University of Louisville
ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

5-2016

The influence of high/low context culture on choice of communication media : students' media choice to communicate with professors in China and the United States.

Xiaoxu Yang
University of Louisville

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.library.louisville.edu/etd

Part of the International and Intercultural Communication Commons, and the Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons

Recommended Citation

Yang, Xiaoxu, "The influence of high/low context culture on choice of communication media : students' media choice to communicate with professors in China and the United States." (2016). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations.* Paper 2375.
https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/2375

THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH/LOW CONTEXT CULTURE ON CHOICE OF
COMMUNICATION MEDIA: STUDENTS' MEDIA CHOICE TO COMMUNICATE
WITH PROFESSORS IN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

By

Xiaoxu Yang
B.A., Humboldt State University, 2013
M.A., University of Louisville, 2016

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Communication

Department of Communication
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2016

THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH/LOW CONTEXT CULTURE ON CHOICE OF
COMMUNICATION MEDIA: STUDENTS' MEDIA CHOICE TO COMMUNICATE
WITH PROFESSORS IN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

By

Xiaoxu Yang
B.A., Humboldt State University, 2013
M.A., University of Louisville, 2016

A Thesis Approved on

April 28, 2016

by the following Thesis Committee:

_____
Margaret D'Silva

_____
Yi Jasmine Wang

_____
Yue Wu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer sincere appreciation to Dr. Margaret D'Silva, and Dr. Yi Jasmine Wang, for all the guidance I have received during the entire time of launching the study and writing this thesis.

I also give genuine thanks to Dr. Yue Wu, who helps tremendously in revising and improving this research project till completion.

I offer my deepest gratitude to my parents for their encouragement, support, and unconditional love. I could not have done it without them.

To all my friends who supported me and helped me both in China and the U.S thank you for all the help and understanding.

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH/LOW CONTEXT CULTURE ON CHOICE OF

COMMUNICATION MEDIA: STUDENTS' MEDIA CHOICE TO COMMUNICATE

WITH PROFESSORS IN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

Xiaoxu Yang

April 28, 2016

This study focuses on a widely used cultural construct, high context and low context culture to investigate the culture's influence on media choices. This research compares the communication media choices of two cultures: the high context culture of China and the low context culture of the United States. 351 participants from the two countries filled out the surveys. All the participants were college students; 195 participants were from a mid-size college in China and 156 from a Midwestern University in the United States. The survey included the high context-low context scale, media richness questions and how participants choose media to communicate under different circumstances in school settings. The overall result confirmed that China is a high context culture and the U.S.A is a low context culture. The research findings supported the hypothesis that there is a difference between communication media choices in China and the U.S.A. The findings

of this study indicate that cultural differences influence people's choice of their

communication media. Overall findings supported the hypothesis that Chinese

participants tend to use richer media while the U.S participants tend to use less rich media.

However, sometimes the Chinese participants chose less rich media such as text

messages or phone calls over face-to-face communication. The unexpected findings may

be due to factors other than high context and low context culture. The discussion and

implication of this study suggest that future studies can focus on other factors such as

power distance and people's decision-making processes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Individuals decide which communication medium to use, whether deliberately or not, for every interaction they initiate. The judgment of one medium being a better option than another is based on an individual's values. These values may include: convenience, the ease of a particular medium's use, and the immediacy that medium creates. These values can also be influenced by the culture of the interactant (Schwartz, 1994). This study focuses on the communication media choices between college students and professors. In general, communicating with professors is more formal and professional, while communicating with friends and family members is more personal. Therefore, when one is considering media choices to communicate with friends and relatives, personal preference and ease of use are among the most influential factors rather than cultural impact and other factors. On the other hand, when one is communicating in a formal or professional environment, one will consider more about if this communication media is appropriate in the situation, and if the communication media is convenient and accessible to other people.

The other reason this study focuses on college students is that school communication is less complex than in other professional environments. In school communication, the power distance does not play a significant part in communication media choice. For example, students and professors mostly have a comparatively equal status than in other professional environments.

This study will show that people from different cultures have different communication media choice preferences influenced by their cultural backgrounds. Culture has been studied as an influence in many communication areas, but culture also can be an easy explanation for many communication differences, such as communication topics, communication styles (e.g. closeness, use different tones to communicate, and direct or indirect), and communication media choice. Moreover, when experiencing the differences, culture plays a critical part in many situations. When many international students from China first came to the United States, they did not even have an email account, because when they were in China, school communication did not involve email. Why do differences occur in the communication media choice? In China, school emails are offered to all students and professors, but they do not seem to have the habit of using email as a way of communicating. There is something more than communication preference at work here. Cultural differences can cause communication differences (Hall, 1976). Based on Hofstede's culture context theory, Chinese would prefer to use face-to-face communication more than other cultural groups because Chinese communication is more than verbal expression; non-verbal is also crucial in Chinese communication (Hofstede, 1980). Using media such as email when communicating, may result in misunderstandings. On the other hand, the culture of the United States tends to

be low context. Thus, people from the U.S. tend to talk more clearly than Chinese. Culture, therefore, may explain some of these differences in communication.

This study uses culture as a factor to explain why communication differences occur. The differences occur in communication styles, communication messages, and communication media choices.

Plan of the Thesis

The plan of the thesis is as follows. The first part of Chapter 2 is the theoretical framework of this study. I will provide the readers with an understanding of high context/ low context culture, language and high/low context communication styles, media richness theory, and other factors that may also play a part in the processes of choosing the media to communicate such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism vs. individualism.

The second part of Chapter 2 is the hypothesis developed from the literature review. There are two hypotheses in this study. Hypothesis one seeks to measure where China and U.S lie on the high context and low context culture scale. Hypothesis two examines the association between participants' response on the cultural context scale and the use of rich media such as face-to-face, communication and lean media such as fax and email.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and the participants in this study. This study is a quantitative study, and there are three parts of survey questions. Ohashi developed the first section of the survey and tested by Bresnaha et al. (2000). This study borrowed the original survey, and did a pilot study to test the reliability. This study changed several

questions from the initial questionnaire and made the reliability higher than the original one. The second part of the survey is to measure individuals' perceptions of each communication media scoring the richest medium on a scale from 1 to 5.

The third part of the survey is fourteen school-related situations that were created based partly upon prior studies about relational communication (Westmyer, Dicioccio, & Rubin, 1998；Richardson & Smith, 2007). Participants responded to each situation and decided which communication medium they like to use the most to communicate and which medium is the least they would use under each circumstance.

Chapter 4 explains the result of the study. Hypothesis one and two were tested separately. The analysis of the data shows that as predicted in hypothesis one, the Chinese students scored higher than U.S. participants on the High Context/Low Context scale. The first part of hypothesis two was tested by asking the participants to choose which medium was richer based on their opinion and experience. The results showed that the participants believe face-to-face communication is the richest, and fax is the leanest. Comparatively, Chinese participants believe text/cell phone apps is a lean medium, while U.S. participants feel text/cell phone apps is a lean medium. Chinese participants are especially likely to use face-to-face communication to contact their professors. Comparatively, U.S participants prefer to use email to communicate with their professors. This may be attributed to the difference between the high context culture and the low context culture. Also, compared to the U.S. participants, Chinese participants preferred to use phone call as a communication tool to contact their professors.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings and the limitations of this study. The overall findings are supporting the hypothesis; however, there are some interesting findings of the media choices. The Chinese participants are likely to use other media than face-to-face. The participants from the United States tend to use emails. There are some situations that email is just being sent for the purpose of getting an appointment with professors. The discussion also uses other situational factors such as power distance, or authority avoidance to explain the study findings. For example, Chinese participants rate face-to-face is the richest communication medium to communicate with their professors; however, they tend to prefer other media rather than face-to-face communication, because some students were afraid to communicate with their professors face-to-face. Moreover, some findings may be explained by the different school policies, such as office hours. In the United States, professors are required to have office hours, but in China, professors usually do not have required office hours. Chinese students may not be able to find their professors in their office, so other communication media such as phone call or text/cell phone apps are preferred.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

High Context Culture vs. Low Context Culture

Hall (1976) proposed that cultures can be identified based on the messages people in a given culture prefer to use, and he defined these as High Context (HC) or Low Context (LC) cultures. Cultures cannot be categorized as exclusively "high context" or "low context". However, cultures are on the two ends of a continuum. Some cultures tend to be at the higher end while others are at the lower end of the continuum (Hall, 1976). In an LC culture, ''where very little is taken for granted, greater cultural diversity and heterogeneity are likely to make verbal skills more necessary and, therefore, more highly prized'' (Okabe, 1983, p. 38). On the other hand, in an HC culture, "cultural homogeneity encourages suspicion of verbal skills, confidence in the unspoken, and eagerness to avoid confrontation'' (Okabe, p. 39). China and the United States are often regarded as having an HC culture and LC culture (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986, 1993; Hall, 1976; Hasegawa & Gudykunst, 1998; Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998; Miyanaga, 1991; Okabe, 1983). American culture reflects LC values; Americans are open, direct, and more confrontational (Chua & Gudykunst, 1987; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986) while Chinese culture historically values HC communication (Tsujimura, 1987); Chinese are more introverted and indirect.

In general, HC communication parties use indirect verbal communication with expressions and implications embedded in nonverbal communication (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986, 1993). LC communication, on the other hand, emphasizes direct and explicit information exchange (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986, 1993). According to previous studies from Nishida, and Hall, in this study, China was chosen as the representative of a high context culture country, and the United States was chosen as the representative of a low context culture.

HC communication tends to be "more indirect, ambiguous, and understated than LC communication, which is direct and precise, and expresses feelings and intentions rather openly" (Gudykunst et al., 1996, p.8) HC communication requires more context-related cues, some of which are related to the communication partner (e.g., gender, age, in-group, etc.), leading to more personalized communication. As emphasized by Hall (1976, p. 103), in LC communication, "most of the information must be in the transmitted message to make up for what is missing in the context." LC communication, therefore, tends to increase clarity, directness, explicit messages, and univocal content that do not require interpretation. See Figure 1.

High-Context versus Low-Context Cultures
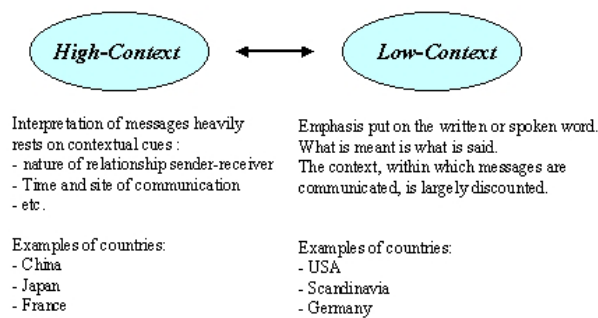
High-Context ←→ Low-Context

Interpretation of messages heavily rests on contextual cues :
- nature of relationship sender-receiver
- Time and site of communication
- etc.

Emphasis put on the written or spoken word. What is meant is what is said. The context, within which messages are communicated, is largely discounted.

Examples of countries:
- China
- Japan
- France

Examples of countries:
- USA
- Scandinavia
- Germany

Source: Edward T. Hall

This high context/low context concept is useful because it summarizes how people in a particular culture relate to one another, especially in social bonds, responsibilities, commitments, relationships, and communication. It helps people to understand the differences among cultures more easily and to study communication and other implications of cultural differences (Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998). However, what is considered as a high-context or low-context culture was often based on personal observations and interpretations. In other words, "the bases or cultural dimensions on which one culture is compared against others in deciding where in the high/low context culture continuum it can be placed are not clearly defined" (Kim, Pan, and Park, 1998, p.15).

In HC cultures, the intimate relationships and the well-structured social hierarchy and social norms serve as a broad context in which interpersonal communication takes place. Therefore, most communication relies on the physical contexts or is internalized in the person (non-verbal parts), and less information is contained in the verbal part of the message such as in words, sentences, and grammar. "In other words, one needs to put the messages in the appropriate context in order to understand the right meanings conveyed in the messages. In general, HC communication, in contrast to LC, is economical, fast, efficient, and satisfying. However, time must be devoted to programming (to be high context)" (Hall, 1976, p. 101). For example, in Asia, a big business deal may take place without sufficient written documents to lay out explicit contract terms. Sometimes a business deal is made during dinners. One drawback is that if the deal goes wrong, it is hard to agree on whose fault it is, which often leads to an adverse turn in the mutual

8

relationship. "In LC cultures, the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code, that is, in the words, sentences, and grammar"(Hall, 1976, p. 91). Low-context messages tend to be more "context-free", and "deals are made with less information about the character, background and values of the participants and much more reliance on the explicit communications" (Keegan, 1989, p. 115). "What is important, then, what is said, not how it is said and not the environment within which it is said" (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1993, p. 261).

HC communication was identified by Hall as involving ''more of the information in the physical context or internalized in the person'' (Hall, 1976, p. 79); greater belief is placed on the nonverbal aspects of communication than the verbal aspects. Communication in LC cultures was identified by Hall as ''just the opposite (of HC communication); i.e. the mass of information is vested in the explicit code'' (Hall, 1976, p. 79). "Face-to-face communication in HC cultures is characterized by an extensive use of nonverbal strategies for conveying meanings and messages. These strategies usually take the shape of behavioral languages, such as facial gestures, body language, silence time, eye contact, proximity and symbolic behavior, while conversation in LC cultures tends to be less physically animated, with the meaning dependent on content and the spoken words" (Würtz, 2006, p.12).

Hall adds that those who use LC communication style are "expected to communicate in ways that are consistent with their feelings,"(Hall, 1976, p.83) whereas a person from an HC culture will set the context and the setting and let the message evolve without referring to the problem directly. In the event of a conflict arising, HC cultures tend to use "indirect, non-confrontational, and vague language, relying on the listener's

or reader's ability to grasp the meaning from the context. LC cultures tend to use a more direct, confrontational, and explicit approach to ensure that the listener receives the message exactly as it was sent" (Hall, 1976, p. 84). Choe (2001) illustrates this difference in the following passage:

> If a North American supervisor is unsatisfied with a subordinate's sales proposal, the response will probably be explicit and direct: "I can't accept this proposal as submitted, so come up with some better ideas." A Korean supervisor, in the same situation, might say: "While I have the highest regard for your abilities, I regret to inform you that I am not completely satisfied with this proposal. I must ask that you reflect further and submit additional ideas on how to develop this sales program." (Choe 2001, p. 5)

Thought Patterns and Language

Based on previous literatures (i.e.Kaplan, 1966; Chen& Starosta, 1998), Choe (2001) outlines the main differences between the thought patterns of HC cultures and LC cultures. Thought patterns "refer to forms of reasoning and approaches to problem solution and can differ from culture to culture" (Choe, 2001, p. 3). LC cultures "tend to emphasize logic and rationality, based on the belief that there is always an objective truth that can be reached through linear processes of discovery" (Würtz, 2006, p. 279). "In conversations, people in LC cultures will shift from information already stated to information about to be given, while HC communication will jump back and forth and leave out details, assuming this to be implicit between the two dialogists. These patterns of linear versus circular thinking may in some ways reflect the way monochromic cultures perceive the concept of time compared to polychromic cultures—as a linear

sequence of progressing happenings from start to deadline, versus the circular or sporadic patterns that are evident in the cycle of the year, month, and life" (Würtz, 2006, p. 279). HC cultures are "characterized by indirect and cyclical approaches in their conversation and writing styles, often communicating without mentioning the subjects directly, whereas LC cultures will get straight to the point." (Würtz, 2006, p.279)

Languages and HC/LC communication styles

Hall's theory of HC-LC communication cultures is based on his background as a cultural anthropologist, on his field studies of Indian cultures, and his pioneering work with U.S. diplomatic services. Hall's theory is related to other cultural patterns relating to time, relationships, and interpersonal distance. Hall seems not to view language as strongly related to HC-LC communication styles when he states in *Beyond Culture* (1976) "The problem lies not in the linguistic code, but in the context, which carries varying proportions of the meaning. Without context, the code is incomplete since it encompasses only part of the message" (p. 86). However, later in the same chapter about "Context and Meaning" (chap. 6), he speaks about the linearity of language (with the English language implicitly in mind) and gives many examples related to the U.S. decontextualized legal system (e.g., in U.S. courts: "Answer the question, Yes or No" (p. 107). On the other hand, Hall gives HC examples based on the Chinese language and writing system as "an art form as well as on the way French courts tend to contextualize trials" (Hall, 1976, p.108). French culture being an "HC-LC *mélange*" (Hall's terminology) (Hall, 1976, p.108). However, being a cultural anthropologist, not a linguist, he seems to overlook how deeply language structure is related to the HC-LC divide. "Many Asian languages use no gender, little or no personal pronouns, do not conjugate

verbs and provide locators with a relatively under signified text, which requires much information from the context for the message to be understood by the receivers. Similarly, a semi-HC language such as French avoids repetitions of the same word for the sake of elegance and therefore uses synonyms or pronouns at the direct expense of preciseness and clarity" (Usunier &Roulin, 2010, p.193). Meaning is supposed to be understood from context. Conversely, LC languages are often over coded to make messages even more explicit. "When a German locator says "*Ich mache*," the first person singular is both in the personal pronoun *Ich* (*I*) and in the ending (*e*) of the verb, which applies only to the first person singular in the present and active tense" (Usunier& Roulin, 2010, p.193). In the view of this thesis, HC-LC communication styles are partly related to language structure. Communication in LC languages, especially English, is more universally used than some HC language such as Chinese and Japanese because it requires less contextual cues to be understood. Context, as defined by Hall is essentially qualitative and related to "five sets of disparate categories of events: subject or activity, situation, status, past experience, and culture"(Hall, 1976, p. 87). In HC communication, the challenge is not only that there is more context but also that the context is specific to particular cultures and languages. For example, Chinese and Japanese have different interpretations and different communication patterns. For instance, in Japanese, the language has gender, and social status embedded. When people communicate with others, the languages and tones they use are different. Though both China and Japan are HC cultures, Chinese seem to communicate more explicit than Japanese. As a consequence, it may be harder to communicate across different HC language-cultures than for a person from HC culture communicates with people from LC language-cultures. When people

communicate across different HC language cultures, they need to understand different cues, such as facial expression, body languages, and different language tones to communicate smoothly.

"HC communicators need their native language because it tends to be strongly associated with particular contextual cues, familiar to them. However, these contextual cues are unfamiliar to communicators from other HC cultures. HC communicators may feel uneasy communicating with other HC business people (i.e., also HC communicators, however not within the same context) whereas they may paradoxically feel more comfortable interacting with LC communicators" (Usunier& Roulin, 2010, p.202).

Media Richness Theory

Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986) indicates that all communication media vary in their ability to enable users to communicate and change understanding - their "richness." "The theory posits that people select interpersonal communication channels by forming a rational judgment regarding the match between channel richness and the message equivocality" (Richardson & Smith, 2007, p. 482). The message equivocality according to Daft and Lengel is defined as "ambiguity, the existence of multiple and conflicting interpretations about an organizational situation" (Daft & Lengel, 1986, p.556). That is, "equivocality often means confusion, disagreement and lack of understanding" (Daft, Lengel & Trevino, 1987, p. 357).

Richer media have more capability of handling more equivocal messages. According to the theory, the richest communication medium is the face-to-face communication, followed by telephone, email, and written letters (Trevino, Daft & Lengel, 1990). Daft

and Lengel's studies also indicate that more variables could affect how people choose media to communicate, and the media richness theory cannot apply to every situation of how people choose the communication media.
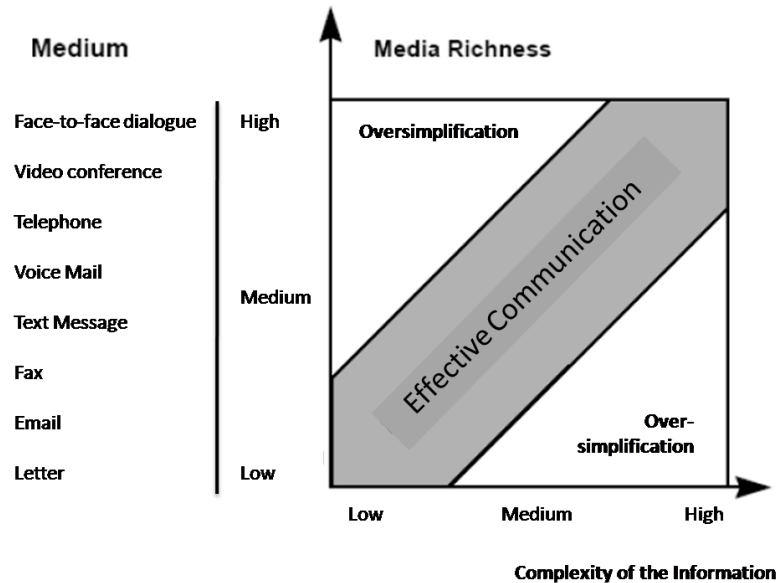
Figure 2. Richness of media (Draft, 1979)

Draft and Wiginton (1979, p. 24) identified nine different types of languages: "art nonverbal cues, poetry, general verbal expression, jargon, linguistic variables, computer languages, probability theory and analytical mathematics." Draft and his colleague (1987) broadly group these alternatives into two categories: natural language and numbers. All three basic media (video, audio, and computer text) provides the equal similar capabilities of using natural language and number excluding the variations provide by varying the first factor, multiple cues.

Media richness theory is imprecise about the definition and measurement of performance. Daft and Lengel (1986, p.567-568) state that organizations process

14

information to "attain adequate performance" without ever defining "performance." In a summary of media richness theory articulating its conceptual framework, Trevino et al. (1990, p.71-96) discuss performance in "three terms: making better decisions (decision quality), establishing shared systems of meaning (consensus among participants), and making better use of participants' time (time required to reach conclusions)." Users' satisfaction is also suggested as an element of performance, albeit less directly (Lengel & Daft, 1988). Satisfaction has long been a key factor in-group work (Hackman, 1990; McGrath，1984), so communication satisfaction of sender and receiver is another element of performance.

Immediacy of Feedback

The Immediacy of feedback is the extent to which a medium enables users to give rapid feedback on the communication they received (Daft & Lengel, 1986). "There are two parts of most communication: the sender presents the message and the receiver accepts it" (Clarke& Brennan, 1991). In order to communicate successfully, both the sender and receiver must mutually agree that the receiver has understood the message (Clarke& Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). Feedback from the receiver to the sender plays an important role in communication.

There are two fundamental types of feedback: concurrent and sequential (Kraus& Weinheimer, 1996). Concurrent feedback (also called "back channel") (Duncan, 1973; Yngve, 1970) is the feedback provided simultaneously with the delivery of the message. "Concurrent feedback often takes the form of nonverbal gestures (e.g., head nods, quizzical expressions) or very brief messages that do not take the communication turn

from the sender (e.g., "uh huh,")"(Kraut et al. 1982, p.391). Sequential feedback occurs when the sender pauses (or the receiver interrupts), and the receiver communicates to confirm understanding or to redirect the sender's presentation of the message. Here, the receiver takes a speech turn but quickly returns to the sender.

Many categories or types of feedback have been identified (Clarke& Brennan 1991; Clarke& Wilkes-Gibbs 1986; & Clarke, 1992). Four types are particularly relevant for understanding effects on media richness. "The first one is an acknowledgment that indicates understanding and can be delivered concurrently (e.g., head nods, "uh huh") or sequentially (e.g., by repeating a portion of the message) (Dennis& Kinney, 1998). A second type, usually delivered sequentially, is a negative acknowledgment, indicating a lack of understanding by the receiver. A third type, usually delivered sequentially (often via an interruption), is the repair, in which the receiver corrects or clarifies the sender's message. A fourth type, also usually sequential, is the proxy in which the receiver completes the message for the sender" (Dennis& Kinney, 1998, p. 261).

Feedback is important to the speed and the effectiveness of communication because it enables the sender to recognize the extent to which the receiver understands the message and to adjust the message presentation accordingly. "A sender could recognize that the receiver understands the message and move on to new messages, or recognize that the receiver does not understand the message and attempt to clarify it" (Clarke, 1992, p.13). Rapid feedback also enables the sender to "use certain communication patterns that minimize the time required to achieve understanding." (Clarke & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986, p. 22) For example, the sender can use installment techniques in which the sender delivers the message in parts, seeks feedback after each

16

part (i.e., acknowledgment or negative acknowledgment), and continues to elaborate on the message by adding additional parts until the receiver indicates understanding. After the acknowledgement of understanding, the sender moves on to the next message. Immediate feedback also enables the sender to encourage "proxy feedback or to use trial references" (Clarke & Brennan, 1991, p.131) in which the sender uses an "uncertain reference and seeks an acknowledgment or repair from the receiver before continuing"(Dennis& Kinney, 1998, p.265). For example, the sender may say "The paper is due on…uh…um…" and the receiver will respond "Next Monday".

There is evidence to suggest that the lacking of immediate feedback increases the number of words senders use to send out the message, and increases the time required completing the communication process (Kraus& Bricker 1966; Kraus& Weinheimer, 1966). As the delay between sending a message and receiving feedback, the time required to complete a task also increased (Kraus& Bricker, 1966). The lacking of feedback also tends to reduce the accuracy of communication (Kraut et al. 1982; Leavitt& Mueller, 1951). From these reasons, Daft and Lengel (1986) argue that media providing immediate feedback be richer than those delays the communicating process.

Hall (1959, 1976) contends that the U.S. as individualism is low in context. In U.S most information is codified and formalized to increase understanding in the multicultural context. In U.S. society, creativity and efficiency by individuals are "valued and rewarded, leading individuals to restrict their communication with other members of the organization and increase the reliance on formal channels." (Leonard, et, al., 2011, p. 87). Individualists seek contextual information and emphasize the importance-codified information (Triandis, 1990, 1995, 1998).

Hall (1959, 1976) identified China as a collectivistic culture and a high context culture. Communicators from collectivistic cultures place more emphasis on high context communication and attribute meaning to both the context and the receiver's orientation. This phenomenon can be confusing to those in low context individualistic cultures. "In collectivistic cultures, message content is often contextual cues to interpret the message properly, and continually looks for cues in communication" (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hall, 1976; H. Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ross, 2001; Triandis, 2002; Ross, 2001). Because the communication is ambiguous to communicators from low context culture, there are not enough clues to completely analyze the communication (Leonard, Scotter,& Pakdil, 2009).

Social Presence Theory

Social presence refers to the degree to which a medium permits communicators to experience others as being psychologically present (Short et. Al., 1976; Fulk, Steinfield, Schmitz, & Power, 1987). Social presence theory also argues that media's effectiveness center on its ability to communicate the character of the relationship between the sender and receiver. According to Short (1978), low in social presence media, such as memos and letters, were suitable for providing information, while media high in social presence, such as face-to-face, was better suited for negotiations.

Media with a greater social presence also provide the message sender with a greater ability to monitor the receiver's reaction to the message. (Dennis& Kinney, 1998; Kahai& Cooper, 2003) When using a high social presence medium, the receiver has to commit some portion of his /her attention to the message and will be more likely to be

motivated to hear it. As individuals increase their attention level, the effort and intention

devoted to the communication progress also increase. "If both intention and effort are

present, then the motivation to think about the advocacy will exit" (Petty& Cacioppo,

p.220). The greater the social presence of a medium, the greater the receiver's motivation

has to be to listen to the message and the communication progress would increase. "On

the other hand, the receiver can easily ignore messages sent through the media that is low

in social presence" (Kahai& Cooper, 2003, p.241). For instance, when communicating

with people face-to-face, the receiver needs to listen to the sender and looking for both

verbal and nonverbal cues. However, when sending an email to the receiver, the receiver

has the choice about when to read the email, and when to respond. The receiver does not

have "to obligate himself to be at a specific time or place." This means that the message

has to compete with other activities. The message senders may need to transmit the

message into a high social presence medium to get the attention from the receiver

(Robert& Dennis, 2005). However, "the use of rich media high in social presence induces

increased motivation but decreased ability to process, while the use of lean media low in

social presence induces decreased motivation but increased ability to process" (Robert&

Dennis, 2005). To give the receiver more time to process and reflect complex information,

the sender should use low social presence media to communicate with the receiver

(Downey, 2010). See Figure 3 and Figure 4.
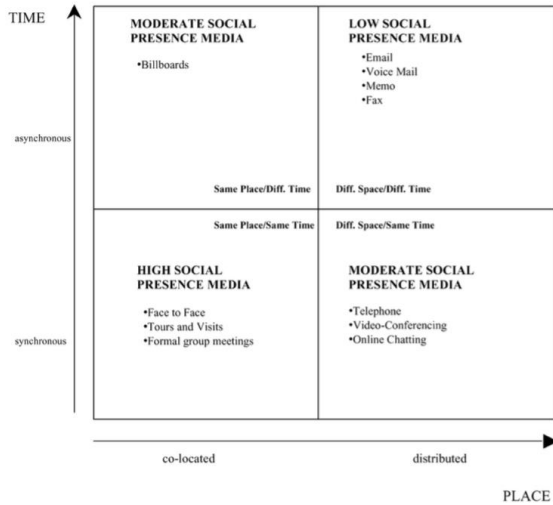
Figure 3. Social presence of media classification (Robert& Dennis, 2005).
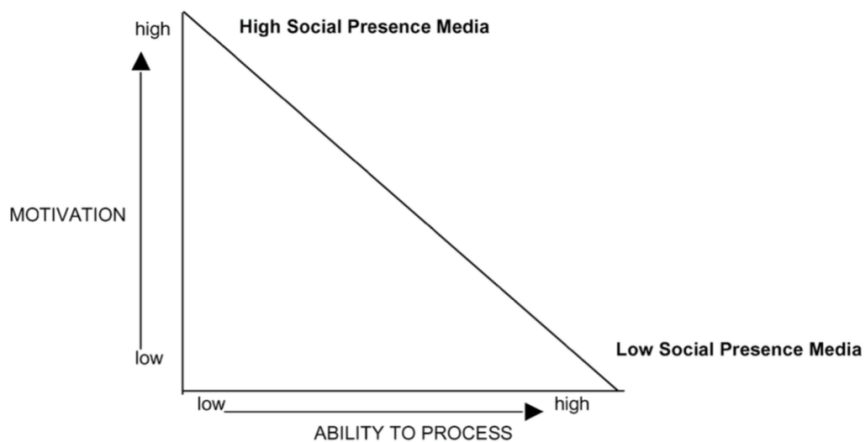

Figure 4. Inverse relationship between motivation and ability to process (Robert& Dennis, 2005).

Collectivism vs. Individualism

Gudykunst (1997) and Gudykunst and Matsumoto (1996) argued that individualism explain major differences and similarities and differences in the ways that individuals communicate. Research shows that individualists are more direct in their

communication and place less emphasis on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others (Singelis& Brown, 1995).

In collectivistic cultures, people are interdependent within their in-groups (family, tribe, nation, etc.), "give priority to the goals of their in-groups, shape their behavior primarily on the basis of in-group norms, and behave in a communal way" (Mills& Clark, 1982. p. 123). People in collectivistic cultures are concerned with relationships. Ohbuchi, Fukushima, and Tedeshi (1999) showed that collectivists in conflict situations are primarily concerned with maintaining their relationship with others, whereas individualists are mainly concerned with achieving justice in conflicts. Thus, collectivists prefer methods and media of communication that do not destroy relationships and can avoid direct conflict (Leung, 1997).

"In individualistic cultures people are autonomous and independent from their in-groups, and they give priority to their personal goals over goals of their in-groups, and exchange theory adequately predicts their social behavior" (Triandis, 2001, p.910).

It should not be assumed that everybody in individualistic cultures has all the characteristics of these cultures and that everyone on in collectivist cultures has the features of those cultures. Rather, "people sample from both the individualist and collectivist cognitive structures, depending on the situation" (Triandis, 2001, p.910).

Situational Factors

Some researchers found media richness to be less sufficient to explain individual communication media choice behavior. (Bowman &Van den Wijingaert, 2002; Rice, 1992) Although some media such as email may not be as rich as face-to-face, some users

still prefer these media "for reasons unrelated to their ability to handle message equivocality." (El-Shinnaway& Markus, 1997, p. 463) Markus and other researchers proposed that new capabilities found uniquely in electronic media could enhance the richness of media. (Culnan & Markus, 1987; El-Shinnaway& Markus, 1998; Markus, 1994) The media such as email was found to be more suitable for more equivocal messages in some situations, counter to the prediction of media richness theory (Huang, Watson, &Wei, 1988; Lee, 1994; Markus, 1994). In additional to the new features available in these new media, situational factors such as accessibility, availability, and experience with new media are also influential on individuals' media choice. (El-Shinnaway &Markus, 1997; King &Xia, 1997; Rice &Shook, 1988; Steinfield, 1986) These studies indicate that the rational judgment of the richness of media is not the only determination for media choice behavior.

High Context & Low Context Culture and Media Choice

Rice and his colleagues (1992) examined the influence of culture values on individual's media choice and found that participants from high context cultures preferred face-to-face communication more than participants from low context cultures did. When individuals interact, they are "situated within a social context that regulates or influences communication contact (who exchange information with whom) and communication content (what information is communicated)" (Sproull &Kiesler, 1986, p.1494). Rice (1992, p. 117) distinguished between two conceptualizations of computer-mediated communication (CMC) "as a new channels for innovative information, as well as the content themselves of innovation processes", and three stages of information processing "input, conversion, and output."

22

Power Distance

This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal. It expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities among us. Power Distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally." (Hofstede, 1980, p. 56)

Scores at 80, China sits in the higher rankings of power distance – i.e. a society that believes that inequalities among people are acceptable. "The subordinate-superior relationship tends to be polarized and there is no defense against power abuse by superiors." (Hofstede, 1980, p. 56) The people who have a higher rank often receive respect and seldom challenged by people who are below their ranks. People should not have ambitions beyond their rank. (Hofstede, 1980)

Hofstede's (1980, 2001) work on power distance is relevant when discussing media use in various cultural contexts. In cultures where power distance is small, supervisors have less control over subordinates, and interdependence develops instead. However, power is perception; it is the potential to control or influence others, often through control of resources (Dahl, 1957; Emerson, 1962; Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1994). Power distance as a cultural variation is the extent to which a society accepts unequal distributions of power in institutions and organizations (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 2001).

Among several comprehensive dimensional frameworks that attempt to discover and verify cultural variations across cultures, Hofstede's (1980) 5D model deals with the norms of governing the societal roles attached to women and men. Hofstede's (1980)

work on cultural differences represents a significant and innovative research on cross-cultural comparisons in the areas of management, social psychology, anthropology, sociology, marketing and communication (Albers, 1994; Kale, 1991). Hofstede's model of five value dimensions was developed based on an extensive data set collected from a survey with IBM employees across the world to find an explanation for the fact that some concepts of work motivation did not work in all countries in the same way (An& Kim, 2006). Like much of psychologists' work on cultural values, Hofstede's (1980) study developed a structure comprised of four major dimensions on which societies would differ: power distance, societal desire for hierarchy or egalitarianism; individualism, societal preference for a group or individual orientation; masculinity, a gender-role differentiation; uncertainty avoidance – societal resistance to uncertainty. Later, an additional Chinese value survey in 23 nations done by Hofstede and Bond (1984) identified the fifth dimension, long-term orientation. The model has been validated in hundreds of different cross-cultural studies from a variety of disciplines including sociology, market research, and medicine, and when compared to other models, Hofstede's model is probably the one that has been most frequently tested and validated (Dorfman& Howell, 1988; Bhagat& McQuaid, 1982).

From the previous definitions of high power-distance cultures, Leonard, Scotter and Pakdil propose that high power-distance cultures are likely to communicate using different media than in lower-power-distance cultures (Leonard, Scotter,& Pakdil, 2009). In high power-distance cultures, subordinates expect a clear distinction between themselves and their superiors, and the communication preferences are likely to reflect it. High interactivity is "more effective for control, contextualization, affectivity, and

perspective, which are required in cultures with higher power distance" (Te'eni, 2001, p.264). In high power-distance cultures, it would seem that managers waste a significant amount of time monitoring routine messages. With the carefully monitoring routines, the managers can show their status and power. Huang et al. (2003) found power distance had a significant effect on whether the email was an acceptable communication, because, in high power-distance cultures, the email did not have the ability to embed the symbols and cues that can show status and respect. In low power-distance cultures, however, "the information was all that was required, so the lack of symbols and cues was not considered a negative effect on its use" (Leonard, Scotter, & Pakdil, 2009, p.854).

Low power-distance cultures provide an environment that "better supports the multilevel distribution of data, information, and certain types of knowledge." (Leonard, Scotter,& Pakdil, 2009, p. 855) People from a low power-distance culture tend to be independent workers and are likely to have more devote into decisions about which medium to use (Leonard, Scotter,& Pakdil, 2009).

From the previous studies and definitions, low power-distance, at the societal level, drives organizational members to consider less rich (lean) communication media more effective whereas organizational members in higher power-distance societies consider rich communication more effective. "At the individual level, the need for less power distance allows individuals to use less rich (leaner) communication media than can organizational members who need more power distance" (Leonard, Scotter,& Pakdil, 2009, p. 856).

Uncertainty Avoidance

The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with how people deal with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings anxiety, and different cultures have learned how to deal with this anxiety in a variety of ways. How the members of a culture feel threatened or anxious by unknown situations and how they will try to avoid these unknown situations is reflected in the score on Uncertainty Avoidance (China-Geert Hofstede, April 18, 2016).

"Score at 30, China has a low score on Uncertainty Avoidance. The truth may be relative though in the immediate social circles there is concern for Truth with a capital T and rules (but not necessarily laws) abound. Nonetheless, adherence to laws and rules may be flexible to suit the actual situation and pragmatism is a fact of life. The Chinese are comfortable with ambiguity; the Chinese language is full of ambiguous meanings that can be difficult for Western people to follow. Chinese are adaptable and entrepreneurial. At the time of writing the majority (70% -80%) of Chinese businesses tend to be small to medium sized and family owned." ("What about China", 2016)

Communication is needed to reduce uncertainty and equivocality, according to the media richness theory (Daft & Macintosh, 1981). "Uncertainty avoidance, as a societal construct, drives organizational members in lower-uncertainty-avoidance societies to communicate in ways that are less rich than would be acceptable to organizational members in higher-uncertainty-avoidance societies." (Daft & Macintosh, 1981, p. 209) Daft and Macintosh's studies also proposed that individual uncertainty avoidance plays a role in the choice of media. Therefore, the studies suggest that uncertainty versus

certainty orientation, as a differentiating societal characteristic, is a determinant of media choice (Leonard, Scotter, & Pakdil, 2009).

From Daft and Macintosh's studies, individuals cope with uncertainty in two ways: "(1) by seeking information directly, that is, uncertainty-oriented; and (2) by looking to others for direction, that is, certainty-oriented" (Shuper et al., 2004; Sorrentino et al., 2003; Sorrentino & Roney, 2000). This has consequences for acceptance of communication by the receivers. If the receivers were uncertainty-oriented, they might have a higher acceptance of ambiguous information. However, if the receiver were certainty-oriented, ambiguous messages and those without clear context or intent would be confusing and could be rejected by receivers (Leonard, Scotter, & Pakdil, 2009).

Figure 5. Postulated effect of the individualism dimension at the societal and individual levels (Leonard, Scotter, & Pakdil, 2009).

Hypotheses

Many past studies have placed China on the higher end and the United States on the lower end of the HC/LC culture continuum. However, individual-level HC/LC communication style was not well studied in China. This study extends the measurement of HC/LC culture, by using an individual-level HC/LC communication scale and testing the assumption that the choices of communication media between the Chinese and the United States will be significantly different at an individual level.

Therefore,

H1: Chinese participants will score higher on the HC/LC scale than will the U.S. participants.

Moreover, nonverbal cues play a major role in HC communication, whereas LC communication emphasizes more verbal, explicit communication. An individual who scores higher on HC/LC communication scale should appreciate the nonverbal cues in messages and therefore use more face-to-face communication. In contrast, those who score low on the scale will focus more on the verbal information and use less rich media.

Therefore,

H2: Scores on the HC/LC communication scale will be positively correlated with the use of richer media such as face- to-face and negatively correlated with the use of lean media such as email and fax.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

351 (n=351) college students from both China and the United States participated in this study. There are 208 participants recruited from a mid-sized college in China and 195 (n=195) participants completed the survey. Students from all majors and years were invited, and the participants are from 18 to 27 years old with the mean age of 22.1 (SD= 2.6). 157 participants from the United States were recruited from a large communication general education course in a mid-western university and 156 (n=156) participants completed the survey.

Of the Chinese participants, 70 were males (35.9%), and 125 were females (64.1%), 14.4% were freshmen, 24.6% were sophomores, 27.2% were juniors, and 24.6% were 4th-year seniors, 9.2% were 5th-year seniors.

There were 157 participants from the United States, and 156 (n=156) completed the survey. Among all the participants 111 were females (71.15%), and 39 were males (25%), and 6 of them (3.85%) preferred not to answer the question. Among these participants 29 were freshmen (18.59%), 37 were sophomore (23.72%), 49 were juniors (31.41%), and 41 were seniors (26.28%).

Procedure

All participants who contributed to this study would receive some extra credits in one of the courses they are taking. Students from the United States were asked to complete the survey online through SurveyMonkey, and the Chinese students were asked to complete the survey via a link on their university web page. The university professors helped upload the survey to their webpage and helped the data collection in China. All participants who agreed to participate in this study signed a consent form, which were collected separately from the rest of the survey. The data collection was IRB approved. Participants were asked to read all the questions carefully, and try not to skip any question. Upon the completion of the survey, the participants were thanked. All the participants remain anonymous.

Measures

High Context/Low Context Culture Communication Scale

Ohashi (2000) pointed out Gudykunst and colleague's High Context/ Low context Communication scales was two-dimensional, with one dimension being high context and the other being low context. However, the High Context/Low Context scale should be unidimensional, based on "Hall's (1976) conceptualization of High Context/ Low Context Communication, in which High Context/ Low Context Communication was thought out as a continuous single dimension." (Ohashi, p. 30).

In this study, a 5-point Likert Scale measuring individual's level of high context/ low context communication value was created based on Ohashi's measurements. Her

scale was tested to be reliable in the past studies. (e.g., Bresnahan et al., 2002), but Bresnahan and his colleagues indicated that Ohashi's scale measures "general societal norms about what is an acceptable style for communicating while certain types of communication may be much dependent on contextual and relational factors." (p.140.), as all items in Ohashi's scale start with, "It is generally considered." Assessing how people in a given culture generally respond in a situation "may have little use in predicting how people are likely to respond given topic salience, interpersonal and relational identity and other contextual constraints." (Bresnahan et al., p. 140). Therefore, a couple of questions from Ohashi's scale were adapted in a way to ask respondents to respond with their individual level preference in a given situation in mind. Moreover, this new scale was based on both Ohashi's scale and a scale from a past study Richardson and Smith (2007) conducted. Twelve items reflecting the concept of High Context / Low Context were created and added. The reliability of this scale was assessed for these twelve items, and the Cronbach's alpha is 0.84.

Media Richness Scale

Media richness was measured using a 5-point scale. Each participant was asked to rate each communication medium from 5 (High) to 1 (Low). Individual's opinion of richness about each of the following communication medium was measured: Face-to-Face, Email, Phone, Text/ Apps and Fax.

Participants were asked to rate each media by four of their characteristics of richness. These characteristics include: ability to handle multiple information cues simultaneously, ability to facilitated rapid feedback, ability to establish a personal focus,

31

ability to utilize natural language, and ability to utilize natural language. The more characteristics of richness a media has, the richer the media is. While 5 is the richest, and 1 is the least rich.

Communication Media Scale

Fourteen school-related situations were created to measure individual's communication media choice. This measurement was built based partly upon prior studies about relational communication (Westmyer, Dicioccio, & Rubin, 1998；Richardson & Smith, 2007). All situations were created based on the students' desire of communicating with their professors and school faculties. The participants were instructed to think of the professors and faculties in general, not a specific professor or faculty. Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to use (a) Face to Face, (b) Email, (c) Phone, (d) Text/ Cell phone Apps, and (e) Fax to contact their professor or school faculties for each of 14 situations on a series of 5 point scales (e.g. You have been working on a project and feel you are going in the wrong direction. You would like to ask the professor for advice.). These four non-face-to-face communication media were chosen based on the past research. (e.g. Trevion& Lengel, 1990; Richardson& Smith, 2007). The reliability of each channel (FtoF, email, phone, text message/cell phone apps, and fax) was assessed, and the Cronbach's alpha for each channel was: 0.77(FtoF), 0.74(email), 0.72(phone), 0.78(text message/cell phone apps), and 0.81(fax).

Demographic Questions

All participants were asked to provide their basic demographic information such as age, sex, and their first language at the end of the survey. Additionally, participants were asked if they have access to and how often they use email and cell phone in their daily lives.

All components of survey instrument were translated from English into Chinese by a bilingual speaker, and were back translated from Chinese into English by another bilingual speaker. When the translation was not consistent, the translators and the researcher discussed the problem and altered that translation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULT

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Chinese participants would score higher on High Context/ Low Context scale than would the U.S. participants. The highest possibility of HC/LC scale is 85, and the lowest points the participants could get is 17. A significant difference of H/L communication score was found between Chinese participants (M=65.82 SD=4.20) and the U.S. participants (M=58.11, SD=2.97) t (329)=19.34, p <. 0001. From the data, the Chinese students score significantly higher than U.S participants on the HC/LC scale (Table 1).

Table 1

High Context/ Low Context Communication Scale Table

	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Chinese Participants	65.82[a]	4.20
U.S. Participants	58.11[b]	2.97

Note: The high context and low context value based on the test of high context and low context culture scale. By adding each score together and have the total score. The possible highest score of the scale is 85, and the lowest possible scale would be 17. The higher the score indicates the higher context culture of communication.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the scores on the High Context / Low Context would correlate positively with the use of rich media (e.g. face-to-face) use and negatively with the use of less rich media (e.g. email).

To test this Hypothesis the media richness was measured by asking the participants to choose which medium was richer based on their opinion and experience. Participants from China (M=4.86, SD=. 03), and United States (M=4.97, SD=. 01) all believe that the face-to-face communication is the richest. And also, both participants from United States (M=3.92, SD=. 26) and China (M=3.57, SD=. 43) believe that phone is a rich medium (Table 2). In contrast, Chinese participants regarded email as a lean medium (M=1.87, SD=. 41), while the U.S. participants scored higher on email than Chinese participants (M=2.58, SD=. 60). Comparing the score on email from Chinese participants and the U.S. participants, there is a significant difference, t (349)= -13.122, p<. 0001.

More interestingly, the Chinese participants scored significantly higher for the richness of text (M=3.45, SD=. 05) than the U.S. participants (M=2.29, SD=. 04). Chinese participants scored text the similarly as they scored on email, (349)= 17.994, p<. 0001. This difference may be due to the development of Chinese cellphone texting apps. Texting apps such as WeiChat can not only send words, but also send pictures, audio, videos, and emoticons. In fact, people tend to respond to text faster than to email. Moreover, most professors will let their students use apps to contact them. However, in the United States, professors, in general, prefer students using email to communicate with them.

There is a significant difference between the U.S. and Chinese participants about the richness of the phone t (349)=-6.44, p<. 0001. Though both groups scored the phone as a medium rich to rich media, the significance of the statistic may be because the U.S. participants mostly scored the phone as a second rich media, and, the Chinese participants chose the second rich media as both phone and text. Also, both groups of participants agree that fax is the least rich medium (Chinese participant M=1.16, SD=. 37) participants from the U.S. (M=1.06, SD=. 25). See Table 2.

Table 2

Communication Media Scale

	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
US FtoF	4.97[a]	.01
Chinese FtoF	4.86[a]	.03
US email	2.58[a]	.60
Chinese email	1.87[b]	.41
US phone	3.92[a]	.26
Chinese phone	3.57[a]	.43
US text	2.29[a]	.04
Chinese text	3.45[b]	.05
US Fax	1.06[a]	.25
Chinese Fax	1.16[a]	.37

Note: How participants' response to all the questions in the media richness scale. The higher score indicates more likely participants will use to communicate. The media score higher than 2.5 would consider as a lean to rich media, and lower than 2.4 is a lean media.

The second part of this test measures the scores of each communication medium choice obtained from participants in two different countries. The possibility of participants to rate the highest on communication media is 70, which means people rate 5 points on all 14 questions, and the lowest points one can get are 14. One can see from the communication media scale (Table 3) that Chinese participants are especially likely to use face-to-face communication to contact the college staff. Comparatively, the email communication style is much more popular among the U.S. participants than Chinese participants, which shows the difference between the high context culture and the low context culture. Also, one can see that the Chinese participants prefer to use phone as the communication tool compared with the U.S. participants. The reason may be that Chinese participants think the phone communication style is a convenient and effective communication style. Anyway, all participants believe that the fax communication is not a convenient and effective style, and this communication is rarely used. The result of Table 3 is consistent with Table 2. However, the text and cellphone app usage by Chinese participants is significantly higher than participants from United States t (349)=35.349, p<. 0001.

Table 3

Communication Media Scale

	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
US TotalFtoF	3.92[a]	.59
Chinese TotalFtoF	4.86	.42
US Totalemail	4.56[a]	.40
Chinese Totalemail	1.78[b]	.24
US Totalphone	2.68[a]	.60
Chinese Totalphone	2.72[b]	.27
US Totaltext	1.93[a]	.46
Chinese Totaltext	3.22[b]	.20
US TotalFax	1.26[a]	.26
Chinese TotalFax	1.20[a]	.14

Note: Participants responses to the media they are using when communicating in the different situation. The most likely they will use scores 5, and the least they use scores 1 on the scale.

Table 4 shows the relationship between how two culture groups respond to the high context culture scale with how two culture groups respond to the media richness scale to see if there is a clear relationship between these two variables. From the correlation we can see that, there is a clear relationship between high context culture with face-to-face richness (r=. 15, p=.005). However, there is a strong negative correlation between high context culture with email richness (r=-.44, p<0.000). The number indicates that the higher score on the high context culture scale, the less rich they believe the email is. The number also indicates there is a not strong negative correlation between high context

culture scale and phone richness (r=-.12, p=. 027). Table 4 indicates there is a strong

relationship between high context culture and text richness (r=. 45, p<0.000). Moreover,

there is no clear relationship between high context culture and the richness of fax.

Table 4

Correlation Between High Context Culture Scale and Media Richness

	FtoF richness	Email richness	Phone richness	Text richness	Fax richness
High Context (n=351)	.15**	-.44**	-.12	.45**	.06

Note: The numbers with ** are significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5

Correlation Between Media Richness and Media Choice

	Total choice of FtoF	Total choice of email	Total choice of phone	Total choice of text	Total choice of Fax
Richness of the media	-.23**	.52**	.47	.64**	-.06

Note: Compare the result on the media richness scale and the media choices (question 18-31) The numbers with ** are significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5 is the relationship between the media richness and the media choice. The

result is consistent with Table 4 in general. But there is one result that does not line up

with the prediction. The prediction is that the richer a media is, the more likely people

will choose. However, from both Table 4 and Table 5, the total choice of face-to-face

communication has a strongly negative relationship with the richness of face-to-face

(r=-.23, p=0.000). Table 2 indicates that the face-to-face communication is the richest

media in both groups. The result shows in table 2 may be occurring due to the study

design because most situations in the survey do not need face-to-face communication.

Table 6:

Correlation Between Different Media Choices and Culture.

	Total choice of FtoF	Total choice of email	Total choice of phone	Total choice of text	Total choice of Fax
Highcontext culture (n=351)	.55**	-.68**	.078	.63**	-.093

Note: The scale compares scale 3 and scale 1, to indicate the relationship between media choice and culture. The numbers with ** are significant at the 0.01 level

One can see from the correlation table (Table 6) that the correlation between the

face-to-face communication and the high context cultures is r=. 55, p<0.01, which

indicates there is a strong relationship between the high context culture and people's

choice of face-to-face communication. Also, evaluation results show text message have a

strong has a very strong positive relationship with the score on high context culture scale

(r=. 63, p<0.01). The values of different correlation coefficients indicate that the

hypothesis two is supported. The correlation coefficient between the email

communication style and the high context culture is r=-. 68, p<0.01, which indicates that

there is a strong negative relationship between culture and email usage. The correlation

coefficient between the phone call and fax communication style and the high context

culture are (r=. 78, p= .15, r=-.09, p=. 08), which indicate that there exist some

relationship between both phone call and fax communication style and the high context

culture, but the relationship is not significantly strong.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this study, both hypotheses were supported. The high context / low context culture context can affect how people choose the communication media. This study revealed that people from the high context culture tend to use richer media to communicate, and try to avoid less rich media. This result supported Hall's theory of high context/low context culture.

First hypothesis predicted that Chinese participants will score higher on the HC/LC scale than will the U.S. participants. As predicted China is a high context culture, and the United States is at the lower end.

The test of the second hypothesis shows that there exists a positive correlation between the score on high context/ low context scale and the use of communication media. The data shows that the Chinese participants prefer to communicate with college faculty using the face-to-face communication style, or using the text/cell phone apps to communicate. Some Chinese students prefer to use text messages or cell phone apps to communicate with their professors, because it is very convenient and efficient. Almost everyone has some access to the new communication style or communication media.

However, the score of phone calls was not very high compared with the richness participants believed phone call communication was. It may be due to the polite reason. Some people think they may interrupt by calling someone, but by texting or using cellphone apps, the interruption would be limited. However, almost every Chinese participant rated text/cell phone apps richer than email, and this could explain why Chinese participants all rate email as similar to fax, which is almost never used. The cell phone apps and text message can send very rich messages, files, videos, audio, and they can get feedback quicker than email. Moreover, in China, there is not a culture of email use in communication. Though most students and professors in college have access to email, the time waiting to get feedback is longer than other communication media.

This study also indicates that the U.S. participants also believe that face-to-face communication is the richest. However, most of the participants chose email the most to communicate with their professors. Although email does not rate as rich media, its usage rate is high, which is understandable, because the hypothesis suggests the higher the context of the culture is, the richer media they will use. From this point, this study can suggest that a lower context culture such as the United States can use less rich media to communicate. Also, how people choose communication media is not only based on the culture, but there are also many other variables, which can affect how people choose the media to communicate. Some people prefer to send text messages not because it is a rich media, but because it is easier and more convenient. Some Chinese participants point out that sometimes there is no need to communicate with their professor face to face, but they still do it, because they know their professors are in their offices, and it is quicker to get

responses. And some students avoid face-to-face communication with their professors that may be due to the power distance.

Compared with the U.S. participants, the Chinese participants tend to use more personal communication styles such as texting, face-to-face, and cell phone apps. It might be due to the individualism vs. collectivism. In China, the idea of privacy is not as strong as in the United States. In the U.S., the professor and college faculties won't easily give their home phone or their personal cell phone numbers to students. But Chinese professors are required by school policy to give their personal cell phone numbers to their students. So, college professors always get students' text messages or cell phone apps messages, especially during finals.   However, in the United States, people tend to respect others' privacy. Also usually, email use is a polite way to set up appointments or ask simple questions, thus giving professors choices to decide when to answer the questions and when to give feedback.

University policies are also playing a part in influencing how students choose media to communicate with their professors. In the United States, professors are required to have office hours. And professors will list their office hours on the syllabus. Students can stop by in their professors' office during office hour. However, in China, professors do not usually have a strict office hour listed or scheduled. Students may not find their professors in their offices, so students in China prefer other ways to communicate with their professors.

Another factor that is part of this study is power distance. China from previous studies is a high power distance country, and U.S is on the lower end. As I said before,

some students avoid face-to-face communication with their professors because students have the tendency to be afraid of their professor of their authority and power. While some students avoid face-to-face communication with their professors, others prefer face-to-face communication with their professor. By communicating with their professors face-to-face, students expect to form a close relationship with their professor and hopefully to get a better grade in their classes.

This study also supports the Daft and Lengel's theory of media richness. In their 1989 article, they indicated "the more learning that can be pumped through a medium, the richer the medium" (Lengel & Daft, 1989). They also indicated that the rich media should have characteristics including "ability to handle multiple information cues simultaneously, ability to facilitate rapid feedback, ability to establish a personal focus, and ability to utilize natural language" (Daft & Lengel, 1984). The participants in this study have identified all or some of the rich media characteristics.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include the design of the study. The study relies on the self-report of participants in hypothetical situations. Although this study shows some satisfying results, I have no idea how participants would respond to the different situations in real life. In actual life situations, participants may not choose communication media based on rational thinking but their instinct. When the study was launched in China, sometimes the participants tended to discuss their answers together due to the collectivism culture and because they don't want to stand out. From the data collected from the Chinese participants, we can also see that Chinese participants do not always rate the extreme, which is also characteristic of the culture. In addition, there is no way to

manipulate all the variables to determine what the direct influence on the communication media choice is. There is no way to isolate a single variable that the researchers want to measure. Though this study showed some interesting findings, the researcher still believes this result is just theoretical. This study is valid in the school environment and was not designed for other environments, such as business or personal relationships.

Besides, the findings of this study may not always show the same way in different countries. For example, Japan has a higher context culture than China, however, in Japan, the usage of email is greater than it is in China. There are many reasons that may cause this situation, such as the different cell phone monthly plan. The other factor might be the strong influence of the United States after the World War II in Japan. International corporations in Japan developed earlier than China. Also, in China, people working for International organizations are required to use email to communicate.

The other limitation of this study is the survey design. The survey questions were modeled after a previous study and adapted to current times and different college styles. However, the survey results are limited in the range of question types and situations because the survey only asks about communication between students and their professors. Most of the situations are more appropriate to use face-to-face communication, but the results have the variety as predicted. This survey categorized text and cell phone apps together, because from the definitions, texts and cell phone apps are less rich media. However, the development of technology can enhance the richness of media (Culnan & Markus, 1987; El-Shinnaway &Markus, 1998; Markus, 1994). By categorizing text and cell phone in the same group, participants may have a different reflection on the term "text". When the participants from the United States see the word "text" they may reflect

it as "text message," while Chinese participants may reflect "text" as cell phone apps such as WeiChat or QQ. I also have some concerns about the answers due to the fact that I don't know if the students took the survey seriously nor if they read the questions carefully. It was difficult to regulate the students' answering behavior because all were given extra credits for participating in the study.

Some results from this study cannot by fully understood, and explained from theory. An example of this is why U.S. participants chose face-to-face more frequently than Chinese participants. Future studies may examine this question further and investigate the other factors that also influence people's choice of communication media. Future research may utilize multiple regression to investigate the factors of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism vs. individualism.

Conclusion

This study provides people with some ideas about how to communicate with people from different cultures. For example, individuals in the United States may need to think twice before emailing people in China. Also, for the International students coming to the United States, it is a good way to learn about the communication styles in the U.S, such as check email regularly, and that professors are available in their office during office hours. The more we understand the different communication norms, the easier we can launch our communication. This study not only shows which media is non-effective but also which media people prefer in different cultures. Chinese prefer the new types of communication media such as the cell phone apps, however, in the United States online chatting apps seems not as popular when students communicate with their professors as it is in China.

REFERENCES

An, D., & Kim, S. (2007). Relating Hofstede's masculinity dimension to gender role portrayals in advertising. *International Marketing Review,* 24 (2), 181-207.

Albers, N.D. (1994). *Relating Hofstede's dimensions of culture to international variations in print advertisements: a comparison of appeals*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Houston, Houston, TX.

Bhagat, R.S. & McQuaid, S.J. (1982). Role of subjective culture in organizations: a review and directions for future research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67(5), 653-85.

Bowan, H &Van den, Wijingeart (2002). Content & context: An exploration of the basic characteristics of information needs. *New Media & Society, 4,* 329-353

Chen, G., & Starosta, W. (1998). Foundations of intercultural communication. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Choe, Y. (2002). Intercultural Conflict Patterns and Intercultural Training Implication for Koreans1. *International Area Studies Review*, 5(1), 111-128.

Clark, H. H. (1992). *Arenas of language use*. University of Chicago Press.

Clark, H. H., & Brennan, S. E. (1991). Grounding in communication. *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition*, *13*(1991), 127-149.

Clark, H. H., & Wilkes-Gibbs, D. (1986). Referring as a collaborative process. *Cognition*, 22(1), 1-39.

Croucher, Stephen M., Ann Bruno, Paul Mcgrath, Caroline Adams, Cassandra Mcgahan, Angela Suits, & Ashleigh Huckins (2012). Conflict Styles and High–Low Context Cultures: A Cross Cultural Extension. *Communication Research Reports* 29 (1) 64-73.

Culnan, M.J. &Markus, M.L. (1987). Information technologies. In F. M. Jablin, K.H. Roberts, L.L. Putnam, &L.W. Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. 420-443.

Dennis, R. & Kinney, T. (1998). Testing media richness theory in new media: The effects of cues, feedback, and task equivocality, *Information System Research,* 9(3), 256–274.

Daft, R.L., &Lengel, R.H. (1984). Information richness: A new approach to managerial behavior and organizational design. *Research in Organizational Behavior,* 6,191-233.

Daft, R.L., &Lengel, R.H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness, and structural design. *Management Science*, 32, 554-571.

Daft, R.L., Lengel, R.H., &Trevino, L.K. (1987). Message equivocality, media selection, and manager performance: Implications for information systems. *MIS Quarterly,* 11, 355-366

Daft, R. L. & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Sci.,* 32(5), 554-571.

Daft, R. L. & Trevino, L. K. (1987). Message equivocality, media selection, and manager performance, *MIS Quarterly,* 11(3), 355-366.

Daft, R. L. & Macintosh, N.B. (1981). A tentative exploration into the amount and equivocality of information processing in organizational work units. *Admin. Sci. Quarterly,* 16 207-224.

Daft, R. L., & Weick, K. E. (1984). Toward a model of organizations as interpretation systems. *Academy of Management Review*, *9*(2), 284-295.

Daft, R. L., & Wiginton, J. C. (1979). Language and organization. *Academy of Management Review*, *4*(2), 179-191.

Dahl, R. A. (1957). The concept of power. *Behavioral Science,* 2, 201-218.

Dorfman, P.W. & Howell, J.P. (1988). Dimensions of national culture and effective leadership patterns: Hofstede revisited, in Farmer, R.N. and McGoon, E.G. (Eds.). *Advances in International Comparative Management, JAI press, Greenwich,* CT, 127-50.

Downey, E. (Ed.). (2010). *E-Government Website Development: Future Trends and Strategic Models: Future Trends and Strategic Models*. IGI Global.

Duncan Jr., S. (1973). Toward a grammar for dyadic conversation. *Semiotica*, *9*(1), 29-46.

El-Shinnaway, M., &Markus, M.L. (1997). The poverty of media richness theory: Explaining people's choice of electronic mail vs. voice mail. *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*, 46, 443-467.

El-Shinnawy, M., & Markus, M. L. (1998). Acceptance of communication media in organizations: richness or features?. *Professional Communication, IEEE Transactions on*, 41(4), 242-253.

Emerson, R. M. (1962). Power-dependence relations. *American Sociological Review,* 27, 31-41.

Gudykunst, W. B. (1997). Cultural variability in communication. *Communication Research,* 24, 327-348.

Gudykunst, W. B., & Matsumoto, Y. (1996). Cross-cultural variability of communication in personal relationships. *Communication in Personal Relationships Across Cultures*, 19-56.

Gudykunst, W. B., & Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). Culture and affective communication: Universality of emotion expression and recognition. *The American Behavioral Scientist,* 31, 384-400.

Hackman, J. R. (1990). Groups that Work (and Those that Don't). *Human Resource Planning*, *15*(2), 87-89.

Hall. E.T. (1976). *Beyond Culture.* Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday.

Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's consequences: International differences in work- related values. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (Vol. 2). London: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G. (1994). Cultural constraints in management theories. *International Review of Strategic Management, 5*, 27-48.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work- related values* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G., & Bond, M. H. (1984). Hofstede's culture dimensions an independent validation using Rokeach's value survey. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 15(4), 417-433.

Huang, L., Lu, M., & Wong, B. K. (2003). The impact of power distance on email acceptance: Evidence from the PRC. *Journal of Computer Information Systems,* 44, 93-101.

Huang, W., Watson, R.T., &Wei, K.K. (1998). Can a lean e-mail medium be used for rich communication? A psychological perspective. *European Journal of Information Systems,*7, 269-274.

Kahai, S. S., & Cooper, R. B. (2003). Exploring the core concepts of media richness theory: The impact of cue multiplicity and feedback immediacy on decision quality. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 20(1), 263-299.

Kale, S. H. (1991). Culture-specific marketing communications: An analytical approach. *International Marketing Review*, 8(2), 18-31.

Kaplan, R. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *Language Learning*, 16, 1–20.

Keegan, W. J. (1989). *Global marketing management (4th ed.).* Englewood Cliff*s*, NJ: Prentic-Hall.

Kim, D., Pan, Y., & Park, H. S. (1998). High-versus low-Context culture: A comparison of Chinese, Korean, and American cultures. *Psychology and Marketing Psychol. Mark., 15*(6), 507-521.

King, R.C., &Xia, W. (1997). Media appropriateness: Effect of experience on communication media choice. *Decision Science*, 28, 877-910.

Krauss, R. M., & Weinheimer, S. (1966). Concurrent feedback, confirmation, and the encoding of referents in verbal communication. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *4*(3), 343.

Kraut, R., Galegher, J., Fish, R., & Chalfonte, B. (1992). Task requirements and media choice in collaborative writing. *Human–Computer Interaction*, 7(4), 375-407.

Leavitt, H. J., & Mueller, R. A. (1951). Some effects of feedback on communication. *Human Relations*, 4, 401-410.

Lee, A.S. (1994). Electronic mail as the medium of managerial choice. *Organization Science,* 5,502-527

Lengel, R. H., & Daft, R. L. (1989). The selection of communication media as an executive skill. *The Academy of Management Executive (1987-1989)*, 225-232.

Leonard, K. M., Van Scotter, J. R., & Pakdil, F. (2009). Culture and communication cultural variations and media effectiveness. *Administration & Society*, 41(7), 850-877.

Leonard, K. M., Scotter, J. R., Pakdil, F., Chamseddine, N. J., Esatoglu, E., Gumus, M.,& Tsai, F. (2011). Examining media effectiveness across cultures and national borders: A review and multilevel framework. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management,* 11(1), 83-103.

Lu, W., Mundorf, N., Ye, Y., Lei, W., & Shimoda, K. (2015). The impact of class discussions on attitudes of Chinese students in the US towards culture and sustainability. *China Media Research*, 11(4), 110-119.

Markus, M. L. (1994). Electronic mail as the medium of managerial choice. *Organization Science*, 5(4), 502-527.

McGrath, J. E. (1984). *Groups: Interaction and performance* (Vol. 14). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mills, J., & Clark, M. S. (1982). Exchange and communal relationships. In L. Wheeler (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology* (Vol. 3, 121–144). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Minkov, M., & Hofstede, G. (2010). Hofstede's fifth dimension: New evidence from the World Values Survey. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 0022022110388567.

Onkvisit, S., & Shaw, J. J. (2004). *International marketing: Analysis and strategy*. Psychology Press.

Ohbuchi, K. I., Fukushima, O., & Tedeschi, J. T. (1999). Cultural values in conflict management goal orientation, goal attainment, and tactical decision. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 30(1), 51-71.

Pettigrew, A. M. (1973). *The politics of organizational decision-making*. Routledge.

Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Managing with power: Politics and influence in organizations*. Harvard Business Press.

Rice. R.E. (1992). Contexts of research on organizational computer-mediated communication: A recursive review. In M. Lea (Ed.), *Contexts of Computer-Mediated Communication* (113-144). United Kingdom: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.

Richardson, R. M., & Smith, S. W. (2007). The influence of high/low-context culture and power distance on choice of communication media: Students' media choice to communicate with professors in Japan and America. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(4), 479-501.

Robert, L. P., & Dennis, A. R. (2005). Paradox of richness: A cognitive model of media choice. *Professional Communication, IEEE Transactions on*, 48(1), 10-21.

Schmitz, J., & Steinfield, C. W. (1990). Technology Use. *Organizations and Communication Technology*, 117.

Schwartz, S. H. (1994). *Beyond individualism/collectivism: New cultural dimensions of values*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The Social Psychology of Telecommunications.* London: John Wiley & Sons.

Shuper, P. A., & Sorrentino, R. M. (2004). Minority versus majority influence and uncertainty orientation: Processing persuasive messages on the basis of situational expectancies. *The Journal of social psychology*, 144(2), 127-147.

Singelis, T. M., & Brown, W. J. (1995). Culture, self, and collectivist communication linking culture to individual behavior. *Human Communication Research*, 21(3), 354-389.

Sorrentino, R. M., & Roney, C. J. R. (2000). Uncertainty orientation, achievement related motivation, and task diagnosticity as determinants of task performance. *Social Cognition,* 4(4), 420-436.

Sproull, L., & Kiesler, S. (1986). Reducing social context cues: Electronic mail in organizational communication. *Management Science*, 32(11), 1492-1512.

Te'eni, D. (2001). Review: A cognitive-affective model of organizational communication for designing IT. *MIS Quarterly*, 25(2), 251-312.

Trevino, L., Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1990). Understanding managers' media choices: A symbolic interactionist perspective. In J. Fulk & C. W. Steinfield (Eds.), *Organizations and communication technology* 71-95 Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Triandis, H. C. (2001). Individualism-collectivism and personality. *Journal of Personality*, 69(6), 907-924.

Usunier, J. C., & Roulin, N. (2010). The influence of high-and low-context communication styles on the design, content, and language of business-to-business web sites. *Journal of Business Communication*, 47(2), 189-227.

What about China? (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2016, from https://geert-hofstede.com/china.html

Würtz, E. (2005). Intercultural communication on Web sites: a cross-cultural analysis of Web sites from high-context cultures and low-context cultures. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(1), 274-299.

Yngve, V. H. (1970). On getting a word in edgewise, *Sixth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago, IL*, 567-57

APENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Form

The influence of high/low context culture on choice of communication media: Students'
media choice to communicate in China and the United States

Date:

Dear participants

You are being invited to participate in a research study by answering the attached survey
about ***how students from two different countries communicate with their friends and
professors in different situations***.   There are no known risks for your participation in
this research study.   The information collected may not benefit you directly.   The
information learned in this study may be helpful to others. The information you provide
will ***use for a study of master thesis.***   Your completed survey will be stored at
University of Louisville Department of Communication.   The survey will take
approximately ***30 minutes*** to complete.

Individuals from the Department of ***Communication***, the Institutional Review Board
(IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPO), and other regulatory
agencies may inspect these records.   In all other respects, however, the data will be held
in confidence to the extent permitted by law.   Should the data be published, your
identity will not be disclosed.

Taking part in this study is voluntary.   By completing this survey you agree to take part
in this research study. Student who participants in this study will receive 2 points of extra
credits. Once you decided to participant you could go to your course professor and ask
him/her for a survey, and write your name to your professor as a record of participation.
Please do NOT write your name on the survey, ask your professor where he/she keeps a
record of extra credit. You do not have to answer any questions that make you
uncomfortable**.** You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study
you may stop taking part at any time.

If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify. You will still get the extra credits. Students who don't want to participant in this study will also get the chance to wine extra credit in other opportunities the professor has for this semester.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Dr. **Margaret D'Silva margaret.dsilva@louisville.edu** *or XiaoxuYang x0yang15@cardmail.louisville.edu or (502) 905-3134*

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. You can discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also call this number if you have other questions about the research, and you cannot reach the research staff, or want to talk to someone else. The IRB is an independent committee made up of people from the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as people from the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this research study.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24 hour hot line answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

Sincerely,

Margaret U D'Silva

Xiaoxu Yang

High Context/ Low Context Communication Scale

Questions 1-17 ask how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Using the scale below, and write the number next to each statement that can best describe your opinion. There is no right or wrong answer, and please be honest when answering the questions, and please read carefully on each statement.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

_____1. Listeners should be able to understand what a speaker is trying to express, even when the speaker does not say everything they intend to communicate.

_____2. Speakers should not expect listeners will figure out what they really mean unless the intended message is stated precisely.

_____3. A listener should understand the intent of the speaker from the way the person talks.

_____4. It is better to risk saying too much than be misunderstood.

_____5. It is more important to state a message efficiently than with great detail.

_____6. Even if not stated exactly, a speaker's intent will rarely be misunderstood.

_____7. The intended content of the message is more important than how a message is communicated.

_____8. People should be able to understand the meaning of a statement by reading between the lines.

_____9. Intentions not explicitly stated can often be inferred from the context.

_____10. A speaker can assume that listeners will know what they really mean.

_____11. People understand many things that are left unsaid.

_____12. Fewer words can often lead to better understanding.

_____13. The context in which a statement is made conveys as much or more information

than the message itself.

_____14. Misunderstandings are more often caused by the listener's failure to draw

reasonable inferences, rather than the speaker's failure to speak clearly.

_____15. You can often convey more information with less words.

_____16. Some ideas are better understood when left unsaid.

_____17. The meaning of a statement often turns more on the context than the actual words.

Media Richness Scale

Please rate the following 5 items by their characteristics of richness. The more

characteristics of richness one media have, richer the media is. 5 is the richest you

believe, and 1 is the least rich. Please think carefully.

Characteristics of Rich media

   a. ability to handle multiple information cues simultaneously

   b. ability to facilitated rapid feedback

   c. ability to establish a personal focus ability to utilize natural language

   d. ability to utilize natural language

   High   High to Medium   Medium   Medium to Low   Low

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

1. Face to Face _____

2. Email _____

3. Phone call_____

4. Text/cell phone apps_____

5. Fax _____

Communication Media Scale

Questions 18-31 describe situations where you might wish to communicate with a professor or school faculty. Each situation is followed by 5 communication methods. Use the scale below. Please write a number to indicate how likely you would use each method in each situation. NOTE: When analyzing each situation, please do NOT think of a particular professor or faculty, think in general.

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Not sure	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

Example:

You want to discuss some questions about your homework with your professor.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax
5	2	3	2	1

There is no right or wrong answer to each one, just provide your honest personal opinion.

18. You have been working on a project and feel you are going in the wrong direction. You would like to ask the professor for advice.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

19. You are feeling worried about your future and would like to ask for advice.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

20. You have two major papers due next week and the pressure is too much. You

would like to ask the professor from one of the classes to postpone the due date.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

21. You are interested in a class and would like to ask the professor about the

assignments.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

22. You need to be out of town on the date of the exam and would like to schedule a

make-up.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

23. You were sick and missed a class. You would like to get a copy of lecture

notes/handouts from the professor for that day.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

24. You would like to drop a class and ask when the deadline is for dropping that

class.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

25. You are having a family/personal emergency and need permission to receive an

incomplete.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

26. You are having trouble catching up with the class and need help from the professor to

understand the material.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

27. You would like to ask your professor about the format of next test.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

28. You liked a class with a particular professor and would like to know if they will be

teaching another course in the near future.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

29. You are thinking about taking a particular class next semester, and would like an

opinion about the class from another professor.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

30. You would like to know what the next test covers.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

31. You would like to talk about the assigned paper.

Face to Face	Email	Phone call	Text/cell phone app	Fax

Demographic Questions

Questions 32-39 ask for information about you.

32. What is your year in college? (check one)

_____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

_____ Post Graduate

33. How old are you?

_____Years

34. What is your sex? (Check one)

_____Male

_____Female

35. Is English your first language?

_____Yes

_____No

36. Do you have access to email?

_____Yes

_____No

37. How often do you check your email?

_____Couple times a day

_____Every day

_____A few times a week

_____Once a week

_____Hardly never

38. Do you have access to cell phone?

_____Yes

_____No

39. How often do you check your cell phone message?

_____ Every time it notices

_____ Every two hour

_____ Every 4 hour

_____ Twice a day

_____ Once a day
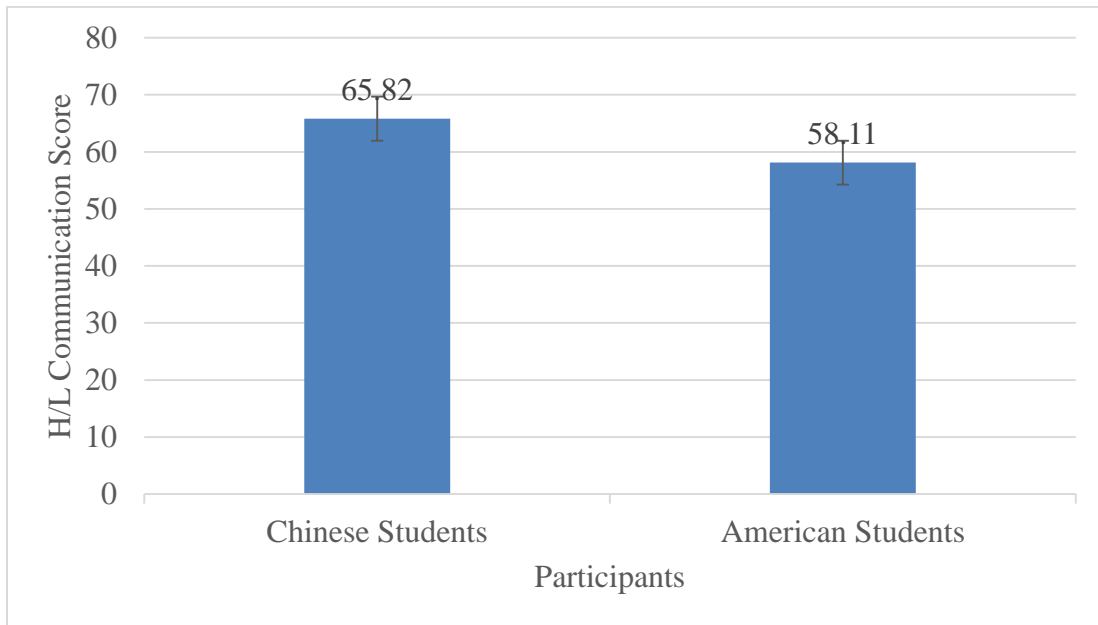
Appendix 3: Analysis Figures

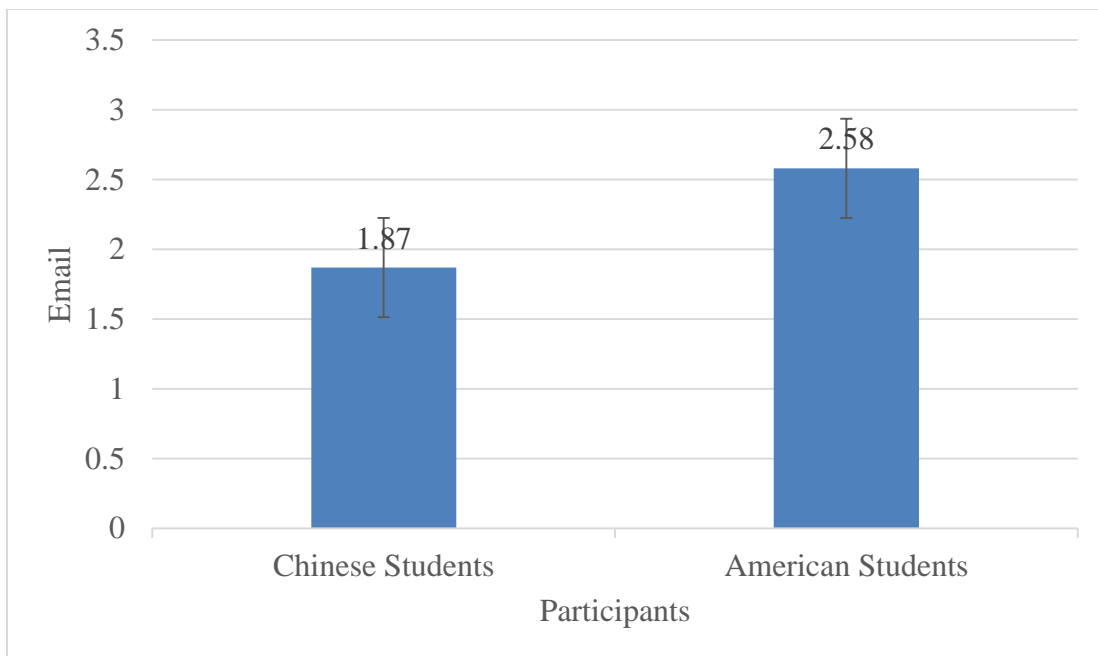Figure 6. High Context/ Low Context Communication Scale. t (329)=19.34, p <. 0001.

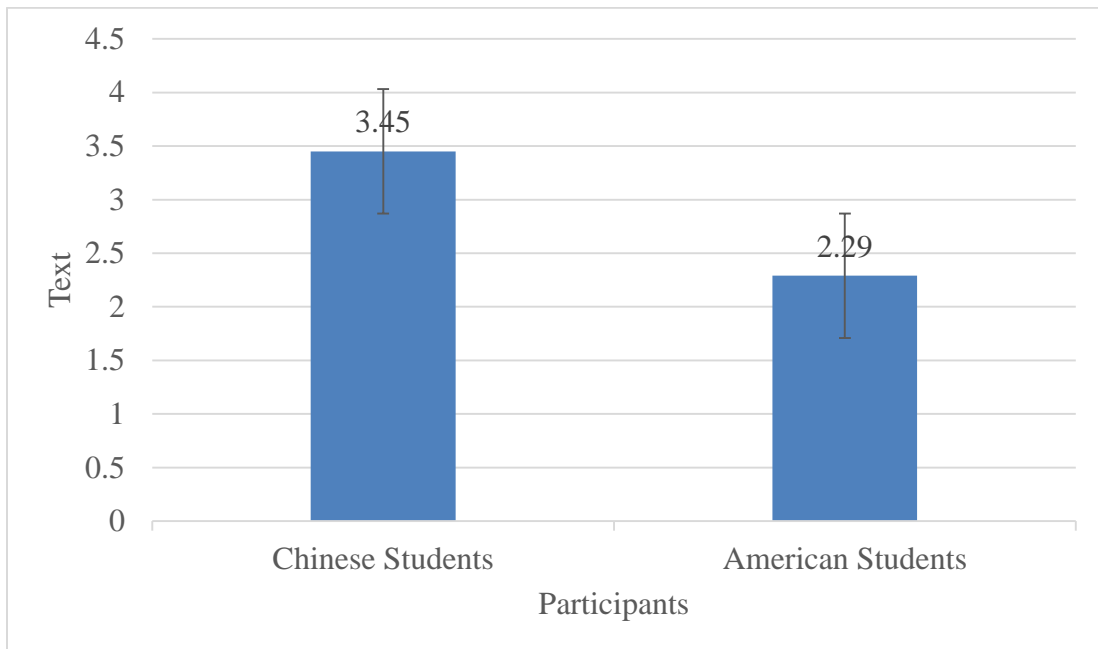Figure 7. Media Richness Scale: Email. t (349)= -13.122, p<. 0001.

Figure 8. Media Richness Scale: Text/Cell phone apps. t (349)= 17.994, p<. 0001.
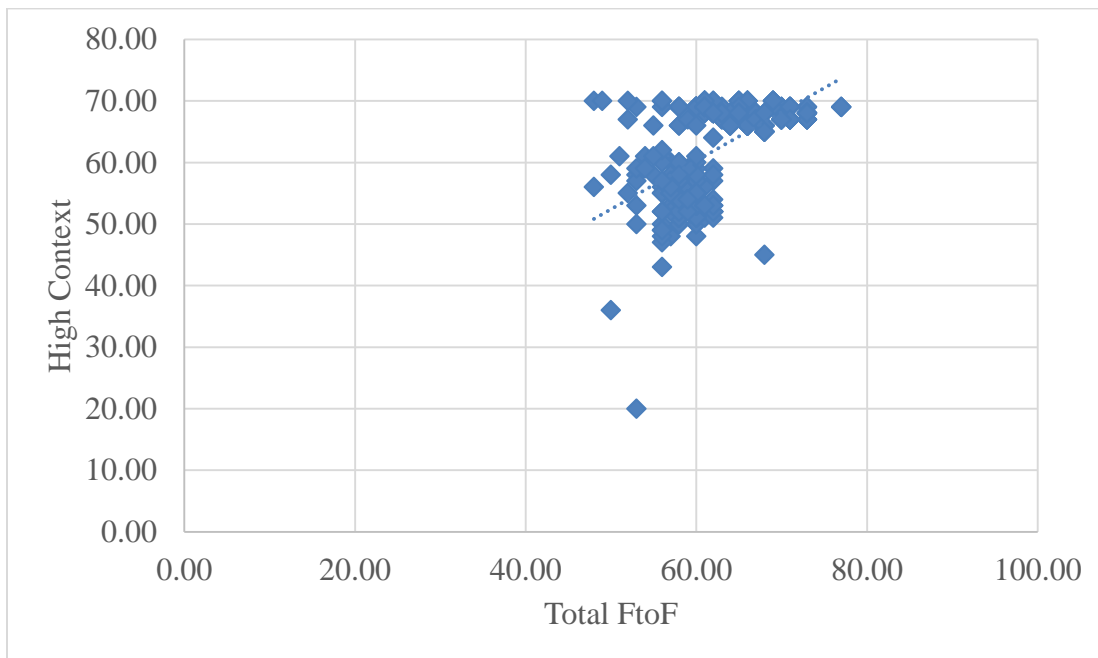

Figure 9. Correlation between different media choices and culture: Face-to-face. r=. 55, p<0.01
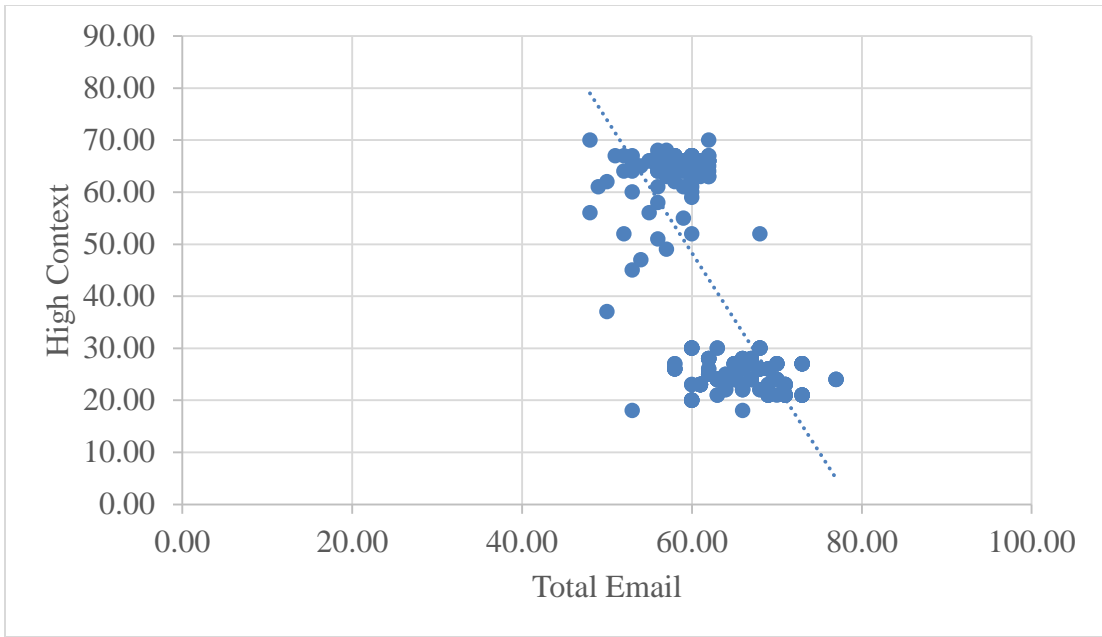
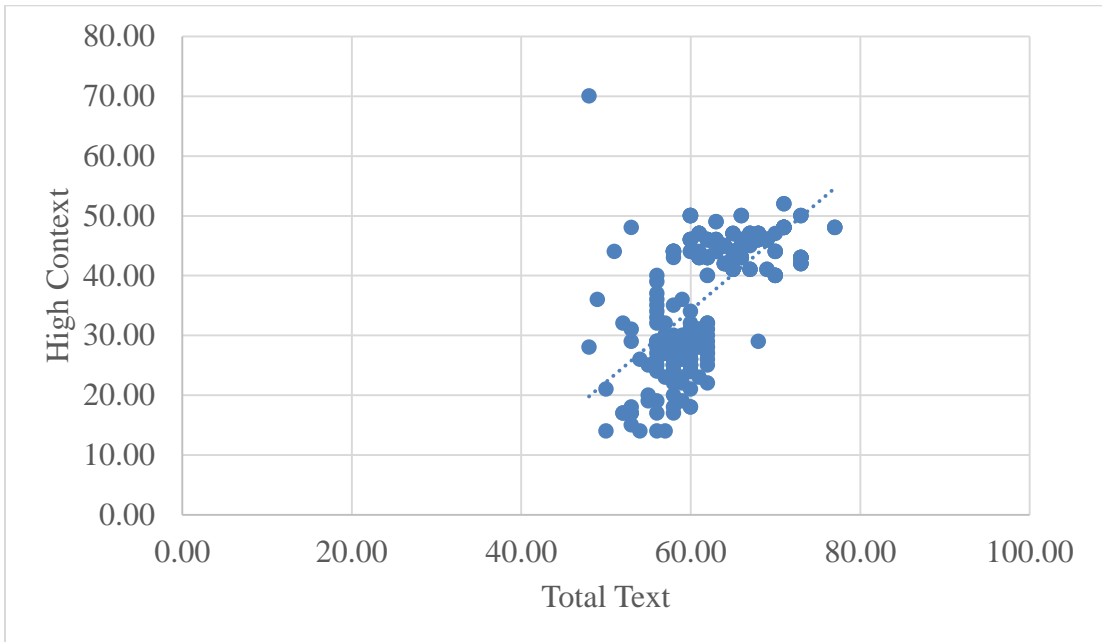Figure 10. Correlation between different media choices and culture: Email. r=-. 68, p<0.01

Figure 11. Correlation between different media choices and culture: Text. r=. 63, p<0.01

CURRICULUM VITA

NAME: Xiaoxu Yang

ADDRESS: Department of Communication

                       310 Strickler Hall, University of Louisville

                       Louisville KY 40292 USA

DOB: Sep. 13, 1989

EDUCATION

& TRAINING: B.A., Journalism& Mass Communication

                              Humboldt State University

                              2008-2013

                              M.A., Communication

                              University of Louisville

                              2014-2016

AWARDS: Presidential Award

                       Humboldt State University

                       2013