A Critical Review of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect Literature: Limitations, Key Challenges and Directions for Future Research

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Abstract:
The study of human behaviour holds a prominent role in organizational behavior literature. For almost 45 years, the exit, voice, loyalty and neglect typology has attracted scholars' interest and has been linked to employee responses towards dissatisfaction and problematic events in the workplace. This paper reviews the literature and identifies and addresses key theoretical and methodological deficiencies that the exit, voice, loyalty and neglect typology faces that have been either ignored or undeveloped. Moreover, by unpicking this typology as currently portrayed in the existing literature, it proposes key challenges that need to be addressed and provides directions for future research.

1. Introduction

The use of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN)typology in a growing body of research, either qualitative or quantitative, examines the way in which employees respond to dissatisfaction and problematic events ; thus, making it a useful tool of measuring employees' responses within the workplace (Farrell, 1983; Rusbult *et al*., 1988; Withey and Cooper, 1989;Farrell and Rusbult, 1992;Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999;Turnley and Feldman, 1999; Naus *et al.*, 2007; Si *et al.*, 2008; Hsiung and Yang, 2012;Si and Li, 2012;O'Donohue *et al.*, 2014; Akhtar *et al.*, 2016).

However, as Dowding and John (2012, p.131) suggest 'the full potential of the framework has not been realized due to a degree of ambiguity within the theory. Therefore, this paper highlights the need of re-examining the EVLN typology, in regards to its underlying constructs and the methodological approaches that have been employed. This paper contributes to academic knowledge by critically evaluating and enriching the theoretical discourse surrounding the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN)typology by addressing its key theoretical and methodological deficiencies that underpin the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN)literature and have been either neglected or underdeveloped. Lack of attention to these deficiencies could pose serious threats to the development and employment of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN)typology on future research attempts. Thus, the paper aims to offer a theoretical and methodological richness through encouraging future research to master its proposed six challenges, and thus to contribute to the long-term viability of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN)typology.

The paper initially provides a theoretical background of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN) typology. It continues by identifying and addressing the central theoretical and methodological limitations that are holding the field back. Next, it sets out the key challenges which researchers need to overcome, and outlines an agenda for future research. Such challenges include the pursuit of conceptual clarity, greater methodological rigor and qualitative understanding of the phenomenon, more attention on the consistency and generalizability of the results; greater focus on the predictive power of the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN)typology, need for identifying and examining mediators and moderators between predictor and outcome variables, and the integration of related literatures. Having all these issues addressed, it will help us advance our understanding in this field of research and will allow us to fill the respective literature gaps.

2. A Critical Review of the EVLN Literature

2.1. The EVLN Typology: a Theoretical Background

Hirschman's (1970) work laid the foundations for the development of the EVLN typology by mainly examining the relationship between consumers and firms.

In the context of the employment relationship, the EVLN typology consists of four constructs/responses, namely Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN). Exit describes any attempt being undertaken from employees in order to escape from a dissatisfying situation such as quitting their jobs, resigning, transferring to another work unit (Todor, 1980; McShane, 2006) or thinking to leave (Rusbult*et al.*, 1988; Allen and Tüselmann, 2009). Contrary to Exit, Voice refers to employees' attempts in changing a dissatisfying situation, rather than escaping from it. Voice represents either a constructive or a destructive response. It can vary from making formal complaints and spreading negative energy in the work environment (Turnley and Feldman, 1999; Allen, 2014) to discussingproblems and suggesting solutions (Luchak, 2003).

Loyalty reflects apassive response on behalf of those employees supporting the organisation, by suggesting to wait until business conditions to be improved mployees, who support the organisation, and hope and wait until the conditions will be improved(Rusbult*et al.*, 1988). According to Hirschman (1970) and McShane (2006), employees silently suffer until a dissatisfying situation is resolved or at least to be improved. Neglect, alike Exit, is a destructive response (Rusbult and Zembrodt, 1983), and similarly to Loyalty is also considered as a passive reaction. Neglect invloves those responses which passively do not allow conditions to improve such as increased absenteeism, lateness and errors at work, reduced work effort and/or interest, and reduced productivity (Farrell, 1983; Rusbult*et al.*, 1988; Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999).

Since Hirschman's (1970) research, literature has been significantly expanded by a large number of studies that have used this typology to and have advanced our understanding of human behaviour within organisations. Our literature review indicates that the EVLN typology has been widely applied in various contexts covering a wide range of relationships: i) Personal context including romantic and close relationships (Rusbult *et al.*, 1982; Rusbult *et al.*, 1991; Overall *et al.*, 2010; Okutan *et al.*, 2016), ii) Political and societal context including political parties, union firms,municipalites (e.g. Kweit, 1986; Langston, 2002; Van Ryzin, 2004), and iii) Organisational context including employees' responses towards the organisation (e.g. Farrell and Rusbult, 1992; Leck and Saunders, 1992; Naus *et al.*, 2007; Hsiung and Yang, 2012; Aravopoulou, 2015; Akhtar *et al.*, 2016).

In respect to the latter, many studies have examined employees' EVLN responses by using different predictor variables such as organisational commitment (e.g. Hirschman, 1970; Luchak, 2003; Mellahi *et al.*, 2010), job satisfaction (e.g. Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Withey and Cooper, 1989; Farrell and Rusbult, 1992; Leck and Saunders, 1992;Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999),psychological contract violation (e.g. Turnley and Feldman, 1999; Si *et al.*, 2008;Shan, 2012), and employability (e.g. Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Hom *et al.*, 1992; Kondratuk *et al.*, 2004; Berntson *et al.*, 2010).

The EVLN typology is based on the premise that such variables can affect employees' behaviour by indicating that low job dissatisfaction and a breach of the psychological contract, all could be proved harmful both for individuals and the organisation (Rusbult and Lowery, 1985; Withey, 1986; Leck and Saunders, 1992; Robinson, 1992; Maguire, 2003; Naus *et al.*, 2007; Mellahi *et al.*, 2010; Seo *et al.*, 2011; Markey *et al.*, 2012;Si and Li, 2012;Aravopoulou and Branine, 2014; Aravopoulou, 2015).Therefore, it is a powerful tool in examining individual responses to various problematic events within the workplace.

In account of all that, this paper builds on EVLN research referring to organisational context. A thoughtful literature review focused only on those research studies employing the EVLN typology as a tool to examine how employees respond to dissatisfaction and real[1]problematic events in the workplace. In line with best practice (Short, 2009), we used a number of electronic databases such as Web of Science, PsycLit, EBSCO, JSTOR, Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, Science Direct and Google scholar in order to identify peer-reviewed articles referring to EVLN either within their title, abstract and keywords. In addition, using the method of backward and forward snowball we also used references of past studies. Using these criteria 42papers were identified for inclusion in our literature review, of which 38 were empirical papers[2].

In brief, our review of the literature shows that there are theoretical and methodological deficiencies that have not been explored within the EVLN literature by questioning the sustainability of this typology as currently constituted. The next section addresses some of these shortcomings; and based on them we then propose six key challenges which can contribute to the long-term sustainability of the EVLN typology, and thus future research should take into consideration.

3. Theoretical Limitations

3.1. The form of the EVLN Typology

A central theoretical problem in the EVLN literature that questions the viability of this typology as a theoretical framework is its several conceptualizations. Far from being conceptually fixed, the EVLN typology has undergone many conceptual alterations and extensions. The literature on organisational behaviour has also considerably expanded over the past 15 years, under the under the extension of this typology and the use of different underlying constructs.

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[1]Studies that adopted the scenario technique were excluded as were out of the scope of this paper.
[2]These articles have been highlighted with an asterisk in the reference section.

Among the first, Hirschman (1970) identified three behaviours through which employees respond to dissatisfaction within their organisations, namely Exit, Voice and Loyalty (EVL). Later on, several authors expanded Hirschman's work by adding a fourth element, that of Neglect (Kolarska and Aldrich, 1980; Rusbult et al., 1982; Farrell, 1983). A different conceptualization was provided by Bourantas and Nikandrou (1998) who predicted employee behaviour after acquisitions by using the Loyalty, Compliance, Voice and Neglect (LCVN) typology. The Exit option was removed and Compliance was added to their model. The latter refers to those employees who passively support the acquisition. This typology has been adopted by other studies such as that of Nikandrou and Papalexandris (2008).

Naus *et al.* (2007) further expanded the EVLN typology by drawing on a number of studies such as those of Kanter and Mirvis (1989), Mirvis and Kanter (1991), and Reichers *et al.*(1997) which showed that employees are cynical towards the organisation. Therefore, the authors suggested cynicism as a fifth dimension (EVLNC). Cynicism refers to employees' loss of confidence and propensity to respond negatively to the organisation, due to their dissatisfaction that increases by their inability to leave the organisation e.g. due to high exit costs. More recently, building on Naus' *et al.*(2007) EVLNC typology, Tucker and Turner (2011) provided an alternation of this typology by substituting Loyalty with Patience; and they statistically confirmed the factor structure of the EVPNC typology which stands for Exit, Voice, Patience, Neglect and Compliance.

Clearly, the different forms that the EVLN typology has taken over years do not provide us with conceptual clarity. Although prior work has typically conceptualized the EVLN typology as a construct composing of the following four responses: Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect, there is discourse on which constructs could be included in this typology. Therefore, a preliminary validation of the modified EVLN typologies, even if they have shown promising results, needs to be replicated (Liljegren *et al.*, 2008).

3.2. Discourse on the Underlying Constructs

Apart from the use of different constructs that has led to conceptual alterations and expansions of the EVLN typology, another limitation is the different conceptualizations of the underlying constructs. Hirschman (1970) describes Exit as a customer response who are dissatisfied with the organisation and they cut ties with it e.g. by stop buying its products; or as an employee response who leave the organisation. Rusbult *et al.* (1988) conceptually broaden the definition of Exit by suggesting that not only does it refer to employees who quit their jobs or leaving the organisation, but also to those who are either thinking of quitting or looking for a job. Such a psychological intention to Exitwidens the definition of Exit, as leaving the organisation is often not a feasible option for employees (Naus *et al.*, 2007; Allen and Tüselmann, 2009).

An ongoing discourse also exists in regard to the forms that Voice can take. Hirschman (1970, p. 30) defines Voice as 'any attempt at all to change an objectionable state of affairs, not only by petitioning to management or higher authorities, but also through protests including the mobilization of the public opinion'. Given that Hirschman's (1970) EVL typology was employed to describe customers' dissatisfaction, this conceptualization makes sense. Yet, in the context of the employment relationship, Voice refers to 'actively and constructively trying to improve conditions through discussing problems with a supervisor or co-workers, taking action to solve problems, suggesting solutions, seeking help from an outside agency like a union or whistle-blowing' (Rusbult *et al.*, 1988, p. 601).

In contrast to the conceptualization of Voice as an active and constructive response, and along with the idea that the degree of its constructiveness differs (Saunders *et al.*, 1992), the work of Hagedoorn *et al.* (1999) distinguished Voice into considerate and aggressive. The former refers to any attempts from employees to solve a problem by taking into consideration both their own and also the organisation's concerns. The latter refers to employees' actions in solving a problem without taking into account the concerns of the organisation. This is a distinction that has been adopted by various authors (e.g.Willenborg, 2001; Parhankangas and Landström, 2004, 2007). Furthermore, it responds to the call for a more precise conceptualization of this construct in organisational behaviour literature(Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003; Detert and Burris, 2007).

Therefore, based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that Voice is not an one-dimensional construct, as it can be either a constructive or a destructive response; varying from making formal complaints or spreading negative energy in the work environment (Turnley and Feldman, 1999), to discussing problems and suggesting solutions (Rusbult *et al.*, 1988;Luchak, 2003). Thus, it is evident that these multiple meanings can cause potential confusion and inhibits the development of a coherent knowledge base.

In a similar vein,the differing conceptualizations of Loyalty, with a number of them being provided by Hirschman (1970), further enhance the conceptual ambiguity of the EVLN's underlying constructs. In the context of employees' responses to dissatisfaction of the employment relationship, he defines Loyalty as a factor that ties employees to the organisation, making Exit costly and undermining Voice (ibid, 1970). The author further describes Loyalty as an attitude that moderates Exit and Voice (ibid, 1970). Loyalty is also portrayed as a behaviour through which employees support the organisation, and is referred as a form of self-sacrifice by dissatisfied employees, that deters Exit, who 'may simply refuse to Exit and suffer in silence, confident that things will get better soon' (ibid 1970, p.38). Similarly, Kolarska and Aldrich (1980) perceive Loyalty as silence. Such diverse perceptions clearly indicate that the concept of Loyalty is complex and not well developed.

Posterior literature has involved the concept in various ways as well. For instance, Rusbult *et al.* (1988) conceptualized Loyalty as a passive and constructive response from employees who accept the situation and wait optimistically until the conditions to improve. In this case, Loyalty takes the form of a feeling of attachment to the organisation. Based on this definition, Leck and Saunders (1992) argued that Loyalty could be relabelled as Patience so as to distinguish between attitudes and behaviours, as Patience could describe a behaviour better than loyalty which is used to describe an attitude. The use of Patience instead of Loyalty has been adopted by other studies such as those of Hagedoorn *et al.* (1999); Liljegren *et al.*(2008) and Tucker and Turner (2011).

Finally, in contrast to the conceptualization of Loyalty as a passive response, and grounded on the idea that despite their dissatisfaction, employees act above and beyond what is required of them (by not counting for instance all their working hours); Withey and Cooper (1989) differentiate between passive Loyalty and active Loyalty, which is paralleled to organisational citizenship behaviour (Organ, 1988).

The different conceptualizations of the underlying constructs of the EVLN typology, along with the interchangeable use of its terms (e.g. Loyalty-Patience) have led to a considerable conceptual ambiguity. Furthermore, it impedes the development of theory and a coherent knowledge base (Shadish *et al.*,2002). Additionally, the inconsistency and lack of clarity on whether EVLN responses describe attitudes or behaviours has also contributed to this confusion (Leck and Saunders, 1992).

3.3. Issues Concerning the Relationship between Antecedent and Outcome Variables

A key deficiency of the EVLN typology is related the ability of its antecedent variables to predict the outcome variables, namely employee's EVLN responses. Several studies which have used a single antecedent variable indicated that one antecedent may have similar effect on more than one response (Hsiung and Yang, 2012). For instance, Meye *et al.* (1993) found that affective commitment is positively related to Voice and Loyalty. More recently, Liljegren *et al.*(2008) argued that perceived justice is negatively associated with Exit as well as aggressive Voice. Therefore, the employment of single antecedent variables cannot always predict which employees would display which behavioural responses (Naus *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, although there are studies considering the compound influences of two antecedents, and examine their interaction effects, their findings are not satisfactory as most interaction effects are either inconsistent or weak (Withey, 1986; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Naus *et al.*, 2007).

4. Methodological Limitations

4.1. Measuring EVLN Employees' Responses

Apart from the theoretical deficiencies, our literature review identified a number of methodological problems that are distinctivewithin the EVLN typology research. The existence of the differing conceptualisations could represent a typical limitation as most of the undertaken studies have used different measurements for employee responses. For instance, a number of studies have adopted Rusbult's *et al.* (1988) scale (e.g.Si *et al.*,2008; Si and Li, 2012). A couple of studies (e.g.Naus *et al.*, 2007; Mellahi *et al.*,2010; Hsiung and Yang, 2012) have adopted the scale developed by Hagedoorn *et al.* (1999). Other studies have adopted Naus' *et al.* (2007) scale (e.g.O'Donohue *et al.*,2014), whilst there are studies that have adopted Rusbult and Lowery's (1985) scale (e.g. Vigoda-Gadot *et al.*, 2012). There are also studies that have used separate measures for each one of the underlying constructs with some being based on existing scales (e.g.Turnley and Feldman, 1999). There are also studies, such as those of Alpmann and Bitsch (2015)that measure employees' EVLN responses through interview transcripts. Clearly, the existing inconsistency on the different measurements of the EVLN typology raises concerns over the reliability of the findings.

4.2. Dealing with Social Desirability Biases and Common Method Variance

The most common methodological limitation derives from the cross-sectional design and self-reported data of most studies being undertaken within the field (e.g.Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999; Turnley and Feldman, 1999;Naus *et al.*, 2007; Seo *et al.*, 2011; Si and Li, 2012; Vigoda-Gadot *et al.*, 2012; O'Donohue *et al.*, 2014; Akhtar *et al*., 2016). This therefore implies the absence of causal inferences (Naus *et al.*, 2007). Since a great number of studies use self-reported data and are conducted ata single moment, they measure intended responses or attitudes, rather than actual responses (Leck and Saunders, 1992). Thus, owing to the divergence between possible and actual responses, the construct validity of the measurement is questioned. Therefore, it is neither clear nor validated that employees exhibit the responses they report (Dowding *et al.*, 2000). In addition, Hsiung and Yang (2012) argue that at a certain period of time, employees are more likely to display limited number of responses rather than to display simultaneously three or four responses. Hence, qualitative longitudinal studies are needed in order to shed light and address the issue of the direction of causality (Naus *et al.*, 2007; Hsiung and Yang, 2012), and to explore in more depth employees' responses over a period of time.

In addition, the issue of self-reported data raises concerns, as it can be a potential source of systematic bias. For instance, it is possible destructive responses to be underreported because employees may want to portray a favourable image (O'Donohue *et al.*,2014). Although a growing body of the relevant literature calls for data collection to be obtained from different sources or at different points of time (e.g. Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; Chang *et al.*,2010), research attempts to limit the common method variance are limited. Thus, since the majority of the EVLN typology research uses self-reported data, it fails to acknowledge the effects of social desirability biases and common method variance that arise from self-report measures(Campbell and Fiske,1959). Therefore, without overcoming the limitations of self-reported data, and/or developing more solid research designs, research findings are questionable (Spector,1994). Hence, they should be interpreted with caution in terms of their generalizability.

4.3. Generalizability Issues

Another methodological limitation of most studies is that they have been conducted in certain cultural contexts. Previous research has mostly conducted in Western countries such as Greece, Finland, the Netherlands, the United Sates (e.g.Withey and Cooper, 1989;Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999;Turnley and Feldman,1999; Parhankangas and Landström, 2004; Naus *et al.*, 2007; Liljegren *et al.*, 2008; Bellou, 2009; Aravopoulou and Branine, 2014; Aravopoulou, 2015; Croonen and Brand, 2015). However, recently a growing body of studies have been conducted in East primarily in China (e.g. Si *et al.*, 2008; Warner, 2008;Bu, McKeen and Shen,2011;

Hsiung and Yang, 2012; Shan, 2012; Si and Li,2012; Peng *et al.*, 2016)but also in Korea (e.g. Seo *et al.*, 2011),Malaysia (e.g. Rahman, 2012; Rajiani and Buyong, 2013) and Pakistan (e.g. Akhtar *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, this geographic 'bias' limits the generalizability of the results. Moreover, given the existence of various modified EVLN typologies (e.g.Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999; Naus *et al.*, 2007), all proposed typologies should be adopted and replicated in diverse settings in order to be empirically validated.

4.4. Dealing with Low Internal Consistencies

Low internal consistencies of the EVLN measures have been reported in earlier studies such as those of Rusbult *et al.* (1988), and Withey and Cooper (1989). To address this deficiency, Hagedoorn *et al.* (1999) relabelled Loyalty to Patience in order to highlight the difference between Loyalty as attitude and Loyalty as behaviour. Also, they classified Voice into aggressive and considerate, and this distinction has been widely adopted by other studies (Parhankangas and Landström, 2004; Liljegren *et al.*, 2008). However, an increasing number of studies further distinguished Voice into considerate, aggressive and creative (Van Yperen *et al.*, 2000; Zhou and George, 2001; Cheung, 2005). In account of all that, it is evident that some of the underlying constructs of the EVLN typology are poorly developed and thus further research is needed in order the problem of low internal consistencies to be addressed this deficiency.

4.5. Small Sample Size/Low Response Rate

Our literature review indicated that in most studies, there is also a small sample size and a low response rate (e.g.Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999; Naus *et al.*, 2007; O'Donohue *et al.*,2014). Coupled with the interaction effects that were found to be either weak or inconsistent, it is further suggested that 'detecting such effects requires the statistical power provided by large samples' (Naus *et al.*, 2007, p. 711).

Overall, having described some of the key limitations of the EVLN framework that were identified by our literature review, the upcoming sections will present some key challenges and directions for future research.

5. Key Challenges And Directions For Future Research

5.1. Challenge #1: Pursue Conceptual Clarity

Our literature review highlighted the lack of conceptual and methodological clarity concerning the EVLN typology. The use of different underlying constructs has resulted in a typology that has not been conceptually fixed, and has undergone various alterations and extensions (e.g.Bourantas and Nikandrou, 1998; Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998; Naus *et al.*, 2007). In addition, the differing conceptualizations of the same underlying construct, see for example Loyalty-Patience in Leck and Saunders (1992), have led to different operationalization of the same variable. These conceptual ambiguities have been proved to be problematic as they impede the development of a coherent knowledge base within the relevant literature. Therefore, understanding and assessing the nature of the underlying constructs are fundamental concerns being highlighted within the literature (see e.g.Shadish *et al.*,2002), and are of a great importance. Additionally, ignoring such concerns threatens the development of a sustainable and valid typology in EVLN literature. Hence, this paper calls scholars to provide stronger theoretical grounding so as the EVLN literature to be enhanced.

5.2. Challenge #2: Greater Methodological Rigor and Qualitative Understanding of the Phenomenon

A key limitation of the vast majority of studies undertaken derives from the use of cross-sectional data, which entails the absence of causal inferences (Naus *et al.*, 2007).In addition, in studies examining cause-effect relationships, causal evidence remains tentative, as reverse causation cannot be ruled out. For instance, Hsiung and Yang (2012) found that self-efficacy promotes Voice behaviour, but it is also possible that positive feedback from Voice behaviour increases self-efficacy. Thus, future studies should pay greater attention to issues related to causality, and should explore the possibility of reverse causation. To this extent, studies with stronger designs are needed in order to be more effectively in examining cause-effect relationships.

Dowding *et al.*(2000) further reported that employee responses may vary over time, while they may also differ from the actual ones as well. Therefore, it is imperative for future research to conduct longitudinal studies and to focus on the time when employee responses are measured, as measures at a certain point in time and self-reported data could yield different estimates. Our suggestion is the design of longitudinal studies (as they can explore employees' responses in depth) with a cross-sectional research perspective (as they can offer a current snapshot of employees' attitudes towards problematic work events). Together, they could achieve the development of a more robust methodological typology.

5.3. Challenge #3: The Consistency and Generalizability of the Results

There are also serious implications concerning the consistency and generalizability of the findings. As aforementioned, the vast majority of the undertaken studies on the EVLN typology were conducted under certain cultural contexts (mainly in Western countries and in China). As a result, the generalizability of the results is questioned (Liljegren *et al.*, 2008).Clearly, there is a need for future research to be conducted in various settings.

Another issue is the existence of modified typologies (e.g.Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999; Naus *et al.*, 2007). This raises concerns on the sustainability and validity of the two-dimensional structure of the EVLN typology. Therefore, there is a need for the proposed modified typologies to be replicated and validated in other settings. Yet, this is a difficult task as the methodological problem of validity shrinkage emerges, which predicts less accurately the relevant criterion with the new sample than the original (Gregory,

2003). Thus, it is difficult to replicate in a new setting the results from a promising initial validation of the EVLN typology. This is a methodological challenge that researchers should carefully consider, by working towards a solution that can address it or at least eliminate it. Last but not least, future research should respond to the call for replication of factor analysis results in order to ascertain that they reflect a general phenomenon, and they do not represent structural peculiar features of the sample (Naus *et al.*, 2007).

5.4. Challenge #4: The Predictive Power of the EVLN Typology
The ability of antecedent variables to predict outcome variables, namely employees' EVLN responses, seems to be problematic. Single antecedents have been found to have a similar effect on more than one responses (see e.g.Meye *et al.*, 1993; Liljegren *et al.*,2008). Similarly, results from empirical studies that have considered the compound influences of two antecedents are weak or inconsistent (e.g.Withey, 1986; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Naus *et al.*, 2007). According to Hsiung and Yang (2012), a plausible explanation is the absence of non-linear relationships between antecedent and outcome variables (the EVLN behavioural responses). To overcome this concern, we suggest that future studies should examine these non-linear relationships and test whether a different methodological approach can fix this theoretical problem.

5.5. Challenge #5: Potential Mediators and Moderators between Predictor and Outcome Variables
Prior research on the EVLN typology has primarily focused on identifying the predictor variables of employees' EVLN responses. Typical examples can be viewed on job attitudes such as perceived justice, trust and fairness, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction (Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999; Meye *et al.*, 1993; Croonen, 2008; Liljegren *et al.*, 2008);situational variables such as investment size and quality of alternatives and job alternatives (Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Farrell and Rusbult, 1992); dispositions such as assertiveness, rigidity, and locus of control (Withey and Cooper, 1989; Naus *et al.*, 2007); demographic variables such as age, tenure, educational level, gender and marital status (Rusbult *et al.*, 1986; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Liljegren *et al.*, 2008; Mellahi *et al.*,2010).
Lately, a growing body of research has focused on identifying potential mediators and moderators between several predictor variables such as organisational commitment, and outcome variables, namely employees' EVLN responses. For instance, Berntson *et al.* (2010) examined the moderating role of employability in the relationship between job insecurity and EVLN. Mellahi *et al.* (2010) further examined the moderating effects of the two foci of commitment, namely organisational-level commitment and team-level commitment on managers' EVLN behaviour. Bellou (2009) also looked on the mediating effects of job satisfaction on the relationship between person-organisation (P-O) fit and employees' EVLN responses. More recently, Si and Li (2012) examined the mediating role of organisational commitment in the relationship between human resource management practices and employees' EVLN responses. Recently, Akhtar *et al.* (2016) investigated the mediating role of perceived fulfilment of psychological contract in the relationship between frequency and impact of organisational change, and employees' EVLN behaviour.
Given the variety of predictor variables, there is a need for further research. Thus, the identification of new potential mediators and moderators between various predictor variables, and outcome variables can help us gain a deeper insight on employees' psyche and their corresponding behaviours. We strongly believe that future research, under this direction, could help us gain a deeper understanding on when and why employees are most likely to respond negatively to problematic events in the workplace. Additionally, we could be able to better analyse the conditions under which such negative responses can be minimized or avoided.

5.6. Challenge #6: Incorporate Related Literatures
According to Robinson (1992), by adopting a broader perspective, both academics and practitioners will be able to better predict employees' responses to dissatisfaction, and thus to manage them more effective. In support to this argument, we suggest that incorporating related literatures has much to offer to the EVLN typology and the study of organisational behaviour as well. Such an approach could contribute to the development of a more comprehensive literature which could offer a better understanding and decoding of employees' responses. For instance, industrial and organisational psychology, and cognitive psychology literatures provide useful insights into mental processes on how employees think and perceive problematic events, the different ways they may respond to them, and how they manage them (e.g. Blake and Mouton, 1964; Kahn and Byosiere, 1992; McKenna, 2000; Lee and Allen, 2002; Arnold *et al.*, 2005). On the other hand, research on organisational change, psychological contract, personnel development, outlines the importance of the provision of information, performance, and job-related factors in promoting certain responses and suppressing others (e.g. Porter and Steers, 1973; Chaudhry *et al.*, 2009;Hausknecht *et al.*, 2009;Huang and Wang, 2013; Rafferty and Restubog, 2010; Aravopoulou and Branine, 2014;Aravopoulou, 2015).
Finally, behavioural and cognitive sciences, as well as organisational studies can provide scholars with better insights into the cognition and behavioural patterns that individuals employ towards dissatisfaction and problematic events in the workplace. The EVLN literature can be expanded and enriched by drawing on other related literatures such as cognitive psychology, industrial and organisational psychology, organisational change, psychological contract, and personnel development that can enhance our understanding on how employees' manage, and why they respond to such events in a certain way.

6. Concluding Thoughts
Since its early introduction, the EVLN typology has been applied under different contexts. By representing a useful tool in the hand of the organisational literature, classifying employees' responses towards dissatisfaction, and problematic events in the workplace could better be explained. Having identified and addressed some of the central theoretical and methodological deficiencies that have been

neglected and/or underdeveloped in the organisational literature, we suggest that it might be of we suggest that there may be value in theorizing the EVLN typology. Accordingly, we have provided the directions for future research.

Research on employee responses should not be myopic and solely focus on employee negative reactions or resistance. As reported by Piderit (2000), employee responses vary from strong positive to strong negative ones. Therefore, a framework like the EVLN typology, which incorporates both constructive and destructive responses, can stand up as an attractive and 'holistic' paradigm for studying human behaviour in organisations. Research on this area will also have important practical implications for organisations, as it can assist them gain a better understanding of employees' psyche and their corresponding behaviours, and in identifying the ways in which they can better manage their employees. Yet, there is much to do for the EVLN typology to become a viable framework capable of adequately reflecting employees' responses. Our review paper aims to offer the fruitful avenues through which future studies could address all related concerns, and thus to offer theoretical and methodological richness so as to contribute to the sustainability of this typology. Thus, we want to encourage scholars to tackle the challenging issues raised in this paper.

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