: American employees perceive that Korean expatriates have more power distance than American direct supervisors.	Fully supported
H7: American employees perceive that Korean expatriates have more uncertainty avoidance than American direct supervisors.	Fully supported
Communication relations	
H8: Employees' information-seeking behaviors will positively predict their communication relation with two information sources—American direct supervisors and Korean expatriates.	Partially supported
H9: Information-seeking behaviors will positively mediate the relationships between predictors of information-seeking behaviors and communication relation with two information sources.	Partially supported

Appendix A. Standardized Regression Weight for Items and Reliability Scores for Factors

Factor	Items	Regression Weight
Inquiry of Feedback from Direct Supervisor (α=0.953)	I ask my DIRECT SUPERVISOR how I am doing	0.915
	I ask my DIRECT SUPERVISOR if I am meeting all my job requirements	0.996
Monitoring of Feedback from Direct Supervisor (α=0.808)	From watching my DIRECT SUPERVISOR, I can tell how well I am performing my job	0.746
	From watching my DIRECT SUPERVISOR 's reactions to what I do, I can tell how well my DIRECT SUPERVISOR thinks I am doing	0.508
Inquiry of Feedback from Korean Expatriates (α=0.938)	I ask KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, about how I am doing	0.891
	I ask KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, if I am meeting all my job requirements	0.969
Monitoring of Feedback from Korean Expatriates (α=0.835)	From watching KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, I can tell how well I am performing my job	0.936
	From watching how KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, react to what I do, I can tell how well the KOREAN EXPATRIATES think I am doing	0.851
	I observe the characteristics of people who are rewarded by KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, and use this information	0.599
Monitoring of Task Information from Direct Supervisor	Pay attention to how my DIRECT SUPERVISOR direct others to do for completing tasks	0.976

(α=0.832)	Pay attention to my DIRECT SUPERVISOR 's comments on what others do	0.731
Monitoring of Task Information from Korean Expatriates (α=0.840)	Pay attention to how KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, direct others to do for completing tasks	0.961
	Pay attention to how KOREAN EXPATRIATES comment about what others do.	0.865
Learning Goal Orientation (α=0.906)	I prefer challenging and difficult tasks so that I'll learn a great deal	0.755
	I truly enjoy learning for the sake of learning	0.553
	I like tasks that really force me to think hard	0.713
	I'm willing to take difficult tasks if I can learn a lot by taking them	0.798
Avoiding Goal Orientation (α=0.778)	I would rather avoid a difficult task than perform poorly	0.696
	I would rather take familiar tasks to avoid performing poorly	0.773
	I am more concerned about avoiding a low performance than I am about learning	0.734
	I prefer to avoid situations where I could risk performing poorly	0.793
Information Overload of Task Information (α=0.724)	I feel that I am given too many phone calls, emails, meetings, and face-to-face conversations in regards to tasks.	0.598
	I receive more information than I need to complete my tasks effectively	0.628
	I receive more task-related information than I can process	0.801
Information Ambiguity of Task Information (α=0.775)	The task-related information I need to explain to others is OFTEN confusing or ambiguous	0.809
	I have more discussions about confusing or ambiguous task-related information than I would like	0.832
Information Overload of Feedback Information	I feel that I am given too many phone calls, emails, meetings, and face-to-face conversations in regards to evaluation of my work.	0.594

(α=0.770)	I receive more feedback than I need to evaluate my performance	0.778
	I receive more feedback than I can process	0.93
Information Ambiguity of Feedback Information (α=0.824)	The feedback I need to explain to others is OFTEN confusing or ambiguous	0.809
	I have more discussions about confusing or ambiguous feedback information than I would like	0.868
Perceived Power Distance for Direct Supervisor (α=0.745)	When there are conflicts between my supervisor's appraisal and team members' expectations, my DIRECT SUPERVISOR is open to team members' opinions	0.769
	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR emphasizes the need to bypass hierarchical lines to build efficient work relationships	0.539
	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR is open to new members' critical attitudes toward him/her	0.834
Perceived Power Distance for Korean Expatriates (α=0.790)	When there are conflicts between my supervisor's appraisal and team members' expectations, KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, are open to team members' opinions	0.803
	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, emphasize the need to bypass hierarchical lines to build efficient work relationships	0.594
	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, are open to new members' critical attitudes toward him/her	0.863
Perceived Uncertainty Avoidance for Direct Supervisor (α=0.851)	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR tends to get anxious easily when s/he doesn't know a potential outcome	0.862
	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR gets stressed when consequences are unpredictable	0.979
	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR doesn't take risks when an outcome is unpredictable	0.565
Perceived Uncertainty Avoidance for Korean Expatriates	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, tend to get anxious easily when s/he doesn't know a potential outcome	0.900

(α=0.815)	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, get stressed when consequences are unpredictable	0.918
	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, don't take risks when an outcome is unpredictable	0.538
	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, are not content with ambiguous situations	0.573
Task Interdependence	I work closely with other team members in doing my work	0.674
(α=0.761)	I frequently must coordinate my efforts with other team members	0.838
	My own performance depends on receiving accurate information from other team members	0.563
	The way I perform my job has a significant impact on other team members	0.591
Communication relation with Direct Supervisor	I am generally satisfied with my communication with my DIRECT SUPERVISOR	0.861
(α=0.953)	I enjoy my interactions with my DIRECT SUPERVISOR	0.966
	I feel good about my conversations with my DIRECT SUPERVISOR	0.977
Communication relation with Korean Expatriates	I am generally satisfied with my communication with the KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me	0.832
(α=0.937)	I enjoy my interactions with the KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me	0.927
	I feel good about my conversations with the KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me	0.979

Appendix B. Survey Questionnaire

"Please answer the following questions about YOURSELF as a member of Samsung in Austin"

1	How many years have you worked for the current company?
2	How many years have you worked for the current team?

" Please think about the last three months at work. When you want EVALUATION regarding your performance on specific aspects of tasks given to you, how frequently, in general, have you done each of the following? Below, 'DIRECT SUPERVISOR' refers to the person who directly supervises you. For example, while a deputy section chief is a direct supervisor for an entry level employee, a section chief is a direct supervisor for the deputy section chief." (1=Very Rarely, 5=Very Often)

2	I ask my DIRECT SUPERVISOR how I am doing	1	2	3	4	5
3	I ask my DIRECT SUPERVISOR if I am meeting all my job requirements	1	2	3	4	5
4	From watching my DIRECT SUPERVISOR, I can tell how well I am performing my job	1	2	3	4	5
5	From watching my DIRECT SUPERVISOR 's reactions to what I do, I can tell how well my DIRECT SUPERVISOR thinks I am doing	1	2	3	4	5
6	I observe the characteristics of people who are rewarded by my DIRECT SUPERVISOR and use this information					
7	I ask KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, about how I am doing	1	2	3	4	5
8	I ask KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, if I am meeting all my job requirements	1	2	3	4	5
9	From watching KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, I can tell how well I am performing my job	1	2	3	4	5
10	From watching how KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, react to what I do, I can tell how well the KOREAN EXPATRIATES think I am doing	1	2	3	4	5

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| 11 | I observe the characteristics of people who are rewarded by KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, and use this information | | | | | |

"Please think about the last three months at work. To *DETERMINE* how to perform specific aspects of the tasks given to you, how frequently, in general, have you done each of the following?" (1=Very Rarely, 5=Very Often)

12	Ask my DIRECT SUPERVISOR for task-related information	1	2	3	4	5
13	Ask KOREAN EXPATRIATES', who work closely with me, for task-related information	1	2	3	4	5
14	Pay attention to how others do for completing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
15	Pay attention to how my DIRECT SUPERVISOR direct others to do for completing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
16	Pay attention to my DIRECT SUPERVISOR 's comments on what others do	1	2	3	4	5
16	Pay attention to how KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, direct others to do for completing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
17	Pay attention to how KOREAN EXPATRIATES comment about what others do.	1	2	3	4	5

This section asks about your general personality and job-related experiences. For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree (5=Strong Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree)

18	I prefer challenging and difficult tasks so that I'll learn a great deal	1	2	3	4	5
19	I truly enjoy learning for the sake of learning	1	2	3	4	5
20	I like tasks that really force me to think hard	1	2	3	4	5
21	I'm willing to take difficult tasks if I can learn a lot by taking them	1	2	3	4	5
22	I would rather avoid a difficult task than perform poorly	1	2	3	4	5
23	I would rather take familiar tasks to avoid performing poorly	1	2	3	4	5

24	I am more concerned about avoiding a low performance than I am about learning	1	2	3	4	5
25	I prefer to avoid situations where I could risk performing poorly	1	2	3	4	5
26	I accept tasks at which I feel that I will probably do well	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
27	It's important that others know that I am a good team member	1	2	3	4	5
28	I think that it's important to perform well to show how competitive you are	1	2	3	4	5
29	It's important for me to prove that I am better than others on my team	1	2	3	4	5
30	To be honest, I really like to show off my ability to others	1	2	3	4	5
31	I feel that I am given too many phone calls, emails, meetings, and face-to-face conversations in regards to tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I receive more information than I need to complete my tasks effectively	1	2	3	4	5
33	I receive more task-related information than I can process	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
34	I receive a lot of task-related information that requires too much explaining to be useful	1	2	3	4	5
35	The task-related information I need to explain to others is OFTEN confusing or ambiguous	1	2	3	4	5
36	I have more discussions about confusing or ambiguous task-related information than I would like	1	2	3	4	5
37	I feel that I am given too many phone calls, emails, meetings, and face-to-face conversations in regards to evaluation of my work.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I receive more feedback than I need to evaluate my performance	1	2	3	4	5
39	I receive more feedback than I can process	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
40	I receive a lot of feedback that requires too much explaining to be useful	1	2	3	4	5
41	The feedback I need to explain to others is OFTEN confusing or ambiguous	1	2	3	4	5

| 42 | I have more discussions about confusing or ambiguous feedback information than I would like | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

This section asks about your opinions on work relationships. For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree (5=Strong Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree)

43	In my opinion, when a performance appraisal made by my supervisor does not fit with team members' expectations, members should feel free to discuss it with the supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
44	In my opinion, efficient work relationships make it necessary to bypass hierarchical lines	1	2	3	4	5
45	In my opinion, it is alright for new members to be critical of the supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
46	When there are conflicts between my supervisor's appraisal and team members' expectations, my DIRECT SUPERVISOR is open to team members' opinions	1	2	3	4	5
47	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR emphasizes the need to bypass hierarchical lines to build efficient work relationships	1	2	3	4	5
48	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR is open to new members' critical attitudes toward him/her	1	2	3	4	5
49	When there are conflicts between my supervisor's appraisal and team members' expectations, KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, are open to team members' opinions	1	2	3	4	5
50	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, emphasize the need to bypass hierarchical lines to build efficient work relationships	1	2	3	4	5
51	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, are open to new members' critical attitudes toward him/her	1	2	3	4	5
52	I prefer structured situations to unstructured situations	1	2	3	4	5
53	I prefer specific instructions to broad guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
54	I tend to easily get anxious when I don't know an outcome	1	2	3	4	5
55	I feel stressed when I cannot predict consequences	1	2	3	4	5

56	I don't take risks when an outcome cannot be predicted	1	2	3	4	5
57	I don't like ambiguous situations	1	2	3	4	5
58	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR prefers structured situations to unstructured situations	1	2	3	4	5
59	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR prefers giving specific instructions to providing broad guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
60	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR tends to get anxious easily when s/he doesn't know a potential outcome	1	2	3	4	5
61	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR gets stressed when consequences are unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5
62	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR doesn't take risks when an outcome is unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5
63	My DIRECT SUPERVISOR is not content with ambiguous situations	1	2	3	4	5
64	KOREAN EXPATRIATES , who work closely with me, prefer structured situations to unstructured situations	1	2	3	4	5
65	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, prefer giving specific instructions to providing broad guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
66	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, tend to get anxious easily when s/he doesn't know a potential outcome	1	2	3	4	5
67	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, get stressed when consequences are unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5
68	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, don't take risks when an outcome is unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5
69	KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me, are not content with ambiguous situations	1	2	3	4	5
70	I work closely with other team members in doing my work	1	2	3	4	5
71	I frequently must coordinate my efforts with other team members	1	2	3	4	5
72	My own performance depends on receiving accurate information from other team members	1	2	3	4	5
73	The way I perform my job has a significant impact on other team members	1	2	3	4	5

74	My work requires me to consult with others fairly frequently	1	2	3	4	5
72	I am generally satisfied with my communication with my DIRECT SUPERVISOR.	1	2	3	4	5
73	I enjoy my interactions with DIRECT SUPERVISOR	1	2	3	4	5
74	I feel good about my conversations with DIRECT SUPERVISOR	1	2	3	4	5
75	I am generally satisfied with my communication with the KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me	1	2	3	4	5
76	I enjoy my interactions with the KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me	1	2	3	4	5
77	I feel good about my conversations with the KOREAN EXPATRIATES, who work closely with me	1	2	3	4	5

In this final section, please answer the following questions about YOURSELF.

78 Are you male or female?   Male   Female
79 In which year were you born? _____
80 In which country were you born? _____
81 What is your first language?   _____

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