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STRESS AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURAL BOUNDARIES IN A
CHINESE-AMERICAN BUSINESS

A Chapter Style Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Public Health in Community Health Education

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STRESS AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURAL BOUNDARIES IN A
CHINESE-AMERICAN BUSINESS

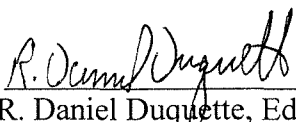
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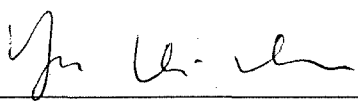
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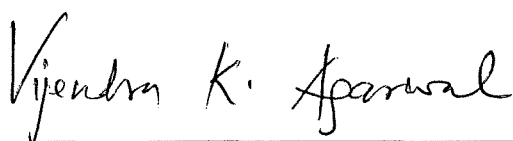

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strong and resilient and I think that that has helped me to this point. Just be strong and be positive (Researcher, 2006a1, 56:15).

Jen used a positive view of herself and others to form a confident sense of personal autonomy, but this did not translate to more than incidental use of literacy, numeracy and other self-management skills in challenging situations. Jen's story also illustrated the importance of her knowing what to know and how to learn what she needed to know about her deteriorating back.

Jen's initial epistemology about spinal health was acquired in the hospital immediately after the crash, but the resulting knowledge was not sufficient for Jen to anticipate what she needed to know about preventing problems, managing symptoms, making treatment decisions, and otherwise responding to a deteriorating back. During our first interview Jen explained the consequences of her continuing back pain, "right now I am unable to work. I can't uh, do too much of anything. I can't lift over 10 lbs. I can't sweep, I can't mop, I can't sit more than 30 minutes at a time" (Researcher, 2006a1, 7:29). Jen told about her decision to stop working, and her eyes filled—not with the tears of unbearable back pain, but with the tears of her frustration about not being able to work:

I worked with a property firm as the manager. My problem was that I would force myself to work there. I mainly sat at the desk but then when I had to show properties the walking was so horrific. The walking up the steps to the second floor, I couldn't do. One or two steps I can make. Anything other than that and it's too painful on my back. I tried everything to be able to pull off that 8-hour-a-day job. That's me. I love to work. I'm a workaholic, but I just couldn't, you know? Truth of the matter is I just couldn't. (Researcher, 2006a1, 39:14)

ABSTRACT

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This research used semi-structured interviews to investigate how Chinese and American workers experienced intercultural communication and stress in an American location of a Chinese company. A Chinese graduate student with 3 years experience using English in an American university was the principal investigator who interviewed 6 Chinese and 5 American workers using the first language of the participant. The research questions and interviews were organized around the workers' working life, intercultural communication experiences, thoughts and feelings about communication, preexisting cultural perspectives, and experience with stress. The findings were written as short descriptions with quotes, and integrative narrative stories illustrating stress during intercultural communication. The discussion included applications to health promotion practice in multicultural workplace settings, and a new model describing the role of stress in intercultural communication was proposed for future research.

Key words: stress, Intercultural communication, health education, health promotion, workplace health

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research used in-depth interviews with six Chinese workers and five American workers to learn about their experiences with intercultural communication, stress, and health while they worked in an American location of a Chinese company. Chapter one explains the phenomena of interest, research questions, researcher's practical approach to inquiry, and how this thesis is organized.

Phenomena of Interest

Intercultural communication became more important because of globalization where increasingly workers were required to work with workers from other cultures. Stress was accepted as part of the acculturation process. In recent years, globalization has come to center stage. Globalization refers to the process of a more international integration of markets via the movement of goods, services, capital, and labor (Rodrik, 1997). The globalization in economics, strengthened technology in communication and decreased transport cost have made the business across the national boundaries more and more competitive. Workers' migration across nations as an important consequence of globalization changed the employment patterns in the world. United Nations reported in 2002 that around 175 million people were estimated to live in countries other than where they were born (United Nations Population Division, 2002), and this number grew to about 190 million in 2005 (International Organization for Migration, 2005a). This type

of migration created worksites where workers from different cultures would need to work and communicate across cultural boundaries.

Workers in organizations experienced communication in a number of ways. They transmitted messages up and down the hierarchical levels of their organization, and horizontally with workers on the same level. Effective communication within organizations not only contributed to worker efficiency, but communication also helped workers feel included in their organizations, experience positive relationships with other workers (Fay & Kline, 2008), and avoid job dissatisfaction (Hoeven & De Jong, 2006). Workers working in a multi-cultural work setting were like any other worker in any other work setting in that they also required effective communication. In addition to the general work and life stress experienced by all workers, the workers in a multi-cultural work setting also faced challenges related to acculturation.

The stress involved in migrating and experiencing the cultural adaptation process were recognized by several researchers (Chen, Kakkad, & Balzano, 2008; Hayne, Gerhardt, & Davis, 2009; Knipscheer & Kleber, 2006). Researchers also pointed out that cultural adaptation involved the stress of facing a new host environment; migrating populations struggled to meet the demands of an unfamiliar culture, strange people, tasks, and situations (Allen, Amason, & Holmes, 1998; Jiali, 2006). Other researchers reported relationships between coping-and-adapting to stress and an individual's physical and mental health (Durvasula & Mylvaganam, 1994; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Moghaddam, Ditto, & Tylor, 1990).

The millions of workers who were joining multicultural work settings were necessarily engaged in intercultural communication, and those same workers were also

experiencing the stress of acculturation. Without a model to guide hypothesis testing, the major purposes of this study was to take an in-depth look at these two phenomena in a work setting and learn more about intercultural communication and stress.

Myself as the Researcher

My interest in intercultural communication, stress, and health was rooted in my personal experience with these phenomena. I did not consciously choose this topic to explain my experience as a Chinese student at an American university. Instead I thought I had found an interesting and important topic that would contribute to my professional development by studying the lives of others. As I read, discussed, and reflected about these phenomena in the lives of others, I also discovered personal relevance.

I recalled my early days in America and the feeling of freshness. Americans had curiosities about my home in China, my educational and work background, and the experience I had as a visitor to America; these topics became the focus of conversations between me and the American students. We transmitted facts in the many conversations that characterized my early days and weeks. I do not recall preexisting understandings about the Americans or that the Americans appeared to have preexisting understandings of me. Language barriers were the biggest problem in my intercultural communication at that time.

As time passed, the freshness and curiosity I had experienced as a newcomer faded. I was more proficient in English, but some new problems began to occur during my intercultural communication. At that time, I believed that my understanding of intercultural communication was ambiguous and not sufficient to conduct effective communication with Americans. I was no longer motivated to take initiative in

intercultural communication; instead I tried to escape communication. I avoided initiating conversation and avoided situations where intercultural communication was likely. I usually positioned myself away from discussion, and I even avoided any eye contact that might lead to communication. When conversation was unavoidable, I limited information sharing with strangers and finished the conversation as soon as possible.

My uncertainty about intercultural communication increased and my avoidance of intercultural communication worsened. The unpleasant experience of intercultural communication led to increased anxiety levels, and intercultural communication became a stressor for me. My confidence in my communication skills disappeared and this loss caused me to doubt my capabilities in other areas as well. Though no obvious physical symptoms appeared, the large variation in emotion and lack of self-confidence had greatly influenced my academic performance.

With my previous experience in mind, it was very easy for me to associate intercultural communication with stress. The systematic literature review for my research helped me to better understand my own experience. In the famous theory of cultural adaptation U-curve Model, the sojourner's emotional adaptation is divided into three to five stages, which stated as: 1) honeymoon stage, leading to feelings of initial euphoria; 2) culture shock because of disorientation; 3) hostility to the host culture, which leads to resentment; 4) initial adaptation with a sense of autonomy within the host culture; and finally 5) assimilation into the host culture with a sense of belonging to both the host and home culture (Adler, 1975; Furnham & Baughner, 1986; Hottola, 2004; Pederson, 1995). This model did not allow for the uniqueness of individual experience where a person may not go through all of the stages or go through them out of order, but it did provide some

explanation about the changes during my intercultural adaptation. Understanding this theory assured me that my experience was normal and this helped me dispel my doubt about my own capabilities.

I understood the personal relevance of my research in incremental steps. As I read the literature, I found things that would help explain my personal experience. As I listened to the participants, I found that I shared similar experiences with what the workers reported. It was not until the end when I was interpreting my findings that I came to a unified understanding of stress and intercultural communication. This was a pleasant and helpful outcome of my research.

Research Questions

Based on review of literature and researcher's interest in learning how intercultural communication, stress, and health occurred in a multicultural business setting, the researcher developed the following research questions:

1. How do Chinese and American workers generally describe their work life with those from the other culture?
2. How do Chinese and American workers describe intercultural communication?
3. How do the workers think and feel about their intercultural communication?
4. How do preexisting cultural perspectives influence intercultural communication?
5. How does stress occur during intercultural communication?

These research questions were used to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation data for this study.

Data Collection

The researcher used her family connections to a Chinese company in the U.S. location to recruit six Chinese and five American workers for individual interviews. All participants voluntarily provided written informed consent to participate. The researcher conducted semi-structured individual interviews with each of the participants. The researcher also observed and experienced the communication activities in their workplace setting and recorded all interviews on a digital audio recorder, translated Chinese interviews to English, and created word-for-word transcriptions of each interview. The recordings and transcriptions were in the possession of the researcher and were locked in a drawer. A set of codes and pseudonyms were used to protect participant identity.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis included open coding of all transcripts; I used a highlighter to identify anything of interest to me. Analysis continued with a closed system of coding where I applied (sorted) a system of codes based on the kinds of concepts that I identified during the open coding.

My interpretation of data was an iterative process that necessarily included my understanding of personal experience and a review of the literature. I used short narratives that often included direct quotes to explain how the findings helped answer each question. I used numbered lists of these narratives in response to questions one through four. I used my familiarity with specific findings about each participant to share several short stories about stress and intercultural communication to illustrate answers for question five. I concluded my interpretation by discussing what I found most interesting and by discussing the implications of my findings for practice and research.

Organization of Thesis

The first chapter introduced my inquiry about intercultural communication, stress, and health. Chapter two made visible how my thinking was influenced by my review of the literature on this subject both before the data collection and during analysis. Chapter three detailed my methodology from choice of data sources through interpretation. Chapter four provided a carefully organized narrative about intercultural communication, stress; short narrative findings including quotes appear in numbered order after each of the first four questions and short stories are organized to illustrate answers to the last question. In chapter five included discussion and the implications of the findings for future practice and research in health promotion and health education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter includes literature about intercultural communication, cultural variability, and work stress that were important to this study. One of the fundamental issues in qualitative research is the question of when the literature should be consulted. The timing of the literature review in qualitative research can be controversial. Glaser and Strauss (1967) fundamentally disagreed over the use of literature and the need to conduct an initial review. Strauss and Corbin (1998) further advocated reviewing the literature early in the study for several reasons: 1) stimulates theoretical sensitivity, 2) provides a secondary source of data, 3) stimulates questions, 4) directs theoretical sampling, and 5) provides supplementary validity. This was in contrast to what Glaser (1992) asserted that no professional literature should be reviewed until the researcher was in the field and codes and categories had begun to emerge. The researcher adopted Strauss' theory to be more "open minded" but not "empty headed"; this review briefly explains what literature the researcher looked at before collecting data and what literature I read to support my analysis and interpretation.

Literature Used Before Data Collection

Intercultural communication was a well-established and highly developed field with an array of literature about fundamental constructs of culture and communication, and their distinctive and sometimes overlapping approaches, theories and methodologies. Studies related to "intercultural communication" can be found in the field of education,

(e.g., Holmes, 2006; Rapoport, 2006), foreign language teaching (e.g., Sercu, 2005; Wilkins, 2006;), and intercultural adaptation of immigrant groups (e.g., Lee & Chen, 2000; Maloof, Rubin, & Miller, 2006). Intercultural communication was often defined as communication “between people from different national cultures, and many scholars limit it to face-to-face communication” (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002, p.179).

According to Beamer (1992, p. 285), “the best way to understand intercultural communication is to focus on the decoding process and the role of perception in communication”. She contextualized her thinking about decoding as part of the Shannon-Weaver model (1949). In this linear sender-receiver model of communication, the sender encoded and transmitted a message through a channel, and the receiver received and decoded the message. The model emphasized the type of channel, the ratio of the intended message to the implied message, a sequential-exchange pattern, and a linear process over time. Transmission of a message by itself was not communication, but the conscious perception of signals at the receiver's end was essential for communication to take place.

Beamer also pointed out what Bowman & Targowski (1987), two engineers from Bell Telephone Labs rather than social scientists—discussed about Shannon and Weaver’s model was inadequate for describing the complex process of human communication; as engineers they seemed aware of the limitation of a model that was developed to fit the context of radio-telephone communication. Despite this critique, Shannon and Weaver's model was described in 1982 as, “widely accepted as one of the main seeds out of which Communication Studies has grown” (Fiske 1982, p. 6).

Beamer described the contributions of Bowman and Targowski as important when they argued that communication was not occurring without the perception and that communication was not sequential, but a “continuing interaction between people” (Bowman & Targowski, 1987, p. 26). Beamer (1992) used their work to emphasize that, “Transmission by itself is not communication, but the conscious perception of signals at the receiver’s end is essential for communication to have taken place” (p. 285).

Models of intercultural communication based on perception differ from linear sender-receiver models by taking into account the social and cultural environment. For example, the comprehensive analysis of communication models by Bowman and Targowski (1987) include the concept of “social context”; Gudykunst and Kim (1995)’s communication model identified four contexts, environmental, cultural, sociocultural, and psychocultural.

As researchers had emphasized the importance of decoding, perception, and various types of context, it is also important to explore how language and cultural differences influence communication. Language differences between the sender and receiver was one of the barriers to the transmission and decoding of information. And cultural differences made the intercultural communication experience more complicated, because of the influence of cultural context and learned culture on the individuals’ perceptions. People’s different assumptions about cultural norms make it more difficult to accurately send or receive information during intercultural communication. And the pre-existing cultural perspectives also present barriers to the senders’ and receivers’ interpretation of information.

Schaafsma (2008) found that in the workplace, majority members sometimes reported that they were reluctant to ask their minority colleagues more personal questions, because they assumed that this would violate their cultural norms. On the other side, minority members sometimes reported that they did not want to disclose too much to their majority colleagues, because they expected their colleagues would not understand their cultural background and react negatively. Schaafsma's research focused on work outcomes rather than descriptions of the intercultural communication taking place in work place settings.

An increasingly large number of studies focused on the intercultural communications that was taking place because of demographic change (Bash, 2009; Bennett & Salonen, 2007; Dressler & Pils, 2009). Several authors focused on international business communication in relation to negotiation and work group outcomes (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997; Poncini, 2003; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2003; Van Der Zee, Atsma, & Brodbeck, 2004); the emphasis was typically not on the communication but on functional business problems. The study by Lindsley (1999) focused on how cultural perspectives contributed to communication in international organizations and the results revealed some repetitive cultural patterns in U.S. and Mexican worker's perceptions of problems and issues in communication. Thirty-seven problems were identified and grouped into three issues based on the analysis of conceptual linkages: negative stereotypes, language inequality, and cultural identities.

Though the intercultural communication literature does not directly and thoroughly examine intercultural communication in a business context, many of the findings seem applicable to business situations. One focal point of intercultural

communication research was the difference between communications of the in-group and the out-group. McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook (2001, p. 416) identified a principle that “a contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people” as a powerful contribution to theory. They pointed out individuals use similarities and differences as a basis for categorizing themselves and others into in-group and out-group. Byrne (1971) offered a prediction that similarity in attitudes, values or demographic characteristics increases interpersonal attraction and liking. Byrne, Clore, and Smeaton (1986) made further explanation and clarification in their later research applied to racial prejudice, interpersonal attraction, and assumed dissimilarity of attitudes.

Liao, Joshi, and Chuang (2004) used Byrne’s prediction to explain the influence of dissimilarity and deviance at work. They believed ethnic dissimilarity in the work group may lead employees to value in-group members more positively than out-group members. So in a multi-cultural work place setting, workers from differing groups may have difficulty establishing positive relationships with each other (Liao, Joshi, & Chuang, 2004).

Tajfel and Turner’s social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1982) could be used to explain the influence of language and cultural difference from another perspective, that the perception of being a member within the group has a stronger influence on behavior than perceptions of similarity (Billing & Tajfel, 1973; Brown, 1995). Some research even demonstrated a relationship between this in-group/out-group construction and a minimization of self-concept and increasing uncertainty and anxiety called intergroup anxiety (e.g., Plant & Devine, 2003; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

Gudykunst's Anxiety and Uncertainty Management Theory described the relationship between intercultural communication and anxiety/uncertainty (1995, 2005). Gudykunst believes that intercultural communication was one type of intergroup communication that could be understood through the same basic variables and processes used to describe other forms of intergroup communication. Gudykunst and Nishida (2001) used Anxiety and Uncertainty Management Theory to explain the effectiveness of intercultural communication. The key concept in Anxiety and Uncertainty Management Theory was the "stranger". The individual present in a new situation and not accepted as an in-group members is like a stranger with limited knowledge of his or her new environment (Gudykunst, 1995, 2005). Communication involves predicting or anticipating the others' response. When we communicate with strangers, we are more aware of the range of their possible response and of the doubts of our predictions (Gudykunst & Kim, 1995). Due to this difficulty in predicting a stranger's response, intercultural communication involves greater degrees of uncertainty. The increased uncertainty involved in interactions with strangers is accompanied by a higher level of anxiety as the stranger anticipates a wider array of possible negative outcomes. Though Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Model has intercultural implications, and includes uncertainty and anxiety as key constructs of the theory, the model does not focus on to develop a relationship between intercultural communication and stress. Instead, it focuses on the process of anxiety reduction through information seeking and tension reduction. It suggests individuals to improve their ability to explain and predict the other's response, and use tension reduction to reduce the anxiety or fear individuals feel

when interacting with people from other cultures in an unfamiliar situation (Gudykunst, 1995).

Other research described an association between intercultural communication and adverse emotional responses. Dodd (1995) pointed out that dominant group members may experience a frustration and become impatient in intercultural communication. Yook and Albert (1999) found that accented speech seemed to consume cognitive and emotional attention. Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) also pointed out the different non-verbal communication styles that appeared to lead to confusion among communicators. Giles and Robinson (1990) also found communication breakdown because cultural misunderstandings were stressful and unpleasant. Additionally, there was support from other research about the relationship between intercultural communication and stress. Hofstede (1991) identified that interacting with people from other cultures tends to cause uncertainty and anxiety. Olaniran (1993) also agreed that learning new communication rules and behavior was generally accompanied by stress. Miller (1990) and Fisher (1984) both pointed out that a lack of control in work situations is also strongly related to stress. Little of the research describing stress, culture, and communication took place in the work context.

Ulrey and Amason's (2001) study on health care providers and patients was one of the few that described the possible negative emotions arising in communication experience in a culturally diverse workplace setting. They pointed out, "Anxiety is a common measure for stress". Their study suggested a possible relationship between effective intercultural communication and the level of intercultural anxiety. They found a

direct relationship among anxiety levels, cultural sensitivity, and intercultural communication effectiveness in health care organizations.

Work-related stress was associated with serious consequences. The consequences include fatigue, insomnia, nervous tension, headache and even a higher rate of cardiovascular disease, (Lazuras, 2006; Spector & Jex, 1998; Yang, Ge, Hu, Chi & Wang, 2009; Zhong, You, Gan, Zhang, Lu, & Wang, 2009) as well as psychological outcomes such as high anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion and even, in some cases, burnout (Oginska-Builk, 2005; Spector, Dwyer, & Jex, 1988; Tian & Wang, 2005; Tyssen and Vaglum, 2002;). Maladaptive coping behaviors such as high levels of alcohol consumption, smoking, substance abuse and even suicide may also be a result of high levels of stress (Kumar and Basu, 2000; McKevitt, Morgan, Simpson, & Holland, 1995; Newbury-Birch, Walshaw, & Kamali, 2001; Pickard, Bates, Dorian, Greig, & Saint, 2000). These behaviors may result in poorer work performance, lower job satisfaction and self-esteem, poor decision-making and bad judgment (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, & Va Di, 2001) Within business organizations, a wide range of work stressors were identified, such as poor physical environment and resources, role conflict and ambiguity, lack of control and decision-making power, employment relationships (e.g. relationships with co-workers and supervisors) (Akerboom & Maes, 2006; Niedhammer, et al. 2006; De Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2004; Houkes, Janssen, De Jonge, & Nijhuis, 2001; Van Der Hulst, Van Veldhoven, & Beckers, 2006).

I chose to examine intercultural communication and stress in the workplace because my review of research literature found a growing understanding of the

relationships between work stress and the well-being of workers, and because the literature seemed to minimize the role of communication. The workplace setting I chose to investigate was a transnational business invested in another country with employees collaborating from different cultural backgrounds. Complex work places like the one in my research presented a challenge to the cross-cultural validity of existing work stress models, such as, the Demand-Control model (Karasek & Theorell, 1994) and the Effort-Reward Imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996).

Literature Used During and After Data Collection

When I heard many participants talk about their differing perspectives about the workers from other cultural groups during their communication, I returned to the literature to help me understand how cultural variables influence cross-cultural communication. In particular I was interested in Hofstede's explanation of the impact of culture on communication.

Cultural Variability

Hofstede (1980) insisted that "human behavior is not random, but to some extent predictable" (p.15). He assumed that each person carries a certain amount of mental programming that is stable over time and causes that person to display more or less the same behavior in similar situations.

Moreover, Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001) believed that cultures across the world could be distinguished along four dimensions of cultural variability: power—distance, uncertainty—avoidance, individualism—collectivism, and masculinity—femininity. Individualism—collectivism and power—distance, which draw from the four dimensions of cultural variability, were focal points during several participants' interviews. Their

descriptions of power—distance issues and individualism—collectivism were not of interest to me until the issues were mentioned by workers frequently enough to get my attention. Though Hofstede's (1991) work was oriented toward describing a nation's culture, some researchers used his theory to explain the structure of corporate organizations (Barros & Prates, 1996; Hofstede, 1991). Machado and Carvalho (2008) applied the theory to business organizations referring to it as the dimensions of organizational culture. They explained six new factors: process-oriented versus results-oriented; employee-oriented versus job-oriented; parochial versus professional; open system versus closed system; loose versus tight; normative versus pragmatic.

For a Chinese company that is trying to establish a new branch in the United States and to hire employees from both eastern and western cultures, Hofstede's cultural variability and subsequent organizational applications seemed highly relevant. Some researchers (Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges, & Luque, 2006) pointed out the possibility of a western bias existing in the four dimensions of culture variability. Hofstede (2001) seemed to recognize this bias when he included a fifth dimension in his latest update based on research findings from a group of Chinese researchers who examined the influence of Confucian teachings on work ethics. This update didn't diminish the western bias existing in the original four variables which remained unchanged. Machado and Carvalho (2008) also reported an awareness of western bias in Hofstede's use of uncertainty—avoidance from North American organizational sociology.

Expectancy Violation Theory

In their explanation of Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory, Gudykunst and Nishida (2001) indicated, “other factors that might influence the effectiveness of our communication (e.g., expectations, perceived similarities, identities, self-esteem, and ability to empathize, relationship with strangers) are superficial causes of effectiveness” (p. 56). When I analyzed the data, I found some of explanations of cross-cultural relationships with the Expectancy Violation Theory. Some workers described the workers from another culture behaved inappropriately in intercultural communication. I began to investigate more about Burgoon’s Expectancy Violation Theory (1978).

Expectancy Violation Theory was used to predict interpersonal communication patterns in order to achieve a greater understanding of human relations within and across cultures. The “expectancy” in Expectancy Violation Theory was comprised of 1) socially normative patterns of behavior applicable to an entire speech community or subgroups, and 2) person specific knowledge related to another’s typical communication patterns. “Violations” were communications that were inappropriate, undesirable, or less-preferred when compared to either the pattern expected by the social norm or by past experience or knowledge of the individual (Burgoon, 1978).

More recently Burgoon and Hubbard (2005) used the expectancy construct to refer to communicative actions that are appropriate, desired, or preferred in a given culture or subculture. They explained that this principle has been used in some training manuals and programs to help workers prepare for international work by enumerating cultural norms in new locations and advising workers to follow local norms. These authors realized the limitation of this principle because it has rarely been applied or tested

beyond mainstream U.S. culture. The authors used this principle to focus on avoiding negative consequences that might occur when workers violate verbal or nonverbal expectations.

Other researchers held an opposite opinion, and write about the benefits of violating expectations. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) proposed that unexpected persuasive messages are more successful than expected ones. Marketing researchers also concluded that customer satisfaction was maximized by positive violations of customer expectations rather than conforming to them (Kopalle & Lehmann, 2001; Spreng & Chiou, 2002). Expectancy Violation Theory became more helpful to my interpretation of research findings when I accepted that violations of expectancies can provide both negative and positive contributions to communication effectiveness.

Stress, Coping, and Health Behavior

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) has been extensively researched and widely accepted by researchers and practitioners (Goh, Sawang, & Oei, 2010; Laubmeier, Zakowski, & Bair, 2004; McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2010; Quine & Pahl, 1991). Glanz and Schwartz (2002, 2008) included the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping in their respected text on health behavior and health education and they reported use of the model by professionals interested in health, health behavior, and health education.

Glanz and Schwartz (2008) said that the central point of the model is “a single event or situation that is perceived in different ways by different people” (p. 213). This is consistent with the points held by Lazarus & Folkman’s (1984) Transactional Stress and Coping Model: perceptions rather than objective stressful events are the main

determinants of effects on behavior and health status. Glanz and Schwartz (2008) used the model to explain how an individual's emotional and behavioral responses to threats are influenced by their subjective interpretations. They pointed out that "stress doesn't affect all people equally ... The ways in which individuals who are ill or at-risk for illness cope can be an important influence on their psychological and physical health outcomes" (p. 213). Carver and Antoni (2004) also found that some people gained growth and positive lessons rather than negative experience from stressful events. Two layers of cognitive appraisal were taking place when an individual faced a stressful event, both the primary appraisal—the individual's perceptions of risk susceptibility and severity, and the secondary appraisal – the individual's coping resources and one's ability to manage the threat along with specific coping strategies and coping outcomes (Glanz & Schwartz, 2008). An individual's cognitive appraisal about a stressor initiated coping responses, and the coping outcomes on an emotional, functional and behavior level depended on the effectiveness of one's cognitive appraisals and coping skills (Glanz & Schwartz, 2008).

Wenzel, Glanz, and Lerman define stressor as, "the demands made by the internal or external environment that upset balance or homeostasis thus affecting the physical and psychological well-being and requiring action to restore balance or equilibrium" (p.211) The defined primary appraisal as "a person's judgment about the significance of a stressor"(p. 213) or threatening event. Secondary appraisal was defined as evaluation of the controllability of the stressor and a person's coping resources. Coping efforts was defined as Actual strategies used to mediate primary and secondary appraisals. Outcomes of coping include outcomes on emotional well-being, functional status, health behaviors.

Dispositional coping styles was defined as generalized ways of behaving that can effect a person's emotional or functional reaction to a stressor; relatively stable across time and situation.

Though the basic process of this Transactional Model of Stress and Coping was a linear sequence, it also included an examination of possible buffering, or moderating factors, such as, dispositional coping strategies, and social support. Goh, Sawang, and Oei (2010) contributed further understanding when they pointed out that coping outcomes influenced the cognitive appraisal stages for further actions if required. This model was developed with an intention to explain health behavior and was frequently applied to health education and health promotion.

Intercultural Communication Competence Model

Intercultural Communication Competence was interesting not only for researchers, but also for practitioners who were doing training to improve intercultural communications (Gudykunst, 1995; Kim, 2001; Spitzberg, 1988; Wiseman & Koester, 1993; Zimmermann, 1995). Spitzberg (1988) defined competent communication in general as "communication behaviour that is both effective and appropriate" (p. 68). There is a rich body of theoretical models describing competent intercultural communication used for intercultural adaptation (Kim, 2001), uncertainty/anxiety management (Gudykunst, 1995), and Intercultural communication competence model (Spitzberg, 1988). Martin (1993) wrote that research conducted with Euro-American participants created theories that were necessarily Euro-centric.

To compare my findings with an idealized standard of intercultural communication competence, I adapted a model from Arasaratnam and Doerfel's

Intercultural Communication Competence model (2005) which identified five constructs: empathy, intercultural experience/training, motivation, global attitude, and the ability to listen well in conversation.

Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) defined empathy as the ability to participate in cognitive and emotional role-taking behavior using the work of Spitzberg and Cupach (1984). Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) defined experience in a number of dimensions such as experience living abroad, traveling abroad, specific training in intercultural communication, and close personal relationships with people from other cultures. Their thinking about listening as cognitive and behavioral engagement in a conversation was taken from the work of Cegala (1981). They defined cultural/global attitudes as positive, non-ethnocentric dispositions toward people from other cultures. Motivation was defined by Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) as the desire to engage in intercultural interactions for the purpose of understanding and learning about other cultures. In their research, competent intercultural communication was defined as effective and appropriate where one achieved their communication goals and did so within the bounds of acceptable behavior.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research method including research questions, choice of data sources, accessing data sources, recruiting participants, organizing interviews and observations, recording and storing data, analyzing data, and interpretation of the data.

Approach to Developing a Method

I used the following research questions to develop my method and guide my qualitative inquiry:

1. How do Chinese and American workers generally describe their work life with those from the other culture?
2. How do Chinese and American workers describe intercultural communication?
3. How do the workers think and feel about their intercultural communication?
4. How do preexisting cultural perspectives influence intercultural communication?
5. How does stress occur during intercultural communication?

Source of Data

I chose to do my research at the American location of a Chinese Company (C) where both Chinese and American workers interacted and communicated.

This was a Chinese corporation. The research was taking place in the company's only location in the United States. The corporation had several locations in China employing mostly Chinese workers while the American location had less than a hundred workers that were both Chinese and American workers. Operations required intense

cooperation between locations, and there was a twelve-hour time difference between the American and Chinese locations.

A manager at Company C introduced my research topic to the president of the company. After a meeting with the president of C Company, including a brief introduction of my research purpose, process, and probable risks and benefits to the participants, I received permission to begin this research at the American location. I was allowed to recruit both American and Chinese employees.

I used individual interviews to allow for rich and detailed portrayals of their place of work, their involvement in intercultural communication, their thoughts and feelings about communication, their preexisting cultural perspectives, and their experience with stress in this intercultural communication setting.

All participation was voluntary. Volunteer participants identified themselves to the researcher, and consent forms were read verbatim in Mandarin Chinese or English, whatever was the participant's first language and questions were encouraged to overcome hidden educational disadvantages. Once volunteers agreed to participate, they were reminded that they could refuse to answer questions and could end the interview at any time. Interviews began only after the participant signed the consent form. Consent forms and interview guides appear in appendices. As principal investigator I maintained confidentiality of the information by keeping forms in a locked drawer along with the codes used to connect all data with a specific participant. Interview recordings were also maintained in a locked drawer by the principal investigator. I conducted, recorded, and transcribed interview data; one of the thesis committee member, a native of Taiwan, back-translated all Chinese transcripts. All transcripts were edited to replace identifying

information with pseudonyms. All recordings were destroyed at the conclusion of this research.

Participant Recruitment and Protection for Confidentiality

C Company was a workplace setting where Chinese and American workers represented the mixing of two cultures. As a result of investment by Company C in the United States, this location was regarded as the platform C in the North American market. Business of Company C at the American location started in 2007 with the following functions: finance; human resources, customer service, and research and development. All of Company C's products, various machines used in heavy industrial, were still being built in China, but the company was planning to begin production of some products in the United States.

Among the 37 employees, 17 were Chinese. Seven of the Chinese came from the Chinese headquarters and were in the U.S. for the first time; all had a bachelor's degree and limited work experience in China. The other 9 Chinese were the ones who already received their masters or doctoral degrees in America, and some had previous work experience in American companies. The 20 American employees included persons in their 30s to 60s, new college graduates, and some with 20 years experience in a relevant field of work. Both Chinese and Americans are from a wide range of locations in each country. The small number of participants provided the diversity of two cultural groups and more diversity within each group.

The topics of intercultural communication, stress and health offered so much complexity, and that is why I did not choose to test hypotheses by asking a list of straight-forward questions; I needed to hear each person's story to understand and explain

these topics. I decided to recruit equal numbers of Chinese and American workers who were experiencing intercultural communication.

I arrived at the location in August 2009, and was allowed to enter the office. With the help of the human resource manager, I distributed recruitment flyers that introduced my research in the office and provided my contact information (posted in the lunch room and on the poster board besides gate). In order to avoid unfavorable differentiation between cultural groups, the recruitment material was written in both Chinese and English. Employees received flyers and contacted me through email or telephone if they were interested in participating in the research. In the first few days there was no feedback, I worked on creating more chances of interaction with the employees in the early morning before the start of work and during the lunch hour. And a few days later I was able to join their gathering activities after work. Things gradually changed as I developed rapport with more and more of the employees.

Volunteer participants identified themselves through the email or telephone. When I received emails expressing interest, I sent a letter of appreciation and the informed consent form. In the Consent forms, participants learned more details about the research design and ethical procedures. People were notified that participation was voluntary and that the interview would be recorded. Each person also learned that their private information will stay in anonymous and protected, and that all recordings and documents revealed their identities will be destroyed at the conclusion of this research. Participants were informed that the research protocol had been accepted by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The consent forms

were in both English and Mandarin Chinese. After the forms were read and signed, an interview was scheduled at a time convenient for the participants.

Data Collection

I collected data using a semi-structured interview. An interview guide was devised and piloted in a few preliminary interviews with international graduate students recruited from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

The interviews with C company's employees were semi-structured and open-ended. A list of broad, open-ended questions were designed to elicit employees' statements regarding – 1) their description of their working context, 2) personal experience in intercultural communication, 3) their personal feelings and thoughts about intercultural communication, 4) their preexisting cultural perspective about their culture or the other culture, 5) their experience with stress.

Initial questions asked for demographic information, especially the participant's former work experience, and their experience in intercultural communication. This not only created a more relaxed environment for the interview, but also provided some information to help me develop follow-up questions to probe for details. Additional questions served to guide the interview process rather than dictate it.

The first two interviews were conducted in public places upon participant's request, and the remaining interviews occurred in meeting rooms at the company offices. Some of the interviews were divided into two parts according to participant's schedule. At the initial interview, all participants signed or had previously signed the informed consent form granting permission to tape record the conversation.

Interview conversation was in the language of the participant's preference. Nelson McDermott and Palchanes (1994, p.114) indicated that "non-English speakers are neither adequately nor accurately studied as a result of the difficulties created for researchers in the collection of the data due to language difficulties". Marshall and While (1994) also doubted the effectiveness and accuracy of semi-structured interviews with respondents who take English as their second language.

Eleven out of thirty-seven employees were interviewed including 6 Chinese and 5 Americans. This included employees to the manager level, both male and female participants. Participant experience in intercultural communication was also diverse, from experts with years of experience with Asian culture to young people who had never fully experienced intercultural communication. This pool of participants ensured variability among participants by age, gender, and job function.

At times during the interviews, I got some formalistic replies that may not reflect all of what knew, thought or felt. I rephrased the questions in other ways to encourage descriptive details that would be more helpful than formalistic replies. With my request for a detailed example, they would chose to answer through telling stories; stories helped me better understand the worker's experience. And in most cases, the stories contained the details that helped me during analysis. Only if these more polite and indirect approaches failed and I really needed the information, I used a different approach: "I have heard a lot of complaints about (any issue), what's your opinion about this one?" That's pretty challenging wording, but it may be necessary if the participant has been giving bland statements.

In interviews, the question “what do you think are the reasons for the barriers in your intercultural communication?” was included to arouse deeper thinking from participants. But in some cases this brought a hard time to participants, even aroused their impatience or disordered phrase. So I stopped from pushing them anymore to prevent me from asking interviewees beyond what they knew and were willing to talk about. Interviewees had more believability if it was clear that the interviewees were talking about their direct experience.

Asking some of the same questions to different people in different roles not only allowed me to check my interview for consistency, but also enabled me to understand separate parts of a truth known by different people and this allowed me to piece together what they collectively knew. Two or more versions of a conflict would reveal underlying ideas that shaped each participant’s experience.

My research explored each participant’s responses, perspectives, and experiences. I didn’t limit the interview to just those issues that I initially thought were important or interesting; I also followed those topics that emerged from participant’s answers. Some topics were not specifically asked about but directly or indirectly raised by respondents, such as some unacceptable behavior that was reported when the participants described their intercultural communication experience. This led to emergent themes beyond what I anticipated--issues that I didn’t anticipate after reviewing literature, still these unanticipated themes emerged very early during my interviews. I adapted my questions to improve subsequent interviews with other participants.

As the data collection progressed I continually refined my interview guide, and I became more reflexive allowing the participant responses to influence how I conducted

the interview. Field notes recorded important aspects of the interview that I observed but would not be audible on the recording, and I used these notes to try to capture emotions expressed by participants.

The audio tape-recorded interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes, 45 minutes as an average. Almost all participants required some direct rapport with me before they asked to participate. After two weeks of sharing space with employees, I started my first interview with an American employee. Other volunteers gradually came forward, and I normally scheduled 2 interviews in a week. The buffer time between interviews helped me concentrate and manage the emotions associated with each interview. The break between interview also provided me with some time begin transcribing from recording to typed text.

All the audio recordings, translations, and subsequent verbatim transcription copies were included in separate files on my portable storage, and a backup copy of all the content in the file was saved in my personal computer. Confidentiality of recordings was maintained by the principal investigator. Participant interviews were recorded and transcribed by the principal investigator. The transcriptions were edited to replace identifying information with pseudonyms and were coded to prevent participant identification by anyone other than the principle investigator, and the coding list was kept separately from the transcriptions files in a locked drawer with only access by me. The personal information of the participants no longer appeared in the latter process of coding and analysis. All the names mentioned and identified by the participants have been replaced by pseudonyms for confidentiality. After the verbatim transcriptions were

developed, the original audio recorders were also kept locked in a drawer with only access to primary investigator.

Data Analysis

I explored the use of computer-aided analysis before I decided an approach to translating and transcribing, coding, and the development of themes.

Consideration for Computer-aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)

A computer-aided analysis program, Nvivo features the function to speed up the analysis by storing and organizing the data, recording memos that facilitate theory building, and making links between sections of data. Its ability to quickly retrieve a piece of data could help ensure the accuracy of the research and encourages the researcher to revise analysis and think about it whenever they want (Weitzman, 2000). However, “software will never ‘do’ theory building for you..., but it can explicitly support you to think coherently about the meaning of your data” (Weitzman & Miles, 1995, p. 330). In particular, there is a big issue when my participants are from two different cultural backgrounds. The interview with American employees which was recorded and transcribed in English could easily fit with the language logic behind the software program; however, the interviews with Chinese employees which were taken in Chinese have a high risk of misunderstanding if I am using a software program developed by English-speaking researchers. While Nvivo accommodates Mandarin Chinese, it was difficult to be sure that the software could accommodate two languages simultaneously.

Translating and Transcribing

Audio recorded data from the interviews needed to be transcribed into written forms before analysis. The reconstruction of the interview situation in my mind ensured

that some of the information that was not audible on the recordings– such as emotions and non-verbal behaviors – were captured from my field notes and my memories to become part of each transcript.

The interviews taken with English speakers were transcribed word-for-word. The questions and answers were indicated with P and R (participants and researcher). To keep the data's "oral" characters, I even tried to reflect the participant's style and rhythm of speech by using dashes, dots, and commas. My explanation which described participants' emotions and non-verbal behaviors were left in round brackets, e.g. (laughs) or (shows photograph). The Italicized text combined with round brackets were used to indicate additional clarification by researcher. In addition, to prevent "verbatim" data from losing its individuality, I put the interview number and the basic biographical details at the beginning.

It was highly suggested by Warrington, (1999, p. 63-67) that the interview should be transcribed from the tape in the original language first, and then prepare your translations subsequently from that written text. So I had all the interviews taken in Chinese transcribed into Chinese written form first, and then translated into English. I started the sense-by-sense translation working with a more fluent speaker, a thesis committee member, who conducted back-translation from my translated English documents and compared her understandings with the original Chinese transcriptions, to ensure the validity of translation.

Coding

Because "repeated reading" of the data is always preferred (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I read through the transcripts at least once before I started formal coding. There

were times that the ideas and identification of possible patterns shaped what I understood while I was reading. I recorded these early ideas in the margin area as resources for my formal coding.

I started open coding by scrutinizing interview transcripts line-by-line and word-by-word, looking for anything that seemed important or interesting. *Colored highlighters* were used to indicate the segments of data, *underlining* was used to identify potential patterns, the *comments* function in word processor was used to attach the potential names to coded data segments.

At the same time, I reduced the raw information to a shortened “outline” form, a manageable size list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting, which made it much easier for the following analysis. The cut-and-paste function in the process was used to copy extracts of data from individual transcripts, and collate codes in a separate computer file.

Developing themes

I grouped my findings under each research question. Question one asked, “How do Chinese and American workers generally describe their work life with those from the other culture? I wrote short descriptive narratives often including a quote to describe how workers described their work life with those from the other culture. Each finding was numbered to set one apart from another. I did not set any findings aside; a finding could be from one, several or all the participants. This provided a rich mix of findings for each question. This describes how I grouped findings under question one through four.

I organized the findings for question five in a different way. I developed six short stories, each from a different worker, some from Chinese, and some from American. The unifying theme in the findings for question five was the occurrence of stress during intercultural communication. Each was a little different, but each was similar as I used constructs from the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping to explain stress and coping during intercultural communication.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings were grouped as answers to each of my five research questions, and each of the following sections answered a specific research question. I numbered the findings to indicate which question is being answered and in what order the finding is grouped in each section. In addition, all the names mentioned and identified by the participants have been replaced by pseudonyms for confidentiality.

Research Question One: How do Chinese and American Workers Generally Describe Their Work Life with Those from the Other Culture?

Chinese and American workers explained the nature of relationships with colleagues, the nature of relationships with supervisors/subordinates, the structure of the company, their experience with decision making, work schedules and company challenges that described their work life in a Chinese company's facility located in the United States.

1-1 Relationships with Colleagues

1-1-a) Both Chinese and American workers initially described their relationships with other workers as positive or neutral. Participants were asked to describe their personal relationship with other workers. None of the participants directly reported oral arguments or physical fights with the other workers. Four out of five American workers (PA4FE, PA1ME, PA2ME, and PA5ME) and one Chinese worker

(PC3FE) clearly stated that they had built good relationships with the other workers. One Chinese female worker reported arguments in her work-related communication, but her answer to this question was still positive. And three of the male workers (PA2ME, PA1ME, and PC4ME) specifically took time to clarify that there have been no oral arguments or physical fights.

For example, an American worker (PA2ME) said: "I think I have an open and fair relationship with all of the colleagues, I get along with everyone, I'm a nice guy, I like to have conversation, I get along with everyone very well, I don't have an issue with anyone."

Another American worker (PA1ME) said: "I have a good relationship with pretty much everybody here. I like everybody, I don't have anything against anybody," but soon, he showed an uncertain or a lack of confidence in his understanding of his relationships when he said, "I feel everybody likes me, they may not but I feel they do." However, later in his description about his relationships he said, "I have a personal relationship with a few people here, but that's not nearly as good as it was at M company." This American worker's description of his relationship with workers seemed generally positive and he was hopeful that he was understanding people accurately. Still he thought his relationships were better at his previous employer.

Two American workers (PA2ME and PA5ME) specifically pointed out their good relationships with workers from China. One American (PA2ME) warmly recounted his experience in China. He said the Chinese workers "always want to translate for me, and help me understand certain situations, help me understand different foods that I wasn't used to eating, explain a meal and what it may be," and he can still recall the warm words

when the American quoted his Chinese host, "I don't know if you would like this..., but this is what it is, please try, but if you don't like it, I understand." He was confident that he "built a rapport or personal relationship with many Chinese employees"

Another American worker (PA5ME) positively described his interaction with Chinese, "we could communicate well, talk, we joke together, we go to work together, we communicate effectively," he said his relationship with Chinese are "fine" and "great" and that, "with the Chinese it's fine, I have great relationship with them I think." He described his special love for China and Chinese culture and he said, "I try hard to relate to Chinese". "I'm half Chinese".

A Chinese female worker (PC3FE) showed her gratitude for an American worker's help when she warmly described her interaction with the American she worked directly with in the office. She said, "They are willing to help me on the work, and if they have any problem they also asked me to help. Such as her report last time, she asked me to give suggestions on the courtesy word usage. And sometimes I asked her some professional questions, and when I asked for help, she is also willing to offer help." The Chinese worker said she had a good relationship, "with anyone, no matter—Americans or Chinese," She warmly described her positive interaction with the American workers that she worked directly with in the office.

An American manager (PA3MM) and a Chinese employee (PC4ME) provide more neutral descriptions of their relationships with other workers. But their further explanation provided a positive description of their experience interacting with the workers from another culture.

A Chinese worker (PC4ME) said, “I have an ordinary personal relationship with colleagues, not bad” and “basically—no oral argument or body violence.” But his further description of his interaction with Americans described a rich experience of “interactions, such as going out and having dinner together after work, as most of the interaction between normal people.” He believes this is as good as the inner group interaction among Americans.

The American manager (PA3MM) said, “I get along personally well with several of them, probably not so well with some others,” though later he expressed his appreciation to his colleagues—Chinese or Americans, both are “high quality” and that, “Actually I like a lot of the people I worked with, ..., both the people I hired from the United States, and quite a few people from China.” He believed he was working with “high quality people”.

1-1-b) Comments offered by Chinese and American workers illustrated an awareness of cultural difference by individuals and groups of workers. When I asked about relationships across cultures, an American manager (PA3MM) was reluctant to differentiate at first saying there is nothing “unique about interacting with people I met from China versus any other back ground.” However later he said, “It’s hard to build a trust relationship with Chinese employees.” An American worker (PA4FE) also refused to compare by saying it was “good on both sides”, but she later pointed out “Chinese have a bigger issue of trusting Americans”.

Three workers who provided positive description of their relationship with the workers from another culture also (PA2ME, PA5ME and PC3FE) agreed that the

relationship with colleagues from the other cultures were different from that within the same cultural group.

One Chinese worker (PC3FE) described two kinds of good in relationships with other workers. She said “no matter Americans or Chinese” both types of relationships were “pretty good.” She said the good relationship with Chinese is different from the “good relationship” with Americans, “the close relationship with Chinese was based on subgroups, and sharing of personal conversation.” Later she said that she considered her American friends as “prime mate”, while Chinese friends are “soul mates”. She had a very close relationship with her American friends from her American university, but she would only share happiness with them. She said “when I felt sad or frustrated, I still wanted to share with a Chinese”.

One American worker (PA2ME) said “it’s kind of hard to build a personal relationship with someone you can’t always communicate”. Even though this American recounted gracious hospitality and friendship extended during his visit to China, he admitted the limits imposed by his lack of language knowledge and skills.

Another American worker (PA5ME) pointed out, “with the Chinese it’s different, you have to work harder for the relationship with Chinese.” He believed that because he tried hard to relate to Chinese and was confident about his positive interaction with Chinese employees, that was why he could communicate well, joke together, and go to work together.

1-1-c) Both American workers and Chinese workers reported culturally homogeneous subgroups in this company; the workers also described some misunderstandings and suspicions as part of the relationships between groups. Three

American workers and two Chinese workers (PA1ME, PA4FE, PA5ME, PC1MM, and PC3FE) all reported, that Chinese and Americans gathered separately into groups within the company. The American worker PA1ME described “all the Americans hang out together every now and then outside of work, all the Chinese hang out together outside of work, Indian guys I think they kind of keep to their own.” This phenomena was also mentioned by a female worker from China (PC3FE); she pointed out that, “it’s very obvious in our company” that it’s, “purely Chinese or purely Americans” and, “everybody had a subgroup, strong sense of subgroup,” and people are not an integrated group in the company, but are a collection of different subgroups. Two female workers both reported limited interactions across the groups. The American female worker (PA4FE) stated there is little communication across the groups; she said, “it’s more predominant among each group that, the Chinese talk to each other, and the Americans talk to each other,” And Chinese female worker (PC3FE) also said “there’s few interactions across groups”; she said that within this company, “Americans only stayed with Americans all day to eat, chat, or talk about sense of humor, while Chinese only stayed with Chinese.”

An American worker (PA5ME) explained that Americans gathered because they have similar previous working experience in American companies and share some confusion or dislike for, “different rules, silly rules” in Chinese company. She believed that common fears become the connection and the reason the American groups were developed.

An American worker (PA5ME) reported that there was tension developing between the subgroups. He stated that both of the Chinese workers and American

workers believed that the other group was getting preferential treatment in the company. He said that, “all the Americans think the Chinese get preferential treatment,” and that Americans think “the Chinese are the favorites of everybody” and that, “the Chinese think the same of the Americans.” PA5ME provided an explanation from American perspective. He believed that Americans pay attention to the special benefits for Chinese workers and that, “they all eat together, they all live in that C company’s house to get food.” The American observed a special interaction between Chinese employee and Chinese manager, “all the Chinese have to behave like what they did in China,” and, “they have to wait for President S to come before they eat”, and “‘S Zong’ a special name that Chinese workers used to call President S, that special names”, were all interactions among Chinese that this American believed was, “all kind of hidden from Americans”.

A Chinese worker (PC5ME) expressed a complaint about an American worker’s higher salary level. He was really unsatisfied and felt disrespected because, “the salary for us Chinese and for Americans are highly differentiated.”

Two Americans (PA3MM and PA4FE) agreed that there was a lack of trust between these two groups. One (PA3MM) generalized that it takes a long while to build trust with Chinese, and the other (PA4FE) believed that Chinese have a bigger issue trusting Americans.

1-2 Relationships between Supervisors and Subordinates

1-2-a) Chinese and American workers believed that relationships between supervisors and subordinates were important. A Chinese manager (PC1MM) said the subordinate and supervisor relationship found in China is different than the relationship found in America, and he found it complex. Chinese managers were less likely to respect

the employee's human dignity. He said, "The superior to subordinate relationship in America, which is different from that in China, fully respects the individuals' human dignity," his answer indicated that Chinese managers was less respectful of the individual's human dignity. He used an example to illustrate that Chinese did not fully respect an individual worker's human dignity, "the working title was a necessary component when you call somebody," and "Americans usually didn't add the title, and just called each other by their first names, which was more equal." He believed that the relationship between subordinate and supervisor in China was more ambiguous than, not as clear as that in America. In America, "their work relationships are very clear, boss is boss, boss will be fully respected." while in China, "the supervisor's opinion and subordinate's opinion were less clearly differentiated," and, "it may be very democratic during work, even subordinates are not required to buy the supervisor's idea."

1-2-b) Several workers identified concerned about relationships between supervisors and subordinates. Three American workers (PA4FE, PA1ME, PA5ME) pointed out there's a "cultural hierarchy" in the company. One American worker (PA5ME) and the other two American workers used "very hierarchy driven" to describe the company, PA5ME pointed out it not only "have a lot of layers" but also "a lot of formality". "Formality" could be easily illustrated with the practice of, "including working title when you call somebody", or it could be explained as a courteous way of expressing the differential treatment based on an individual's position in the hierarchy.

A young American worker (PA1ME) used the word "strict" to describe the relationships between the supervisor and subordinates. This worker (PA1ME) compared his work experience in this company and in his former company, one company was "a

little bit more strict”, the other was “very laid back”. The description of a “strict” relationship in his current company was developed based on his comparison with his former “very laid back” experience in the American company. He recounted his “very laid back” experience in the American company, and his thinking seemed focused on the owner of the former company, Mr. M, who the worker described as someone who loved to be called “B (his first name)” instead of “Mr. M”. “Mr. M”, wore jeans and t-shirts like his employees, and went out for beer with his employees. This worker used his experience with Mr. M’s company to emphasize his conclusion about his situation at C company, “it’s more strict, more professional, more like a large company atmosphere”.

Some Chinese workers also identified the relationship between the supervisor and subordinates as a concern. A Chinese worker (PCIMM) described the relationship between the supervisor and subordinates at this company as less equal. He pointed out the differential treatment between supervisor and subordinates.

A Chinese worker (PC5ME) described a very intense and restrained relationship with his supervisor, and he told why the relationship with his supervisor was not positive. He said he, “had a feeling of being restrained” when he was with the manager, and he attributed this mainly to his disagreement with differential treatments between employees and managers. He provided two examples to describe the differential treatment between managers and employees, “a very simple thing, here, we won’t be served food until the manager comes.” Another example is that a whole group of employees were asked to pick up the manager at the airport when he/she first arrived. And he said “this couldn’t be imagined before”. Besides, he expressed his strong disagreements about the manager treating the workers “grindingly”, he complained, the managers gave little consideration

of the workers' benefits, and the workers were required to provide much more than they were rewarded.

1-3 Structure of the Company

1-3-a) American and Chinese workers demonstrated concern about organizational structure as they provided their individual understandings about how this company was structured. Two American workers (PA5ME and PA1ME) described a company "has a lot of layers" and that this made the company "hierarchy driven". An American worker (PA5ME) also agreed that the company "is very strict and very hierarchy driven...have a lot of layers...a lot of formality". Another American worker (PA1ME) described the excessive administrative layers in the company in this way, "there are bosses" and "there are the bosses of the bosses". He had a stronger and direct experience of the hierarchy in the company when he sought approval for "a 200-dollar back-up tape", and he complained, "even if I needed a 200 dollar back-up tape, I needed to get, to write a PO, get it approved by Song, get approved by Green, get it approved by Bill, and Bill (all the names identified have been replaced by pseudonyms) had to get approved by so and so, and it had to be approved, and you know, if I needed anything that's only 50 bucks, it takes three weeks to get approved, that's very stifling."

Another American worker (PA4FE) agreed that "there is hierarchy of the position", but she said the hierarchy is "figuratively the same with Americans". She felt "the structure is very region, very matrix, there is a clearly defined hierarchy". She said, "Figuratively it's the same, Chinese verses American company, you have your president, you have your vice president, you have all the way down to the worker on the (factory) floor."

1-3-b) Workers were sensitive to the existence of C Company in China, and the relationship between C Company in America and C Company in China. An American worker (PA5ME) said, “C Company have a team in China, a team in America” which he didn’t see as integrated like other companies, and this structure may limit how much work can be accomplished because, “each design of product in China had a team...you know most company’s teams assembled together—C Company have a team in China, a team in America, and you have to figure out how to function together.” An American engineer (PA2ME) mentioned there was a pump truck team and all of the electrical engineers for that team were back in China. If he had a question, he would communicate with them through email because there were times when the information he needed could only be found at C-China. Another American engineer (PA3MM) also mentioned C Company’s resources in China, and he believed that C-China had much freer access to information than people in C-America. He believed C leadership in China owed workers in C-America more trust.

1-4 Making Decisions

Chinese and American workers described what they understood about decision making in their company.

1-4-a) The employees and managers did not agree about which level owned the power to make decisions. Some American and Chinese lower-level workers said decision power was controlled at the top level.

An American worker (PA1ME) pointed out that the bosses in this company control most of the decision power, “those bosses have to give their approval for anything to happen here.” He indicated that supervisors wanted to give their opinion on

everything, and that they influenced or impacted everything. He said, "Employees have to get approval to make things happen." This experience was totally different from his former experience in American company where, "we could make decisions on things; we didn't have to get approval for things to make things happen."

Another American worker (PA4FE) agreed that "on the Chinese cultural side, all the decisions were made from the top", not like "in American cultural side, that top was used as supporting, so most of the decisions that the top made was driven by the worker on the floor." In her description of American culture, the worker did at least participate in making decisions and influenced the decisions. She believed that in Chinese culture the top was not only used in a supporting role, but also made all the decisions. She said, "the Chinese side made every decision at the president".

A Chinese worker (PC5ME) described his experience as "do whatever the manager said, manager is above the priority of everything". He said, "After I came to C Company...basically I acted according to what manager said." He continued saying, "the manager would control you on many things, there's no room for your own idea." He said that's a restriction of his own mind and will to act according to the order. He used to have conflict with managers because he did not always agree with decisions about work. But now he is more compliant that he would "basically listen to the order".

Both American and Chinese employees on the manager level argued that they didn't have decision power; they are not the "final decision makers". However, they attributed it to a different reason.

An American team leader (PA3MM) complained that as a team leader, he "cannot sign a ten dollar expense of people who work for me without having the presidents of the

company to approve it,” and he attributed this to “trust factors” He said “the Chinese leadership trusts the information they get from the Chinese sources, but they don’t trust the information they get from a source that’s not Chinese,” which he interprets that his lack of decision power is because of not being trusted by Chinese leadership. He said, “That’s insulting for me as the manager, this approved my capability over a year, running business, successful businesses.”

A Chinese manager (PC1MM) said even boss didn’t have the final decision power. He believed this was different from an American company where, “their working relationships are very clear, boss is boss, boss will be fully respected.” He said in Chinese company, “the supervisor’s opinion and subordinate’s opinion were less clearly differentiated” and that, “it may be very democratic during work, even the subordinates didn’t buy the supervisor’s idea” and that, “the final decision maker could not be the boss, but decided by multiple factors, such as the team members’ background, and the relationship between the leader and the members.” This was a more complicated understanding that contrasted with the understanding expressed by some American workers.

A Chinese mid-manager (PC1MM) admitted that he had some decision power and was able to make some impact in the company, and this was a source of his job satisfaction. However, this was included as one of his stressors, because the scope of his decision power was ambiguously defined. He described his decision making process as a complicated experience requiring extra attention, “you need to be really careful about what was required to be reported to the boss, what was not required—there’s no clear

definition—you need to figure this out by yourself”. “It’s not very clear, some things you could do, and some things you can not, watch out, nothing was clear.”

Another two Chinese employees (PC4ME and PC5ME) reported that a complex decision making process was caused by workers not understanding their ambiguously defined decision power and responsibilities in this company. The two Chinese employees both reported different instructions received from different layers within the upper management. This Chinese manager (PC1MM) and a Chinese worker (PC5ME) agreed that they lacked a clear definition of their decision power and a clear definition of their responsibilities at work. The Chinese worker (PC5ME) explained how a clear definition of one’s decision power and responsibilities would decrease hesitation in taking responsibilities during decision making. He said, “This means I can make the decisions within my power. Even though I made a wrong one, I was able to carry the responsibilities, that within my boundary/scope. Sometimes there was a lacking of clearly defined boundary/scope.”

1-4-b) Lower-level and manager-level employees described a decision making process that delayed work because it required too much time to get too many approvals. An American worker (PA1ME) described layers in the approval process, “even if I needed a 200 dollar back-up tape, I needed to get, to write a PO, get it approved by Song, get approved by Green, get it approved by Bill, and Bill had to get approved by so and so, and it had to be approved, and you know, if I needed anything that’s only 50 bucks, it takes three weeks to get approved, that’s very stifling.” (all the names identified have been replaced by pseudonyms).

An American manager (PA3MM) said “the number of approval steps is too much, and makes the job go much, much slower...the experience with C Company is that it takes much too long to get the approval, the approval steps take too many stage.”

Another American worker (PA4FE) said, “The approving processes are very heavy...very top heavy”. She complained that, “lots of signatures, signature on the top, signature on top, signature on top, signature just to get one thing done, so it makes any process here very slow, and very inefficient”. She provided an example of getting approval for traveler reimbursement, “you’ve got to have about five signatures on one document to get someone two hundred bucks back, and might get back in a week or two from the time it was initially put in.”

An American manager (PA3MM) described the approving process, “the operations management wants to go to very fine details” and that even if a plan was approved, the items within the plan need to be checked. He said, “Sometimes items (in the decision process) are randomly removed”; there was a time when he was told “you don’t need that person, to hire that person to do this job”.

Another American worker (PA4FE) agreed that in the C Company approving process, “they require a lot of things” that she thought were not necessary. She said, “you shouldn’t require (so many layers of approval), because it’s only going to weight the company down, and make it harder for the company to succeed.”

1-5 Work Responsibilities and Power

1-5-a) Workers reported a workplace had been slowed down by the approving process in this company. One worker (PA1ME) worked in an important department and reported his plan to improve his work by doing some experiments on a

backup server was hold up by the failure to seek an approve for the backup server. He said, "I think I could be much better at doing my job, if this test server where I can run the software backup doesn't affect the two real servers, I could try things, I could restore, I could update, I could try it before I actually do it on the real computer."

Another worker (PA4FE) who is on a administrative position pointed out that a large portion of her work was slowed down by approving process. "All the processes are in the requirements, even doing a simple project, usually takes twice amount of time as it would". She provided an example of how the approving process slows down the reimbursement process with the five signatures required on the document, made the reimbursement process for two hundred bucks take a week or two.

An American engineer (PA2ME) reported the approval process contributed to the delay of approaching information for an engineering project, Another worker (PA3MM) described how the approval process interfered his original work as an engineer and that of his team members, he said, "We were asked for some engineering models with drawings of the excavators from China, so we can do some modifications for US, items a non-engineer told us you don't need that information to do that job, so like, one, it's engineering information, it is required to do the job, here is someone doesn't have technical background telling you, you don't need it, when they don't, never done that job, and then again engineer experts say this is what I need to get the job done, they are told you can't have it, but you still need to get the job done, so that's very frustrating, and I think that gets back to that trust, and if I can speak Chinese, then I can explain why I need it, but there's a road block...and you move on."

An American employee (PA5ME) described how the Chinese employees in the lower level figure out a way to get through the system to avoid delaying. He said they are “working around the system” instead of “working through the system”, because “they know the rules, they know how to get around them (the rules).” He provided an example, “working around the system” in his request for a laptop, “I decide, I’m just going to buy one, expense, see what happens, I’ll fight about it later, I have my laptop, fight about it later.” He thought he was, “overly restricted, they have to work around the C Company’s rules and security system to try to get things done,”

Even though the Chinese workers were more familiar with the process, there were still some Chinese workers who reported the influence of the approval process. A Chinese worker (PC2ME) reported this influence when he said, “this approving process hold up my plan when I want to finish it as quick as possible, ... , the influence is pretty big...I’m responsible for most of the communication with Chinese locations...it’s exactly the information or resources needed from Chinese locations involved in the approving process...in this case, I could only wait, while my American team members don’t have to do this, most of the project they are in charge of didn’t include an approval from Chinese location.”

1-6 Work Schedule

American and Chinese workers described the scheduling of their work life.

1-6-a) Working overtime was a requirement for communication across a twelve hour time difference between workers in China and workers in America. The Chinese workers and American workers who mentioned this were aware of the necessity of working overtime for their work. Despite this recognition, some workers were still

unable to accept the working schedule. One American worker pointed out the importance of building a well-developed communication system, which made the experience of “working overtime...very positive”.

A Chinese worker (PC4ME) and an American worker (PA5ME) both understood the importance of a flexible working schedule, and both worked more effectively. This Chinese worker stated that he understood that it was a necessary part of the job, and it was required for better cooperation between the workers in China and America. He said it's a voluntary behavior based on individual decisions. The American worker (PC5ME) was also highly aware of the importance of the workers in C China to also work longer hours as a convenience for him to complete his work during the American work day. He said, “C China if they're not working (in American's working hour), the engineers can't email out, their system is closed, so there's no way to communicate with C's engineers during working hours.”

Another American worker (PA2ME) highlighted the importance of ability to be “flexible and adjustable” with his working schedule. He developed this awareness from a similar experience in his last job, which also required overtime work to cooperate with his co-workers in China. He said: “we did a good job at balancing that, either we would coming early, or we would stay late to make sure we all communicate to meet our goal of getting the job done.” he said “it's not fair for Chinese colleagues to always have to stay late”.

1-6-b) Some employees still thought it was unacceptable to work overtime.

One American (PA5ME) was reluctant to work such long hours, “if I come in at 6:00 am

everyday...and I work till nine and ten o'clock at night...I got to kill myself working for the company." He thought working overtime was "a great sacrifice" of his family time.

A Chinese worker (PC5ME) passively refused to work overtime right now. He said, "I used to have a motivation to finish the job—that I don't mind to work overtime, but now I thought it's time to get off, there's no requirement to get it done—just leave it for tomorrow—it won't cause any problems".

An American manager (PA3MM) pointed out prerequisite resources for working overtime. He recalled his positive experience using a well developed support system at his previous company did when they were faced the same situation. His former company built a "well-developed communication system" which included multiple ways of communication such as video conference that they used mostly during working hour and "an internal chat network where you could talk to your other employees, so we would chat with each other." In addition, he had his "work issue laptop at home" and his work cell phone. All these features provided a convenience for him to continue work when he is "out from work". He said "I would still be working while I was at home" and he thought of his working at home as a "positive experience". He proudly described how he, "helped them (co-workers in China) fix a problem while I was in my living room" and, "while I was at home, on my work cell phone, and also chatting with them on the side of the road, I helped them fix the problems while I was in my living room, helped them get the truck running that was on the side of the road," all the tools enabled his working overtime to be a "very good experience". The American manager (PA3MM) complained about not being provided any resources for him to be able to work overtime at home, and how this lack of tools limited his contributions during hours away from the workplace.

According to an American manager (PA3MM), it's very common for American managers at higher levels to bring work back home, and he said that was also the case in his previous job. He said, "While I working for U.S. and Japanese company, I used to work a lot at night". He said, "If I was given the tools to get the job done, it was very satisfying," and he enjoyed the experience of working overtime. He said that in his previous job he, "was given the resources"; he explained, "I had a laptop that I could work anywhere when I worked with US and Japanese company." His expectation when he joined C Company was that, "I'd like to get into it again, and make C Company successful", but he concluded that "it's very difficult to work at night" because, "I'm not allowed to have a laptop in this company; I'm not given the cell phone." He needed the tools for him to be able to work from home after hours; he wanted, "laptop computers, internet connection, the ability to get the information from the computers at work".

1-7 Challenges for This Company

Chinese and Americans from lower-level and manager-level roles described two great challenges faced by this company: **1-7-a) one was because it was a newly started company, and 1-7-b) the difficulties that come from cultural differences among the workers.**

1-7-c) As a newly started company, it was lacking a well-developed processes for basic management functions. A Chinese manager (PC1MM) said, "that we are so green that everything need to be controlled, nothing were defined, nothing has process", Now the most important thing for him is to "develop all the processes to regulate the company in a standard way", and the process building have to be started from very

beginning like “purchase” process. A Chinese worker (PA4ME) also reported a lack of well-developed process, and how this lead to inefficiency in his work.

1-7-d) A Chinese manager (PC1MM) and a Chinese worker (PC5ME) pointed out the need for clear definitions of worker responsibilities and their authority to make decisions. PC1MM said, “there’s not a clear boundary” of his work responsibilities and decision authority. He said, “it’s not very clear, some things you can do, some things you cannot, watch out, nothing was clear.”

1-7-e) Some workers expected difficulties in a new company. An American female worker (PA4FE) said the company was experiencing the turbulence that, “any start-up company experienced”; she said “it’s just the way it is, there’s no start-up company that hasn’t experienced every single thing that this workplace experienced”.

An American engineer (PA2ME) said we were “accepting the challenge before us”, it was “a big challenge to build a multi-product base in America, and establish product in America”,

Another American engineer (PA3MM) worried about the product made by a Chinese company couldn’t meet the American customer’s requirements. He said with anxiousness, “I think the expectation level is a little different in China than United States” and that, “the level of service that’s expected by the US customer is probably higher” and that, “the customers expect a very specific product, expects a sales team that’s knowledgeable and very thorough, and expects after market support.” He strongly suggested that, “C Company has to adapt to those expectations”.

Cultural differences among workers (finding 1-7-b) complicated the difficulties of a start-up company. One worker (PA4FE) said that, “cultural barriers and communication” make start-up challenges that were, “already bumpy, even bumpier”.

A Chinese manager (PC1MM) pointed out several times that the “cultural collision” is one of the biggest challenge faced by C Company; he said, “we were in a totally different culture, brand new city, different location, so we are facing many challenges.” and he believed that C company was a forerunner of Chinese corporations investing in America with little experience borrow from others.

PA2ME explained what’s included in “the challenge before us”, he said, “the challenge that’s before us, I see it as a big challenge to build a multi-product base in America, and establish product in America, and also the cultural difference establishing a business in America verses a business that is normal of in China”.

An American manager (PA3MM) provided a practical problem in the work because of cultural difference. He was concerned about the product made by Chinese company wasn’t able to meet the American customer’s expectations because “the expectation level is a little different in China than United States,” which is a cultural issue. According to him, his concerns were not entirely accepted with, “only half of them...approved, while some others were rejected, and some of them were still being looked at,” because C’s manager in a higher level “said it’ was unnecessary”. He suggested that “you can’t just reject stuff that you think is unimportant, because it might be very important to the customer.”

A Chinese worker (PC3FE) pointed out “(the company culture) is still basically Chinese” and it included “a cultural environment and habits” typical of a Chinese

company. She said, "Many rules in C Company are still following Chinese ways." She described the example of three month probation for every new employee which could only be found in Chinese company. She said that, "Chinese owns decision power everything". She said, "The foreigners (Americans) in C Company are different from those in the other company, they would follow Chinese ways to do the work". She said "I didn't find any discrimination to Chinese here" and that, "we are much happier and casual in C Company" and she added that, "I'm more able to speak freely".

An American worker (PA4FE) never expected the company to be "completely Americanized, she said " I'm just hoping it maybe can evolve into a middle ground, part of Chinese, and part of American, and make it a stronger bonds somewhere down the road,"

A Chinese worker (PC2ME) also expected a multi-cultural environment in the future. He said, "the two cultures, two nations...both sides need to change", and he was expecting that this company would, "definitely not to ask Americans to adapt to a typically Chinese company, nor to ask C company to change to a typically American company".

A Chinese female worker (PC3FE) appreciated the multi-culture environment in her working area, and took the adaptation process as a challenge. She wanted to enrich herself in a multi-culture environment instead of limiting and narrowing herself in a mono-cultural environment. At the same time, she still liked the Chinese traditional culture in her personal life to return her to a sense of home, which gave her comfort and ease.

Another Chinese worker (PC4ME) insisted that “it’s one way adaptation instead of two ways”; he said, “I think it’s not an intercultural communication, but the problem is for American employees adapting to the culture of a Chinese-invested company located in America.” He insisted that it’s American employees’ responsibility to blend into this company.

1-7-f) Workers were facing difficulties aroused by culture difference. An American worker (PA1MM) pointed out several times that C-America, this Chinese invested company in the US, “was located in a totally new place, and surrounded by a wholly new culture, so we are facing many challenges.” And he emphasized that the borrowed experience is important for their work, “there’s little experience that we can borrow from”.

Another American worker (PA2ME) agreed that C Company by locating in America was accepting big challenges, and cross-cultural challenges contributed a big part of that challenge.

An American worker (PA4FE) pointed out another example of culture challenges when he described the difference between American and Chinese approaches to a “bargaining system”.

Some cultural differences were within the company, some American workers (codes of workers) have a disagreement with the decision power that was concentrated in the upper level and the restriction in information sharing.

The collision of different cultural perspectives was revealed in communication between workers. Workers described disagreements on varying cultural perspectives that were used to understand work issues; communications sought understanding and

agreement on important work issues. Workers described cultural barriers and language barriers existed in these work-related communications. A Chinese worker (PC2ME) pointed out how barriers related to culture and language made it difficult for Chinese managers to fully explain their positions to American workers.

Research Question Two: How Do Chinese and American Workers Describe Intercultural Communication?

Five American and six Chinese workers participated in this research. Both Chinese and American workers provided a positive or at least neutral description of their relationship with co-workers. Some of the workers noticed that “subgroups” existed inside the American location. Some workers described the relationship between subordinates and supervisors in the company as strict, distant and hierarchical. Some workers highlighted extra layers of structure in the company. The decision making process was ambiguous in the company, employees said managers controlled the decision power, while the two managers from China and one from the U.S. separately complained that they don’t have the decision power either. Workers were generally concerned about having the power to make decisions, and this left them uncertain about their responsibilities in the company. Workers also expressed concerns about overtime and the role of cultural differences as the company worked to meet the challenges of a start-up in a new market.

All participants in this research described examples of intercultural communication. Chinese and American workers described both work-related and personal examples of intercultural communication with workers.

2-1 Descriptions of Work-related Intercultural Communication

Chinese and American workers described intercultural communication that was focused on Work.

2-1-a) Workers varied in their need to communicate. Some did administrative work requiring regular communication with workers from different departments to help with coordinate and support. Some workers in professional jobs, such as engineering in a specific area communicated less frequently than persons in administrative roles.

2-1-b) Workers varied in their need to communicate with workers from another cultural group. Based on workers' different working position and working requirements, the frequency of intercultural communication varied from worker to worker.

Some American workers did administrative work that required more frequent and more extended communication with Chinese workers in the U.S. location. One American (PA4FE) was doing tasks related to all the different lines of equipment. So her communication with Chinese workers is an everyday activity in her work. "Every day, every day situation." she said and, "I have lots of scenario every single day that I worked with Chinese culture." .

A Chinese worker (PC4ME) reported intense work-related intercultural communication while in charge of administrative work in purchasing. He said he communicated with basically everybody in the company, "no matter Chinese or American workers". Because of his work requirement, "I'm in charge of purchase, so I need to communicate with the employees, no matter Chinese or Americans, to know exactly what he or she wants, then I was able to arrange an order."

An American software administrator (PA1ME) was in charge of the software used by engineers, and he said his communication with Chinese was limited with only two Chinese engineers who are working in his professional area within the U.S. location.

A Chinese recruitment assistant (PC3FE) had limited communication experience with American workers due to only being with this company for two months; she said, “my interactions are mainly with Chinese...with Americans, it’s much less,” and she clearly pointed out her communication with Americans are due to the requirements of her position.

Another Chinese worker (PC5ME) reported little communication with Americans or with other workers; he said, “Basically there’s little necessity to communicate with the other departments.”

American workers performing technical work described work communication as being limited to their group of technical workers with shared responsibilities; this communication involved Chinese and American workers with a common technical language.

Some Chinese workers who had at least some proficiency in English were assuming responsibilities in intercultural communications beyond their defined work roles as engineers or administrative staff. One Chinese worker (PC6ME), who provided technical information support to the American engineers also supported communication with almost everybody within the company; he said, “our team’s responsibility is to make sure the product runs smoothly from production to service after sales. But our work couldn’t be isolated from the other product teams. And as you know we are building the product base here, I knew something about this, so others would find me to ask about

arrangements, schedules, purchasing. We would communicate on this stuff. So almost everyone in the company knows me well, and we would say hi to each other whenever we meet.” Another Chinese worker (PC2ME) who was a professional engineer, also took the responsibilities to “be the translator for the Chinese documents or be the interpreter when my team traveled back in China.” When he found the cultural diversity between his team members and their Chinese managers, he worked to assure communication between these two groups. He explained, “The most direct resolution to me is to sit down and had a communication face-to-face. I believe it’s the most direct resolutions, and I did say (to my team members): ‘we need to talk to our manager’, and said to the manager that ‘I believe it’s necessary for you to have a communication with our team members.’”

A Chinese manager (PC1MM) also described extensive involvement in intercultural communication because part of his work is to set up a regular intercultural communication process between departments, and promote efficient intercultural communication.

2-1-c) Unlike most domestic companies, there was a special need to communicate outside regular working hours in this international business. Since there is a twelve-hour time difference between the American and Chinese locations of this company, workers at both ends are required to communicate outside the normal work day. According to a Chinese worker (PC4ME) and an American worker (PA5ME), Chinese workers are more likely to be involved in this voluntary after hours communication than American workers.

2-2 Geographic Scope of Communication

2-2-a) The geographic scope of communication varied. Verbal and non-verbal communication were used in communication within the U.S. location or in communication between the US and Chinese locations.

2-2-b) Most of the communication discussed by the workers took place inside the U.S. location of the company. In the U.S. location, the verbal communication was face-to-face, and the non-verbal communication was email. Though the communication through email was only reported by one American (PA4ME), her words described busy traffic in email communication within the office.

2-2-c) Some of the communication discussed by workers took place between workers in the United States and workers in China. The communication between workers in United States and those in China were long distance communication with a reliance on technology. An American (PA2ME) described several tools he used in his communication with engineers in China, “talk on the telephone”, “through email”, and “video conference”. According to this worker, use of these tools was restricted to the workplace. He said he used emails more frequently than, “talk on the phone” or “video conference”. Another American worker (PA5ME) described a similar preference.

2-2-d) There was a 12-hour time difference that caused some of the communication to take place outside of regular working hours. To communicate with the Chinese location made it necessary to work at the office late in the evening or early before sunrise. An American worker (PA5ME) described it this way, “there’s no way to communicate with anybody in C company (China), during working hours” and he believed that, “it works better for them to go home and communicate” using the

technology available to the public rather than the within office system. He said, “they always use their personal email, QQ (a online chatting software), or whatever.”

2-2-e) English speaking skills were required for Chinese workers in the U.S. location; however those requirements do not apply to the workers in Chinese locations. So the communication with workers in Chinese locations is limited to Chinese or fundamental level of English communication skills. Two Americans (PA2ME and PA3MM) reported using a translator for their communication with workers in the Chinese locations. One described his communication with workers back in China as indirect through interpreters.

2-2-f) Access to some information in the Chinese location was restricted. The communication between locations was often the access to technical information and related support. In addition to the time difference and language issues mentioned earlier, there were also man-made restrictions about the communication of important technical information. One American (PA2ME) explained, “there may even be a process of approval for me to obtain that information”. Another American worker (PA3ME) also said the communication failed to get his request through the approval process. Both workers described this approval step as time-consuming.

2-3 Non-verbal Forms of Communication

Each non-verbal tool was used individually or mixed with other non-verbal or verbal communication. There are several tools used in the non-verbal communication: “emails”, “QQ” (an online instant message program), “reports”. “Drawing pictures” in combination with verbal communication was also reported by two workers (PA5ME and PC6ME).

2-3-a) Emails were used in communication within the U.S. location, and in communication between the U.S. and Chinese locations. There was a well-developed email system within the U.S. offices, and two workers (PA2ME and PA5ME) reported communication with workers in the Chinese location through emails. Though email communication within the office was rarely mentioned by other workers, one worker (PA4FE) described “email traffic” as “flying around the office”.

Another worker (PA2ME) described his communication through emails with engineers in a Chinese location of the company. Email is the most frequently used way for him to communicate with engineers back in China. “There have been a few situations that I have emailed with Chinese electrical engineers back in a Chinese location of the company ...so if I have a question, I have a relationship with persons who knows me and I know them, so I can communicate through email.” Another worker (PA5ME) also mentioned communication through “emails” with workers in Chinese locations. In addition, he mentioned another non-verbal tool called QQ.

2-3-b) Workers also reported using “QQ”, a text messaging system similar to Instant Messenger.

2-4 Verbal or Oral Communication

Workers used verbal communication in face-to-face encounters in the U.S. location and in technology-enabled verbal communication with the locations in China. Telephone and video conferencing were the technologies used to long-distance verbal communication. There are cases where non-verbal tools have been introduced into face-to-face communication, and contributed to the information transmission. Language skills are more complex and demanding in verbal communication.

2-4-a) Workers described face-to-face communication. In addition to the frequent references to face-to-face communication within the U.S. location, one American worker (PA3MM) described his face-to-face communication with Chinese engineers in China and the Chinese supervisors who worked in the Chinese locations when he traveled to China. In this situation a translator is introduced into the communication process.

2-4-b) Workers described video conferencing communication. Two workers (PA2ME and PA5ME) described verbal communications with Chinese workers in Chinese locations that were either through telephone or “video conference call”. One of the workers (PA2ME) described verbal communication through video conference in long distance communication and he described this technology as underused by C company.

2-4-c) Workers described telephone communication. Workers described communication through telephone. One American worker (PA2ME) said, “I don’t communicate too much on the phone” with the location in China, but he provided a detailed description of his verbal communication through phone in the U.S.; he said, “if it’s over the phone, most of the time the discussion would be between Li Ming (pseudonym) and the engineers,” and “I may ask Li Ming (pseudonym) when I don’t know the answer to this question, ‘do you know?’, he would say, ‘no, I don’t know, but tonight I will call the Chinese engineer, and I’ll get you the answer tomorrow, yes’”. This person (PA2ME) used verbal communication with a mid-person in his long distance communication with Chinese engineers in China.

2-5 Language Skills

Workers described language skills in their intercultural communication experience.

2-5-a) Both Chinese and American workers agreed that English was the common language used in their communication. All the Chinese workers in C-America have shown certain fundamental level for English writing and speaking skills, some of them are on a much higher level. The American workers are not required to have understanding of Chinese and culture.

2-5-b) Four American workers (PA1ME, PA2ME, PA4FE, PA3MM) admitted their language barriers in communication. Some Americans attributed the barrier to Chinese not speaking English and only one attributed the barrier at least in part to his inability to speak and fully understand Chinese.

2-5-c) Four Chinese participants (PC1MM, PC2ME, PC3FE, and PC5ME) did not report problems understanding English. Some Chinese participants had previous experience studying at a university in the United States.

2-5-d) Some Chinese workers (PC4ME and PC2ME) reported that some of the other Chinese workers lacked sufficient language skills for effective communication in English.

2-5-e) Workers described communication with the use of a translator or interpreter. Translators were introduced into communication when language barriers were apparent and acknowledged. The translation process added layers to the communication process and consumed more time. Accuracy and completeness of translation were concerns expressed by some workers.

2-5-f) Chinese workers in the U.S. location assumed more responsibilities for translation than their American co-workers. This included translation of oral communication and written documents.

2-6 Seeking Information and Approval

Workers identified information seeking as a frequent reason for communication.

2-6-a) The American location had partially restricted authority of information. An American engineer (PA3MM) described that the Chinese locations have much free access to the information than these workers in the American locations. He said, “it seems like, people work for the company in China has a lot free access to the information than the people work for the company outside of China.” Another American engineer (PA2ME) also mentioned that some of the information were required by his work could only be found “from S city (one of the company’s Chinese location)”. (Another American engineer (PA5ME) also reported that communication to seek information took a large part of his communication with the Chinese locations.)

2-6-b) Individuals played key roles in helping others seek information. One Chinese engineer (PC6ME) described the information seeking communication within the office; He said the American workers sought all the information from him, such as the information or parameters about their product; he said, “I acted like a teacher, if they have any questions, they would come and ask me,” and “I was responsible for answering all their questions.” And this description was supported by American engineer PA2ME, he said, Li Ming (pseudonym) “is our main key between C-America and C-China.”

2-6-c) Access to information that required an approval process. Two workers (PA2ME and PA3MM) mentioned that some information requests needed to be approved

before information was provided the Chinese location. One worker (PA3MM) said the Chinese location “has a lot freer access to the information” than the American location. Several other workers (PA5ME and PA2ME) agreed with this description.

2-6-d) Some workers described restrictions on access to information. An American worker (PA5ME) described a restriction on information other than technical information. He described: “they are restrictive, secretive” in the vertical communication. The employees were not expected to ask a lot of questions.

2-7 Organizational Structure Influenced Communication

Workers described communication that was influenced by organizational structure.

2-7-a) Some workers described a heavy hierarchy structure that influenced the flow of information between subordinates and supervisors. The workers described sending their message to the upper level to get a response required going through different layers and was time consuming. According to some workers, a message had to travel through more than five levels of administrative review and that any approval or denial would necessarily come back through those same levels on the way back to the worker requesting approval.

2-7-b) Workers reported that communication through the hierarchy requires time. One worker (PA1ME) said, “it takes three weeks to get approved,” and another (PA4FE) explained that even a single traveler reimbursement “might get back in a week or two, from the time, it was initially put in”.

2-7-c) Some workers reported the feedback from upper levels were undeniable/irreversible. One Chinese worker (PC5ME) described the vertical communication as one direction--from the upper to the lower level and not in reverse; he

said, “If the upper level say so, then that it is.” An American worker (PA5ME) seemed to agree when he said, “Chinese are more...top down hierarchy, if boss says it’s this way, it’s this way—you don’t ask a lot of questions”.

An American worker (PA3MM) described the feedback he received from the upper level as undeniable and as lacking an explanation, he provided a detailed description of this conversation, “I have a recent example, we were asking for some engineering models with drawings of the excavators from China so we can do some modifications for U.S.. A non-engineer told us, ‘You don’t need that information to do that job.’ so like—one, it’s engineering information, it is required to do the job, here is someone doesn’t have technical background telling you, ‘You don’t need it.’ when they don’t—never done that job, and then again engineer experts say that this is what I need to get the job done, they are telling you, ‘You can’t have it.’ but you still need to get the job done, so that’s very frustrating, and I think that gets back to that trust, and if I can speak Chinese, then I can explain why I need it, but there’s a road block...and you move on.”

2-8 Peer-to-Peer Communication

Workers described communication with their peers.

2-8-a) Cooperation and arguments co-existed in the peer-to-peer communication like a normal work-place. One Chinese worker (PC3FE) admitted arguments existed in her communication with one of the American co-workers, while at the same time, she also reported good cooperation with the other American coworkers. An American worker (PA4FE) described typical arguments within her location with emails that asserted, “I don’t work for you”, and that this type of email “flies around the office”. However, on the other hand, another Chinese worker (PC6ME) reported good

cooperation between him and his team members in the negotiation with the component suppliers.

2-8-b) Some workers described peer communications that were built on relationships. Some workers reported that peer communication benefitted from a positive relationship. An American worker (PA3MM) had close contact with Japanese culture for more than 20 years and developed an awareness of a form of peer communication based on relationships. He described his experience conducting peer communication, “people are more comfortable interacting with each other when they know each other on business and personal levels. I think he keep the negative emotion out of when you have some positive experience with people by interacting socially together...give you more thing to discuss, even when you are at work, when you have some time that wasn’t filled with actual work discussion.” Another American (PA2ME) reported it’s easier for him to communicate with the person he built a relationship with; he said he, “built a relationship with engineers in China who do work on the pump truck team, so if I have a question, I have a relationship with person who knows me and I know them, so I can communicate through email”.

2-8-c) Some workers described peer communications that were built on a process. Some workers reported communications built on a process rather than a personal relationship. A Chinese worker (PC4ME) described most of his communication in the work-place settings are because of demand from the upper level, or the process requirement. He described some of his communication was taken place because of a need, there is no time for ones to get to know each other, you could only adjusted yourself and implemented communications without any understandings about each other.

2-9 Communication on a Cultural, Sociological and/or Ideological Level

This was a generalized finding that is detailed as part of the findings from research questions three through five. When workers shared an understanding of cultural concepts, sociological conceptualizations, or ideological positions, they were communicating on those levels where they agree. When workers did not share an understanding in these domains, it adversely influenced other communication about more specific topics. The shared culture of a group of Chinese or the shared culture of a group of Americans enabled other communication within either group; a mixed group of Americans and Chinese had more difficulty communicating without a shared understanding of culture.

Chinese and American engineers shared a sociological understanding of their profession that seemed to make other communication easier. Conversely ideological differences between Chinese and American business practices interfered with communication.

These forms of communication at the cultural, sociological, and ideological level were reported by workers in this company.

2-9-a) Some workers described administrative problems or purely business problems as being attributed to a cultural difference or characteristic. Two Chinese workers (PC1MM and PC2ME) both mentioned that when problems happen in this company, the problem would be easily exaggerated to a cultural or ideological level, and labeled as a form of cultural difference between Chinese and Americans. One of the Chinese workers (PC2ME) said, “once there’s any problems between these two groups, sometime even though it was included in business or administrative area, it will be

related to the difference between Chinese and American culture or ideological difference.”

An American worker (PA3MM) suggested that workers need to be aware of cultural differences and “don’t take that personally”.

Another American (PA5ME) described the poor quality of the product in C Company as a cultural issue, “There’s a cultural acceptance of poor quality in China,” and “it’s really a Chinese culture versus American western culture—the Chinese attention to detail is lacking, Chinese level of quality is low.” This American worker believes the poor quality of product in China was his biggest problem in the work, because he struggled with poor quality in C Company. He explained his thinking in more detail, “you know the C is big company, it’s hard, it’s a cultural thing, it’s years being that way, or it’s just so many people there, you have to compromise somehow, or you just accept that it is hard to change a cultural thing—I don’t know—I don’t know—you get this constantly.” He found it hard to change the basic values, norms or habits. He believed that sometimes he had to compromise; he was forced to accept that, “it’s hard to change the cultural thing.”

2-10 Communication as Cooperation and Argumentation

2-10-a) Workers reported both arguments and cooperation in workplace settings.

2-11 Personal Communication

2-11-a) American and Chinese workers described intercultural communication that was less oriented toward work and more oriented toward their personal lives.

2-11-b) Workers described personal communication within their cultural group. Some workers described the communication within a cultural group occurred with more frequency, they (PC3FE, PA5ME, PA4FE) all pointed out the within group communication is more “predominant” in this company.

However, some workers also reported a non-frequent communication within groups besides work. An American female worker (PA4FE) used “not very abundant” to describe her communication with American workers, when she used “minimal” to describe her communication with other Chinese workers. She said, “I usually stuck in my area”. A Chinese worker (PC5ME) also reported that his communication with other Chinese workers are also limited, “we only communicated during lunch time, and had a few conversation after work when we returned to the apartment, however, usually everybody stayed in one’s individual room, the communication is seldom.” Another American worker (PA2ME) said, “honestly I don’t outside of work really socialize with any employees, Chinese or American”, and he attributed his limited communication besides working hours to some physical barriers, “I don’t live in the local area”.

Some workers described the topics involved in the less work-related communication within the cultural group are “close”, “private”, and “in-depth”, American worker (PA1ME) called his conversation with other American workers besides work as “casual conversation”, which includes topics about various aspects of personal life, varied from sports(“football”) to “food”.

Chinese worker (PC3FE) identified her communication with workers within the group are occupied with “close and private” topics, for example, “personal goal, plan, and individual life and interest”, something like this. And she described a special topic that

she only shared with the friends with in the cultural group, which is the stressor that leads to her “frustration” and “sadness”. PC2ME also agreed that within group communication are more “close”.

Some workers described the less work-related communication within group easily received agreements and understandings. A Chinese worker (PC1MM) described the non barriers communication between the Americans, “for example, a topic was mentioned in the conversation, American workers were able to understand easily, such as a name of the film or a person, they immediately understood,”

2-11-c) Workers described limited personal communication outside of their cultural group. Workers described the less work-related communication across the group as limited to a different degree. Some workers described the personal conversation didn’t existed or with some limitations in the communication across the cultural groups. An American worker (PA1ME) said, the “casual conversation” that was taken place between his American workers and him, “it doesn’t really exist with the Chinese employees,” when he described his less work-related communication with Chinese colleagues, he still said, “it’s pretty strict, strictly business,” with formatted conversation like “OK, what do you need, How can I help you, what can I do?” Um, and “is that OK, does that work?” A Chinese worker (PC5ME) also reported very few experience of communicating with American co-workers without an example could be identified.

Some workers described the personal conversation was very much limited in communication across the cultural groups. Two female workers reported the communication (PA4FE) described the personal conversation between Chinese and American workers as “minimal” and “usually it’s not really in depth, it doesn’t seem like

people get time to know each other very well,” and (PC3FE) also agreed that the communication that’s not work related with her American workers stayed on a superficial level, around the topics about “the weather”, “the families”.

Some workers described the personal conversation existed in their communication with workers from the other cultural group, PA2ME proudly stated that personal conversation existed in his communication with some of the Chinese workers that “I built good rapport with”. He said, with these Chinese workers, “We talk on a personal level”. In PA5ME’s description, his communication with Chinese workers was also as “effective”. He said, “we could communicate well, talk, we joke together, we go to work together, we communicate effectively,” his effective communication also based on the good relationship he built with most of the Chinese workers.

A Chinese worker (PC4ME) reported his casual communication with American workers were also taken place when they “go out to have dinner, watch movies, drink beer”, and the communication topics includes “sports, football team or something like that, very common and normal topics”.

2-11-d) Workers described their understanding of communication within the other cultural group. A Chinese worker (PC2ME) described how American workers shared a common voice, “Americans easily accepted each others’ ideas, some would even agree and follow though he didn’t understand, they think you must be right because you are an American and me too.” And “Vice versa, it’s the same for Chinese to easily accept the idea of people from the same culture group.

Two Chinese workers (PC3FE and PC4ME) described a difference between the communication styles found within the American cultural group and found within the

Chinese cultural group. Both of them reported a direct, clear, and purposeful communication within the American culture group, which is different from the communication experience that included some buffering topics within the Chinese culture group. One described her observation of communication within the US cultural group when she said, “Americans’ ways are, you are expected to directly identify your points first, then the small talk will be allowed if extra time are left” and that, “That’s very helpful, because if you are using Chinese way of communication, they would say, “what you are talking about, they would get confused” and that, “while the Chinese don’t like to go right to the point, they would rather add some transition part within between even though I hold a specific communication purpose, I don’t go right to the point, I would start with some small talk, and then described step by step, finally concluding my communication.”

An American worker (PA5ME) provided an ambiguous description of his understanding about different communication within Chinese culture group. He described a communication experience within American culture group, “Westerners are very direct, get it out there, that’s what it is, it is what it is,” while the communication within the Chinese culture group were more complex, and it’s so complicated for him to describe that he commented that, “I don’t know. It’s hard for westerners to describe. You may understand better than me—different—I can’t tell—just different.”

Another American (PA5ME) described, “typical with the American communications, you have to explain a lot, you have to talk a lot, you have to write things down, you have to go over it a lot. You know—they like to argue back and forth—come up with consensus—so you spend a lot of time communicating, you may go over

the same thing”. This American contrasted his culture’s style by explaining his understanding of Chinese communication, “if boss says it’s this way, it’s this way, you don’t ask a lot of questions”.

2-11-e) Workers described situations where they were excluded from communication between two or more workers of the other culture. Three American workers (PA1ME, PA2ME and PA3MM) reported a communication that two or more Chinese workers communicated in Chinese language in front of American workers.

2-12 Discovering Cultural Differences

2-12-a) Workers described how intercultural communication led them to discover cultural differences.

Research Question Three: How Do the Workers Think and Feel about Their Intercultural Communication?

This section I summarized how workers thought and felt about intercultural communication in their workplace.

Their thoughts and feelings are organized to align with the concepts they used to describe intercultural communication including descriptions of work-related intercultural communication, the geographic scope of intercultural communication, verbal or oral forms of communication, non-verbal forms of communication, language skills, seeking information and approval, organizational structure, peer-to-peer communication, communication at the cultural/sociological/ideological level, communication as argumentation or cooperation, personal communication, and communication as discovering cultural differences.

3-1 Work-related Intercultural Communications

3-1-a) Workers quietly accepted that their need to communicate across cultures at work would depend on the nature of their particular job. A Chinese worker (PC4ME) was pragmatic in his acceptance of the need to communicate across cultures. He reported collecting information required for his role in purchasing, such as information about materials requested by many people throughout the facility. He explained, “I received communications about products, and of course on price too”, and he communicated to determine, “is it an emergent request?...when do you need it?...what’s it for?”, and then, “Is it included in the company’s budget?” and, “if it’s not included, should it be arranged in the budget for next month?”

An American worker (PA5ME) had personal reasons for accepting intercultural communication. This American worker had a special love for learning Chinese and Chinese culture, and he used frequent intercultural communication at work as a chance to learn Chinese for personal reasons. Intercultural communication was not such a pleasant experience and it included difficulties or problems. He said, “communication is always an issue, but you know for me it’s alright (each intercultural exchange) gives me more chance to learn Chinese, that’s what I always want to do anyhow.”

3-1-b) Some workers felt and thought differently about the need to communicate across cultural boundaries.

3-2 Thoughts and Feelings about the Geographic Scope of Communication

Communication between Chinese and American locations required accommodation of a 12-hour time difference. Communication between these two locations required asynchronous email or forms of text messaging. Real time

synchronous communication required that workers at one location work late evening or early morning hours outside a normal work day. Workers felt that synchronous communication during times outside the regular work day was voluntary, but strongly encouraged.

3-2-a) Workers agreed that intercontinental communication was both important and necessary to do their work. Participants understood that communication with the Chinese location enabled cooperation that contributed to their own work, especially when ineffective intercontinental communication delayed their work progress.

3-2-b) Some Chinese workers were enthusiastic and positive about their role in communication with the Chinese location during times outside the regular work day.

3-2-c) Some American workers were uncomfortable and questioned the need to communicate with the Chinese locations during times outside the regular work day. One worker (PA5ME) expressed a reluctance to participate in communication during hours outside the normal workday when he said, “At C Company...you go in...work till eight, nine o’clock at night—so where’s your family time? You haven’t that—the work becomes your family—there’s not a good balance.”

Another American worker (PA3MM) simply said, “It’s very difficult to work at night.”

3-2-d) Some workers believed that after hours communication with the Chinese location could be facilitated by the use of technology from the worker’s home. Without this technological support from the company workers seemed resistant to staying at the workplace after hours.

One worker (PA2ME) used previous experience to explain how work does not have to be in the workplace, “a lot of times I would be away from the workplace...I would have my work-issue laptop at home, I would still be working while I was at home.” He highlighted his satisfaction using remote technology, “I helped them fix the problems while I was in my living room...so it’s a very good experience.” He also praised a past employer for an internal chat network and easy communication using cell phones.

Another worker (PA3MM) also thought technology could help when he said, “the only place I can do that work is in this building, which I don’t mind to come here to work but I don’t want to work for 24 hours a day. I’m much more likely to do work in the evening and weekends if I can work at home”. He said, “I need tools to be able to do that from home”, and he believed that, “I’m not allowed to have a laptop in this company, I’m not given the cell phone, so it’s very difficult to work at night and that “if I was given the tools to get the job done, it would be very satisfying.” Later he defined the resources he required, “laptop computer, internet connection, and the ability to get the information from the computers at work.”

3-2-e) One worker (PA2ME) thought flexible and adjustable scheduling of work hours would be helpful in after-hours communications. This would allow for compensatory time off during the day when workers are needed for after-hours communication with the Chinese locations; this worker felt that this would help all workers do, “a good job at balancing”. This worker also thought that, “it’s not fair for Chinese colleagues to always have to stay late...either we would be coming in early, or we would stay late to make sure we all communicate to meet our goal of getting the job

done.” This latter comment reveals that since many workers in China have limited English skills, communication with the Chinese locations may fall disproportionately to the Chinese workers at the American facility.

3-2-f) Chinese workers had positive thoughts and feelings about communicating with China even during hours outside the normal work day. One Chinese worker (PC6ME) acted like a “teacher” for his American co-workers. He answered questions about the construction of a modified product for the American market. The words he used to describe his communication activities revealed an obvious pride about being the “teacher” of his American co-workers including the American engineers.

Another Chinese engineer (PC2ME) didn’t complain about his additional communication activities as a translator; although at times he thought his translation activity interfered with his opportunities to ask his own questions and discuss his own ideas with the other Chinese workers. He explained, “I need to sacrifice for the group...it’s not my job to be a translator, but I could still understand that...these things need to be done in this developing stage. No matter if this is what I anticipated or not, I still took it as things I need to do.” He voluntarily included the translation activities into his responsibilities.

A Chinese manager (PC1MM) also said that he was proud to “make impact or influence in many places” using his communication tools; he remembered how his efforts solved a misunderstanding about a budget issue. He seemed to fully understand how communication efficiency influenced the progress of their work.

3-2-g) Some American workers thought technology was important in communications with the Chinese location. Two workers (PA2ME and PA5ME)

reported a higher reliance on technology including email, telephone, QQ, and video conferencing. One worker (PA2ME) strongly suggested more frequent use of video conference, because he thought, “the video conferencing is a valuable tool that could help C-America and C-China to develop a cohesive working relationship together.”

3-2-h) At least one American worker thought it was important to establish relationships with the workers in China. This worker (PA2ME) believed that a positive relationship contributed to the effectiveness of communication with workers in Chinese locations. He said, “I’m very grateful to have been given the opportunity to travel to China twice, so I’m very grateful for that, and that also helped me to build relationships with engineers in China who do work on the pump truck team, so if I have a question, I have a relationship with the person who knows me and I know them, so I can communicate through email.”

3-3 Thoughts and Feelings about Non-verbal Communication

3-3-a) The time difference influenced some workers to prefer non-verbal communication as a form for communicating with workers in the Chinese location.

3-3-b) Some American workers preferred non-verbal communication because it provided access to translation through technology. One worker (PA2ME) thought of non-verbal communication as more positive to him, because “as an American we cannot always depend on a translator” and that non-verbal communication provided a convenient way for his independent study of Chinese language. He explained that, “if it’s written down, I can copy and paste...I can go to Google translator, copy and paste it...75% of the time I could pretty much make out what each person was trying to say.” He added that even when he has trouble making sense, “I may go and ask Miss Wang

(pseudonym).” He also pointed to the advantage that recorded non-verbal information was long lasting, which is different from the spoken information; recorded written copies made it easier for him to implement independent study of his understanding of Chinese and of past messages. For the email he sent to his Chinese co-workers, “I’ll write them in English, I’ll copy it in a Google translator, and let it be converted into Chinese, and I’ll put it into Chinese on the bottom of the email”.

3-3-c) Both Chinese and American workers valued the use of drawing pictures as part of their non-verbal communication techniques. Two workers (PA5ME and PC6ME) agreed that “drawing pictures” was a technique that contributed to their spoken communication, especially on a technical level. He (PA5ME) said the non-verbal communication was very helpful in communication with Chinese who were reluctant to “acknowledge that they don’t understand”. Similarly, a Chinese worker (PC6ME) was sure that, “drawing them a picture” helped his intercultural communication especially when he could only speak out the “keywords” drawings helped make his communication work.

One American (PA5ME) emphasized the importance of non-verbal communication, and considered it an essential part of intercultural communication. He described intercultural communication as, “multi-facet...many different ways to communicate...not just verbal, but also non-verbal...visual...written...draw a picture”.

3-4 Thoughts and Feelings about Verbal or Oral Communication

There were many examples of workers sharing their thoughts and feelings about oral communication; these examples coincided with other findings summarized in other parts of the findings related to question three.

3-5 Thoughts and Feelings about Language Skills

3-5-a) Even though this was a Chinese company, workers at this American location expressed their feeling that English was the common language.

3-5-b) Worker feelings about English being the common language of the facility characterized a form of confusion when compared to so many worker descriptions of situations where Chinese was necessary to access important information and approvals essential to company operations.

3-5-c) Some American workers believed English was essential to company operations in the United States. Several American workers attributed communication problems to those workers who lacked proficiency in English. One worker (PA1ME) described language as a large hurdle in the communication. Another worker (PA2ME) said that when, “everyone was fluent in English...the communication was actually very easy”. Another worker (PA3MM) used several examples to show how language proficiency contributes to communication efficiency.

And a fourth American worker (PA4FE) explained how she realized that language barriers brought difficulties to her communication, but she believed that language barriers are “not as much of an issue as the difference between cultures”. In her understanding, intercultural communication requires both “the ability to convey a message, and for the message to be understood”. She believed language skills determine, “the ability to convey a message”, however, “for the message to be understood” was about understanding culture and not necessarily a language issue. Her thinking about language skills fit into her larger thinking about communication; she explained, “so there’s two different types, there is communication and effective communication.” In her thinking,

effective communication required more than language skills, it required an understanding of culture.

Another worker (PA3MM) shared his sense that both Chinese and American workers were inefficient in their use of a second language and he thought that this undermined effective communication. He had no intention of improving his Chinese language skills because, “Chinese language is primarily a very difficult language for us from United States to learn it.” When he was asked about how to improve language skills among workers, he suggested that the company change the composition of workforce. He thought there should be a, “higher portion of workforce from United States, from North America” and he repeated his thinking at several points in his interview. He said, “we need to hire more people who are proficient in English and people who understand American culture quite bit” and he continued, “I think if the team member were hired from United States...could speak Chinese...would help a lot”. He said, “they have to have a large number of team member proficient in English and people who understand American culture quite bit”. He thought that language skills in English would help build an Americanized environment in his work place.

One American worker (PA5ME) who was enthusiastic about learning Chinese described the reluctance of his fellow Americans to learn Chinese. He said, “Americans don’t really seem all that interested in learning Chinese”. He described his American co-workers as thinking and behaving differently, “I know most of them think they are American, ‘these Chinese come to America to set up shop in America—they should do it the American way—Why do I need to learn Chinese?’ ...the same with going to China” he

said, “I asked, ‘you know what? You need to go to China.’(And they responded) ‘I don’t want to go to China.’ ”

3-5-d) Some Americans expressed respect for the Chinese language skills of their fellow workers. One worker (PA2ME) stated his acceptance of uneven English proficiency levels among the Chinese workers, “I’m completely open, respectful of the fact that the person whom I’m working with may not have English as their home language. And I can’t speak their language, so I can understand how difficult that would be coming to a situation like this,” and that, “I mean I don’t fault anyone, I don’t point a finger at anyone, because I know I can’t speak Chinese, so it’s not equal”. He tried to explain his intentions, “I mean the only thing I’ve really done now is just being able to understand the fact that I would probably be working with person from China who was well-educated—may be more educated than me—but just, I’m always open to...understand that English is not their home language, as long as I keep that in my mind, keep that as a thought forward”.

Two workers (PA2ME and PA1ME) stated a willingness to learn Chinese. One worker described investing in the purchase of CDs and a book for learning Chinese, while the second worker was conditional saying if the company provided any training in language skills, “I would definitely be open to learning Chinese with that opportunity.”

Another worker (PA5ME) had a strong motivation to learn Chinese, because of his special love of Chinese language and culture. He said, “I want to learn to be fluent in Chinese. I want to live over there”. And he is trying to “speak as much as Chinese as I can”, even send his email in Chinese.

3-5-e) Some Chinese workers expressed a reluctance to improve their English proficiency. One Chinese worker (PC6ME) stated he had no intention to devote time and energy to improving his English, because he was afraid that improving language skills would lead to an unwanted extension of his working period in the U.S.

Two other Chinese workers (PC2ME and PC4ME) stated their awareness of inefficient language skills among Chinese workers, but both of these workers thought their skills were sufficient to communicate effectively in English.

The reluctance of Chinese workers to learn more English may be attributed to the Chinese workers in the US location had previously been asked by C company to pass a certain requirement on English language level. Also some have years of experience studying and working in American, and they have a certain confidence in their language level.

3-5-f) Workers had thoughts and feelings about using another worker to translate and or interpret what was being communicated in a language other than their own. Three American workers (PA1ME, PA3MM and PA2ME) described their communication experience using a translator for communication with Chinese workers. One worker's evaluation was neither positive nor negative—it was neutral; without much enthusiasm, he said the translation was “good, we get it worked”. The other two workers felt that communication using a translator was unsatisfactory or negative. The first worker (PA2ME) reported his frustration and fear that information was lost in translation; he shared his private thoughts saying, “you know you always want to know what's going on in a conversation—but then it's like—Oh I don't understand”. The second worker described himself as “uncomfortable” and as someone who was always wondering, “Am

I missing something?...what am I missing?” whenever he received such short English translations instead of the long conversation he heard in Chinese being spoken between the translator and the other worker.

3-5-g) Workers had thoughts and feelings about trusting what they received from translation. One American worker (PA3MM) thought information lost in translation because he did not trust the translations provided by the translator. He was suspicious of the language skills of the translator “because the interpretation is not 100% perfect, because the language is not exactly lined up” and, “it’s difficult to find the right combination of the words to convey the same questions” and, “the interpreter may or may not be aware of the communication requirements”. This worker also appeared to be impatient, frustrated and fatigued when he said, “why don’t they understand what I’m saying, on both, both directions”; he felt his feelings were shared by the other communicator and translator. Another American (PA2ME) thought that, “as an American we cannot always depend on a translator”.

3-5-h) Some workers felt positive about their use of technical language skills that seemed to transcend the differences between Chinese and English. One American worker (PA2ME) expressed pride and satisfaction with communication about technical topics with Chinese at a previous employer when he said, “I mean we could actually hold technical conversation in English, that was very positive at the company that I used to worked in”. Conversely, two workers (PA2ME and PA3MM) described nontechnical communication at C Company as unsatisfactory and one said that nontechnical communication “can be difficult to communicate sometimes”.

A Chinese engineer (PC6ME) at C Company had high satisfaction with the technical conversation in his work-related communication saying he thought that he just needed to “speak out a few key words, or draw a picture, the American engineers would understand”. He said he did not intend to improve his English, he believed workers “will figure out by themselves...we make it through”, and he asserted that, “I didn’t face any problems till now”. With his experience participating in technical conversations with American technicians outside of the company, he concluded, “I’m not alone; I’m not all by myself in this fight.” He thought of communication as a teamwork where his job was to, “provide ideas” and the other American workers would need to “be in charge of the communication” with American suppliers.

Two Americans (PA2ME and PA3MM) thought the limits of their technical conversations with their Chinese co-workers were attributable to Chinese workers limited English skills. These Americans thought technical conversation required more English fluency than other work conversation; they believed technical communication required the use of special engineering or technical words.

3-6 Thoughts and Feelings about Seeking Information and Approvals

3-6-a) Some American workers thought their access to information was restricted and those workers felt they were not trusted. One American worker (PA2ME) said the communication process for information was very inefficient, “it could easily take a week, or two weeks” for just one piece of information, and he complained about how inefficient communication interfered with his work progress. He believed that, “if I could just reach out there and grabbed it(the information), I could have completed

the design and validated the design within that whole two weeks period while we were waiting”.

Another American worker (PA3MM) thought the restrictions on sharing information came from a lack of trust across the group; he guessed about the Chinese perspective, “they are really concerned” about current employees with technical expertise who could potentially take company secrets to other companies. He said the restrictions on information sharing presented “huge barriers to work performance” because he said, “key to good work performance is sharing information” and without this sharing, “progress is going to be limited”. Obviously, this communication experience caused confusion for this American worker who described this information restrictions as something he had “never experienced working with”.

3-6-b) Some American workers thought restrictions on their access to information adversely influenced their work. Two workers (PA2ME and PA3MM) shared their thoughts and expectations about sharing information. The first worker (PA2ME) said that, “we as engineers in C-America could openly, collectively share that information with C-China, or working together for one common goal.” He believed that he should be able to, “come into work and instead of waiting two days to get an answer from China, I can just email my friends, that we both work together, and I know they can easily email me back, and they will email me in a reasonable amount of time,”

The second worker (PA3MM) emphasized that, “information has to be thorough, needs to be clear, needs to be unambiguous—means you need to share information that are asked for—not hide anything...needs to be very quick”.

3-6-c) Some Chinese workers explained their thinking about restricting information sharing. A Chinese worker reported his concern about communicating with American workers in this company, and he said, "I have a confusion, or perhaps not quite confident about sharing all kinds of information with American co-workers." He expected but did not receive guidance from the company on how much information to share with American workers. He said, "I want a clear instructions from the managers about what communication between Chinese and American workers should be like. Should it be totally free and open without any restrictions—that everyone was included as a member of this big family or we still need to hold some restrictions, or concerns, that some information should be reserved from a legal consideration?" He also described his understanding about the Chinese managers' concerns about sharing information with American workers. He described how other Chinese companies in America fell into legal problems that they didn't think of in China saying, "this a new problem (to this American location of a Chinese company), managers also realized this will be a problem, a huge concern. But they were not sure how to deal with this, so their behavior tends to be conservative." He also explained the American workers' suspicion about not being trusted, he said, "the lack of trust, is not a lack of confidence in American workers, it is a lack of confidence with our ability to cope with the situation."

3-7 Thoughts and Feelings about Organizational Structure

3-7-a) Some workers thought the layers that made up the vertical structure of the organization were excessive and not always necessary. An American worker (PA4FE) shared thoughts about so much vertical structure when she said, "it's only going to weight the company down, and make it harder for the company to succeed". A second

worker (PA1ME) also expressed impatience when he described the vertical structure as, “very stiffening” and he felt, “that can be aggravating sometimes”.

3-7-b) Some workers thought the vertical structure interfered with effective communication. A worker (PC4ME) asked for communication up-and-down the vertical structure to be built on a well developed process; he said “if there’s a well developed process, it (the required vertical communication) won’t bring any difficulties to the work, vice versa”. He described “a well developed process”, “the communication built on well developed process went through the ABCDE layers very smoothly; while the communication built on a not well-developed process jump from AB to D, then was forced back to B and then go through C.” He thought that communication without a well-developed communication process led to repeated work and complicated communication.

A Chinese worker (PC5ME) said the detailed communication required by the vertical structure of the organization limited his innovation, and he thought his communication had changed, “in many cases, the order is very detailed and strict; there is little room for your innovation.” He described his way of communicating with upper level is, “generally, I just acted according the order”.

A Chinese worker (PC5ME) reported that the instructions he received from the upper level was changed frequently, that leads to a delay and repeated work on the same project. “the vertical communication is complicated. There are times that my supervisor had confusion with his supervisor. My supervisor have announced his decision about a program, however, the decision was changed to another after he reported to his supervisor. The designers was acting according to the original decision at first, however, after a while, the designs need to be changed because the different decision from a higher

level, this cause another delay in implementation, this was usually repeated several times in a process, and made the communication very inefficient.” He said, “Many decisions from upper level were changed because of the change of the situation, it changed so frequently that you become tired after several times. For example, many of the projects I’m doing right now is iterative work from a long time ago, and we are still working on that after many changes have been made.”

Another Chinese worker (PC4ME) also reported the vertical communication leads to difficulties on his work. He said the frequently changed instructions from the upper level leads to difficulties in his work, “for example, manager A said this, and we followed in A’s instructions. However, Manager B said, ‘no we should work on another project right now’,

3-7-c) Some workers reported different influence on their work performance.

An American worker (PA1ME) reported little influence on his work performance, because he had little need to communicate vertically. He described the few experiences he had with communicating up the vertical structure of the organization as, “stiffening...aggravating sometimes”.

Another worker (PA3MM) emphasized the “frustrated” feelings about vertical communication that he felt was shared by other team members. He was frustrated when the vertical communication influenced his work. The first “frustration” he associated with the excessive time needed for information to travel up and down the organization’s structure; he thought this would, “hold up all the process...while I have a whole team of people (who) want to work on a project, that they have to wait, wait, wait, and wait”. The second “frustration” was because he failed to get the human resources he requested

through vertical communication; he thought that he and C company needed to, “give the people they hired the tools they need to get the job done...I think our progress is seriously limited, and C will fail if they are not going to change the approval process”.

Another worker (PA4FE) felt, “it’s frustrating because even the simplest things sometimes took two or three times as long as they should”.

3-7-d) At least one worker thought the vertical structure was hiding how trust and mistrust played a role in communication up-and-down the vertical structure of the organization. The inefficient vertical communication with supervisors aroused suspicion in an American worker (PA3MM) that, “the Chinese leadership trusts the information they get from the Chinese sources, but they don’t trust the information they get from a source that’s not Chinese...you hired me because of my expertise in this area, now you are telling me my expertise is not correct with no explanation.” This worker felt further justified in his complaint because, “here is someone who doesn’t have the technical background telling you, you don’t need it...when they...never done that job, and...engineer experts say this is what I need to get the job done, they are telling you can’t have it, but you still need to get the job done, so that’s very frustrating, and I think that gets back to that trust”. He felt anger when he described his limited decision power as a manager and felt his abilities were being questioned. He said, “That’s insulting for me! As a manager with approval of my capabilities for over a year, running business, successful businesses, I don’t have a budget! ...it’s just too slow, too slow, and C will fail, if that’s the way they continue.”

An American (PA5ME) described how Chinese workers have a different way of communicating to get approvals; he said they seem to, “get around the system” instead of

“working through a system” and, “they’ll figure out a way to get things done” instead of allowing the structure to slow down by the system. He used an example to describe how a Chinese worker might respond to a delayed approval for permission to buy a laptop computer, “Fine, I decide, I’m just going to buy one, expense, see what happens, I’ll fight about it later, I have my laptop, fight about it later.”

The issue of trust became more complicated when a Chinese middle manager (PC1MM) shared how he thought he had to be very careful with communication to the upper level. He felt the need to give extra consideration on the things reported or not—this made him less confident in this job than he was in his previous job.

Another Chinese worker (PC2ME) thought he would benefit from an approval process that involved less organizational structure. He felt he would benefit more from this simplification than most American workers because as a Chinese, “I’m responsible for most of the communication with Chinese locations, it was exactly these interactions with Chinese locations that was required...to go through approving process”. He said, “Most of my American team members may don’t have to go through these process, because most of their job don’t have to go through the process in China.”

3-8 Thoughts and Feelings about Peer-to-Peer Communication

Workers developed an understanding of their co-workers from both cooperation and argumentation in peer-to-peer communication.

An American worker (PA4FE) described the arguments she found in the email traffic between the co-workers as the thing “bothered her most in the work”. She expressed her disagreement and anger to this behavior, “You know, what I mean, it’s more like wow, guy did you really have to go there? Did you need act like that? Was it

appropriate, was it professional? Not really, and if I'm an American, and I think it's not appropriate, not professional, I'm sure the Chinese are probably thinking a few choice thoughts of you right now, ... if I have to put them in a category, they would be real asses," She has afraid that this behavior will in turn influence her relationship with the other Chinese workers, "it gives the image that all the Americans are arrogant asses", "those Americans, make it more difficult, for the rest of Americans when dealing with Chinese,"

A Chinese female worker (PC3FE) said, though she had argument with one of her American co-workers, she still kept a positive relationship with other American workers and was grateful for the positive interaction with her American coworkers, who included the American worker PA4FE. The Chinese worker described her understanding about her relationship with PA4FE, "Though we had no deep understanding with each other, less frequent personal conversation than that taken place with the person from a same culture group, but I can felt her friendship from a deep heart. She was very nice to me, she was very helpful by offering suggestions when I was in trouble, and I was deeply touched by her willingness to offer help." With a special sensitivity of a female, she developed this gratitude from specific details in their positive interactions.

A Chinese worker (PC6ME) expressed his proud of successful negotiation experience with his American coworkers.

3-9 Thoughts and Feelings about Cultural/Sociological/Ideological Communication

One Chinese worker (PC2ME) shared several thoughts about communication that is cultural/sociological/ideological. First, there was a less equal relationship between the two sides who participated in the communication; one was a Chinese supervisor and the

other was the workers who were Americans. Secondly, language inefficiency was a barrier in the communication that prevented the two sides from communicating freely and openly. Third, the communicators hid some thoughts or information to avoid arguments. This worker thought it was hard to change one's cultural perspective through communication; he said, "when you try to persuade the others to accept your ideal or to make yourself understand the ideas of other persons, you would easily give up after a short and simple conversation, because you know it's not easy to change others' or your own idea." He pointed out there are cultural conflicts that are more visible and cultural conflicts that are less visible.

3-10 Thoughts and Feelings about Communication as Cooperation and Argumentation.

In other parts of the findings I have documented examples of workers having feelings and thoughts about communication when it involved cooperation and argumentation.

3-11 Thoughts and Feelings about Personal Communication

An American worker (PA1ME) revealed a regret for the personal communication that "not really existed" between him and his Chinese workers, and he was upset by the negative feedback that he received from his Chinese workers when he shared his American culture based interest with them, "I had a few, and maybe the American food, 'No, no, I don't need the American food.' 'Do you want to go try?' 'No, don't want to try.' 'Ok ... ha.' So, you can't really force them, I've tried a little bit, but not much, 'Do you watch football?' 'No, don't watch football.' So, you know, just tried a little bit, it is what it is."

An American worker (PA3MM) stated a need to increase the intercultural communication after work. He believed that casual conversation after work may influence the relationship and communication during work. He believed that the casual conversation in this Chinese company is not sufficient to positively influence work-related relationships and communications.

Another American worker (PA4FE) also realized the limited personal conversation between the Chinese and American workers. She said, "It doesn't seem like we had enough time to know each other." But she expressed little expectation to change this situation, she said, "It doesn't bother me, to use your own, I mean I talk to everybody here, it doesn't matter if you're a Chinese or not, I mean it served every work of life you can imagine, so it doesn't really affect me...it would be better, if it wasn't so much, because it would make a better team building, a more productive environment, but it is what it is."

An American worker developed an understanding about his Chinese co-workers close to the practical life rather than an understanding distant from a culture education from his peer-to-peer communication with them. And "once you start work in C company for a longer time then you think, yeah, they do the same stuff we do in the west, people lived the same lives, ... then you start seeing, well, people got to go to the market, you know, you get to back and forth from the work, and their life, is kind of life like we have here in America. There is cultural differences, but you know, eighty percent is really the same thing, we are all, we are all the same," he suggest more besides work communication between the cultural group "for C Company to do better, ... there's tendency for people to cluster together in their own culture, you can't get the Chinese to

interact with Americans, the Americans to interact with Chinese, you got to make yourself do it, make yourself do it, cause you know,”

No Chinese worker expressed any interest in increasing the personal conversations between cultural groups. A Chinese female worker (PA3FE) described less frequent personal conversation between members of different cultural groups in this company; she compared this to her previous work at an American company. However, she found a stronger sense of belonging to this company, which she described as “Chinese culture based international business”, the ways of doing things in this company are more acceptable in Chinese cultural perspectives, and she developed a strong pride in being Chinese when she worked in this company, and she had more satisfaction with “not being discriminated” against by other cultural groups. “I found the American workers in this company have no discriminations to Chinese workers, and are more likely to follow Chinese norms in the work, that’s the difference between them and American employees in the other American companies.”

3-12 Thoughts and Feelings about Discovering Cultural Differences.

3-12-a) Some workers believed differences in cultural experience lead to less communication between cultural groups. An American worker (PA1MM) told how he thought differences in cultural experience led to less frequent personal communication between persons of different cultural backgrounds; he said, “again there’s difference in cultures, the Chinese people eat Chinese food, they pay attention to Chinese sports, you know, we pay attention to American food, American sports, so it’s just, as far as the casual conversations goes, it doesn’t really exist with the Chinese employees”. He explained Chinese workers’ hesitation in learning about another culture when he

described how they responded to his suggestion of American food; he said they said, "...No, no, I don't need the American food', do you want to go try?, 'no don't want to try', Ok, ha, so , can't really force them, I've tried a little bit, but not much, do you watch football?, 'no, don't watch football', so you know, just tried a little bit, it is what it is."

The four Chinese workers who had previous experience of studying or/and working in American society, all realized and pointed out the influence of intercultural difference brought to the intercultural communication, especially the less work-related communication.

Another American worker (PA5ME) also pointed out the necessity of intercultural communication; it requires interpretation and understanding using the cultural frame work of those who are communicating, otherwise "you are not communicating."

3-12-b) Some workers believed personal relationships can overcome cultural differences. Another American worker (PA2ME) felt, "a rapport or personal relationship with Chinese employees" was important in his personal conversation with Chinese workers, and he gave special attention and devoted great efforts to building up the relationship; he said, "I'm beginning to build a rapport or personal relationship with more Chinese employees, (I mean) I have taken Li Ming (pseudonym) to lunch before...we just went to lunch one on one." However the socializing time outside of work occupied time normally spent with his family and that conflict caused a barrier to regularly socializing with Chinese workers. Perhaps as a consequence to less socializing, this American felt frustrated because he felt his lack of greater rapport led to frustration with work-related communication; he recalled, "I'm having a conversation in English with a Chinese

employee...say another Chinese employee comes up and begins talking in a conversation, but they just start speak in Chinese”.

Another American (PA3MM) also understood the importance of interaction between workers on a personal level from his earlier experience in a Japanese culture where we had, “a lot of group activities after work...a lot of dinners together, a lot of personal interaction,” and he said, “I think that helps a lot in business communications.” He believed that personal communication helps you to build a “multiple level” relationship with your co-worker; he said this helps you, “know your co-workers on a personal level, not just work-related level...I think it keeps the negative emotions out when you have some positive experience with people by interacting socially together”—that’s something he learned from Japanese company.

3-12-c) Some workers felt the need to act to overcome cultural differences.

Another American worker (PA4FE) stated her acceptance of the limited communication between the cultural groups; she said, “it doesn’t bother me...it’s what it is”. I attributed this tolerance to her army experience that set her apart from other workers; she explained the importance of communication, “it would be better, if it wasn’t so much, because it would make a better team building, a more productive environment,” and she stated her intention to not differentiate “if you’re a Chinese or not” in communication. She said, “I mean I talk to everybody here”. She was aware that Americans, “have the tendency to talk faster, so you have to talk slower, you have to make your English words simpler, so they translate better”.

Another American (PA5ME) believed his special interest in Chinese and Chinese culture, his active efforts in learning Chinese language have brought him more

acceptance/agreement from Chinese workers; he said, “I think Chinese, they appreciate it, somebody who wants to learn...what I find, Chinese, they’re very perceptive, they are, you know, they honor things that are very important—how hard you work, they know, I think they know I’m a C guy, the president knows, the vice president knows...I make the company work better.” He emphasized that, “the communication is half or more of understanding someone else”, and he strongly suggested to “spend time learning the culture...the context, the people, where they’re from, and then their perspective starts”. He described the occurrence of miscommunication due to a lack of cultural understanding—“miscommunication” because, “you could be talking...not communicating...you just had no framework to understand that perspective”.

3-12-d) Some workers discovered resistance to overcoming cultural differences. A Chinese worker (PC3FE) provided an example of cultural difference in personal life, “Whenever I had arguments with my (American) husband, I found their (his) priority of consideration to be different from ours (her Chinese). They (Americans) believe you are totally freedom, if the worst was just divorce—it does not matter, but for Chinese the influence on your family, your Children, your career and other social relationships need to be considered—but Americans may not care, it’s hard to ask them to understand.”

Another American (PA5ME) thought this way about cultural difference, “once they start work in C for a longer time then you think, yeah, they do the same stuff we do in the west, people lived the same lives—these are cultural differences, but you know, eighty percent is really the same thing, we are all, we are all the same”. She explained that for personal communication she thought there was, “tendency for people to cluster

together in their own culture” and that this tendency was the biggest obstacle to communication. It’s hard to get people involved in communication with people from another cultural group, when the outside pressure to interact is lacking. When it is left to individuals, “there’s a tendency for people to cluster together in their own culture, you can’t get the Chinese to interact with Americans—the Americans to interact with Chinese—you got to make yourself do it, make yourself do it”.

Research Question Four: How Do Preexisting Cultural Perspectives Influence Intercultural Communication?

The preexisting cultural perspectives were organized around American workers’ preexisting cultural perspectives about Chinese culture, American workers’ preexisting cultural perspectives about American culture, Chinese workers’ preexisting cultural perspectives about Chinese culture, and Chinese workers’ preexisting cultural perspectives about American culture. The cultural perspectives not only varied between the two groups, but also varied within each group.

4-1 American Workers’ Preexisting Cultural Perspectives about Chinese Culture

American workers identified or exhibited preexisting cultural perspectives about Chinese culture that may have influenced intercultural communication.

One American (PA1ME) believed he had little in common with Chinese workers saying, “again there’s a difference in cultures, the Chinese people eat Chinese food, they pay attention to Chinese sports, you know, we pay attention to American food, American sports, so it’s just, as far as the casual conversations goes, it doesn’t really exist with the Chinese employees”.

Another American (PA2ME) attributed his understanding of Chinese workers at C Company to his previous work experience with other Chinese workers. He described communication with Chinese workers as a, “very positive experience” explaining that, “I still have some friends in China from my previous job that I stay in contact with.” He seemed to think of Chinese culture as a culture that is accessible with effort.

The same worker (PA2ME) also revealed a real sympathy for his Chinese workers. There were several times when he described experience from the Chinese worker’s perspective. For example, in his description about “difficult” communication experience with Chinese workers who were not proficient in English, he said, “I mean I don’t fault anyone, I don’t point a finger at anyone, because I know I can’t speak Chinese, so it’s not equal (for Chinese workers)...so I can understand how difficult that would be coming to a situation like this”. He described his frustration when Chinese communicated in Chinese in front of him, he said, “on the reverse side, I’m sure it’s the same, I know sometime, Li Ming (pseudonym) was with US, I just traveled with Li Ming last week, I’m sure there were times that I would be talking to the customer in English, so he (Li Ming) didn’t understand what I was saying. So I’m sure it can be frustrating for...him”. He described anticipating work requirements to communicate across cultures when he said, “understanding the fact that I would probably be working with a person from China, who was well-educated, maybe more educated than me...I’m always open to the point to understand that English is not their home language—as long as I keep that in my mind, keep that as a thought going forward”. His efforts to prepare and anticipate illustrated his good intentions, but it also had practical value of realizing that language proficiency can hide strengths and weaknesses.

Another worker (PA3MM) adopted his understanding of demographics, economics, and trends in trade as proxies for a real understanding of Chinese culture. This American worker described Chinese culture as, “the most populous country in the world...rapidly growing for the past twenty or so years” and, “becoming a very large supplier to many American and international companies”. His understanding of Chinese culture was dependent on his emerging experience at C Company.

This same worker had a deep understanding of the importance of personal relationships to the business communication based on his experience with Japanese culture, and he made analogies in his efforts to understand Chinese culture. He said that personal conversation in China “can be a little more limited than what was encouraged from the Japanese”.

He also stated, “It’s going to take a while to develop trust between people from different cultural backgrounds, and I think it’s both directions/ways”. He easily attributed the difference between his current communication experience and his previous communication experience to a lack of trust between members of different cultural groups. For example, he related the restriction on information sharing with the trust factor by saying, “I think they (Chinese workers) are really concerned about the industrialist people (current technical employees) taking their(C’s) information, learning for the other companies. Well in the United States, probably a longer history of international business relationships that probably are a little more open with sharing that information because you know that it is necessary to get the job done”, and he associated the problem of having too many too many steps in the approval process to worker concerns about a lack of trust saying, “because the number of approval steps is too much, and make the job go

much, much slower, and I think that goes back to the trust factors, the Chinese leadership trusts the information they get from the Chinese sources, but they don't trust the information they get from a source that's not Chinese".

This same worker believed the Chinese focus on individual achievement was less likely to share information than a focus on team achievement that depended on information sharing. He said, "Chinese culture seems to be more focused on individual achievement, and may be less so about team achievement. Just from my initial interaction...people seem to be more secretive because they think it might damage their ability to show their capability as individual; if they share their information with larger audience, it might be some fear about somebody else taking credit".

Another worker (PA4FE) attributed the hierarchical nature of C Company to Chinese culture and contrasted this with the more horizontal structure found in American organizations. She described Chinese companies saying, "The structure is very region, very matrix, there is a clearly defined hierarchy of positions" and, "the biggest difference is that on the Chinese cultural side, all the decisions are made from the top, and in American cultural side, that top used more as supporting, so most of the decisions that the top made, is driven by the worker on the floor, so it's almost a lower hierarchy making more of the decisions".

Another worker PA5ME had many more preexisting perspectives about Chinese culture, which were accumulated during his work experience in this Chinese company and his longstanding relationship with his Chinese wife and adopted Chinese daughter. He described how learned about Chinese culture by interacting with his wife, "sometimes it's difficult to know what's the difference between what's Chinese culture—what's their

culture—my wife will tell me. I ask her, ‘Is this a Chinese cultural thing?’” I did not know all that he learned from his family about Chinese culture, but I suspected that it was enough to help him interpret more about the role of culture at work. And from his first experience in a Chinese workplace he said, “it’s difficult to know what’s the difference between what’s Chinese culture and what’s their (C-China) culture”. He stated that he had a tendency to generalize his understanding of his work experience in C company to his understanding of Chinese culture. He provided examples of his emerging perspectives about Chinese culture that he would probably carry into future intercultural communication, “the C Company culture, the C Company rules...overly restricted...have to work around the C Company rules and security system to try to get things done”, and he said, “C-China culture is very strict...very hierarchy driven...inner people...Chinese way...a lot of layers, a lot of formality...everybody knows everybody has his little rules...bias...very close and security conscious...very restrictive on their communication and information sharing...Very strict...don’t really allow engineers and designers as much freedom to innovate...get product out and get it out quickly...severely discourage taking chances...schedule is the king in China, not making that product.”

He also said the Chinese workers were more “group-oriented” saying, “Chinese are a lot more sacrificial for the good of the company...they work long hours over there, they work too hard, they don’t get paid as well obviously, so it’s--there’s a big cultural difference in how people in China view a job compared to people in America.”

This worker thought Chinese workers highlighted “the honor things”, and if “I’m a C guy”, that was important to gaining some “latitude” in his work. “Chinese—they’re very perceptive, they are—you know, the honor things are very important, how hard you

work, they know, I think they know I'm a C guy, the president knows, the vice president knows...I make the company work better, yeah, you know, if I've got to bend the rules a little, then they will give me some latitude".

He developed sympathy for the Chinese workers from his day to day experience working with Chinese, and he said, "once you start work in C company and stay for a longer time, then you think, 'yeah, they do the same stuff we do in the west, people lived the same lives,' ... then you start seeing, well, people got to go to the market, you know, you go back and forth from the work, and their life, is kind of like the life we have here in America. There are cultural differences, but you know, eighty percent is really the same thing, we are all, we are all the same," and he identified himself as "half Chinese". He said, "I found the Chinese people are most resourceful people in the world, they'll figure out a way to get things done. The system, whether it will be the communist system, or C-system, or whatever is in the place—those guys over there, they know the rules, they know how to get around them pretty well".

He also found Chinese workers to have less interest in information seeking, he described the communication within the group as requiring less interest information when he said, "(Chinese) they don't want to acknowledge they don't understand", though they may have some confusion about the information received, "the Chinese will sit there and nod their head like they understand you. But you can see in their eyes, the eyes you can see, you know...they really don't understand". And communication through the vertical structure of the organization is characterized by acceptance of higher authority, "if boss says it's this way, it's this way, you don't ask a lot of questions, you don't want to cause trouble".

This worker also said “there’s a cultural acceptance of poor quality in China...the Chinese attention to detail is lacking...Chinese level of quality is low”.

This worker believed that it would be hard to communicate with Chinese workers if he did not have some understanding of Chinese culture. He said, “you just miss, you could be talking, you’re just not communicating, you just nod, you just had no framework to understand that perspective”. He said, “It’s hard for Westerners to describe how the Chinese think differently from the Americans”. After a long time in thought, he answered that “I understand their minds are more complex, work on different levels” (meaning more complex and multilevel than PA5ME could understand). He provided more detail, “the Chinese are more collective together, you have to deal with that, they are very, they are more guarded and secretive than westerners, at least Americans, you have to deal with that, their minds are more complex, work on different level”. He concluded, “you know you start understanding the culture, the context, the people, where they’re from, and then their perspective starts”.

4-2 American Workers’ Preexisting Cultural Perspectives on American Culture

American workers identified or exhibited preexisting cultural perspectives about American culture that may influence intercultural communication.

American workers had a lifetime of cultural experience when they started working for a Chinese company. Exposure to another culture led some American workers to recognize perspectives about their culture that otherwise might be taken for granted.

One American (PA1ME) used “laid back” to describe the “professional atmosphere” in the American company he worked for in the past, and he said, “Mr. M

the owner of the entire company, would get angry if you called him Mr. M, he would say my name is 'B (first name)', don't call me 'Mr. M', he wore T-shirts and blue Jeans every day, and now required us to wear T-shirts and blue Jeans—you know—you go out to have beers with him after work—stuff like that—he was just really a laid back guy". Compared to his current Chinese company, the American company he worked for was less "strict", less "professional", less like a "large company". He believed these differences explained why vertical communication at the American company was much simpler than his current Chinese employer. He realized that the relationships between workers in his American company were much closer than relationships in this Chinese company.

This worker also used his views about American culture to define what it means to have "personal conversation"; these conversations were limited to conversation about "American foods", "American football", or other "American things". He believed that a shared culture was the only basis for personal conversation.

Another worker (PA3MM) used his experience with American companies to generalize that Americans are, "very open most of the time". He promoted this cultural perspective when he said, "if you need some information, especially if you work for the same company, the information is shared freely" and emphasized that communication, "has to be thorough, needs to be clear, needs not to be ambiguous, means, you need to share information that's asked for, not hide anything, and needs to be very quick".

He also said that a, "U.S. Company tends to be a little bit more business oriented", and "in the United States, when visitors come over, you pretty much say: 'meet me Monday morning eight o'clock'." He contrasted this no-frills business approach to what

he, “learned working with Japanese companies, there’s a lot of personal relationship, it’s very important even for your business performance”. He believed that cultures outside of the U.S. were focused on, “a more personal level, what their families were like, what their personal interests were, and that gave you more things to discuss, even when you were at work, when you had some time that wasn’t filled with actual work discussion.”

Another American (PA5ME) held a perspective that American culture was more individualistic saying, “with Americans we like more individual freedom”, which he contrasted to the views of Chinese workers who he described as, “a lot more sacrificial for the good of the company”. American workers tended to have more distance in their relationship with the company; he said, “we Americans were, we are not always out for ourselves, most of us understand the company is the company, we are individuals, as long as our interest lies together, we’re OK with that, if the company starts ... malfunctioning we may move on or move elsewhere. As I understand, Chinese don’t quite have that, just go wherever they want”. He also emphasized how some American workers valued a balance between work and personal lives, when he said, “the Americans want more balanced life, work is big part of it, obviously, but at the end of the day, you go home, you have family, you have your friends, and you do other things”.

This American also made an observation that he thought applied to both cultural groups when he said, “the Americans tend to stay together, and the Chinese tend to stay together” and, “a lot of Americans don’t go, make any effort to get to know the Chinese, and vice versa”.

Another American (PA5ME) thought that both American and Chinese workers took passive strategies in adapting to a new culture, when he said, “A lot of Americans

don't go, make any effort to get to know the Chinese" and "the Americans tend to stay together, and the Chinese tend to stay together". He said, "Americans don't really seem all that interested in learning Chinese, "I know most of them think they are American, these Chinese who come to America to set up shop in America. They should do American way. Why do I need to learn Chinese?" and when he talked about Americans in C Company, he said, "You know what? You need to go to China." but he said their response was, "I don't want to go to China."

He believed the American workers were, "very information oriented people". With considerable thought he said, " American communication (long pause), Americans like a lot of information, so to communicate with Americans, they would like to know what's going on, they would like to know what's the plan, they want to understand where we are going, what you are doing, so typical with the American communications, you have to explain a lot, you have to talk a lot, you have to put write things down, you have to go over it a lot, You know, they like to argue back and forth, come up with consensus, so you spend a lot of time communicating , you may go over the same thing constantly".

In his description the American workers were thinking very straight, very Greek; he said that Americans liked to, "get it out there, that's what it is, it is what it is", which means there were no hidden or deeper layers of meaning to the words. So he said, even as an American who considered himself "half Chinese", and as someone who could "think pretty well like Chinese", it's still hard for him to understand Chinese ways of thinking, which he described as "more right brain" and " their mind are more complex, work on different level", so that led to much more frequent misunderstanding in communication.

He thought the American workers had a higher requirement for product quality. He said that, “with Americans, you don’t compromise a quality...you pay attention to the details, you don’t want to cut corners...to save a buck...there is certain quality level you don’t want to go below,”

Another American (PA4FE) was very proud of her own experience with cultural diversity, and unlike “a lot of the employees at C Company”, she believed, “I’m more at an advantage than a lot of the employees at the C Company...I have the cultural diversity...traveled...lived many places in the world, so every time you move to a place, you have to be able to shift gears—culturally shift gears. I’m fairly open and accepting of cultural differences” while others, “haven’t been exposed as much—probably wouldn’t be as acceptable.”

4-3 Chinese Workers’ Preexisting Cultural Perspectives about American Culture

Chinese workers identified or exhibited preexisting cultural perspectives about American culture that may have influenced intercultural communication.

Several Chinese workers (PC1MM, PC2ME, PC3FE, PC4ME) had previous experience studying or working in the U.S. before they entered this company; they accumulated more perspectives on American culture than the two Chinese participants (PC5ME and PC6ME) who were lacking previous experience in American culture.

A Chinese worker (PC1MM) had a general understanding of American culture as being “very rich and diverse...though American culture doesn’t have a long history, but it’s a mixed culture made up of Europeans, Latinos, and other Hispanics—very rich and diverse.”

He also learned from previous experience in the U.S. that American culture made an effort to decrease the differences between the supervisor and subordinates; he understood supervisors and subordinates to be equal on a personal level--no superiority or inferiority and that, individuals were differentiated/identified/classified by each individual's role. For example, everybody was called by the first name, which is unlike the culture in a Chinese company where more formal titles are used to separate upper level and lower level workers.

He also thought that decision power was concentrated in the higher levels in American companies where the, "boss's opinion would be fully respected—group leader has the final decision power".

He believed American companies were more likely to have clearly defined job responsibilities and power for workers when he said, "my job responsibilities are clearly defined, what are the things I can decide, what I cannot, those are very clear, he felt the work in the American company is easier, I mean for the things I was able to make a decision, I sent email or made a decision, while for the others, I knew I need to report and ask for decision from boss. So I was quite confident with my job after a while." The work required vertical communication ("report, ask for boss' opinion") and the work didn't necessarily require vertical communication.

He believed that American companies have well-developed systems because they exist in a very industrialized country. He said, "In American companies, the work performance evaluation system is well developed--your target—responsibilities and goals are clearer. ... American companies have already established in America for much

longer...entering a firm stage, the boss was clear with the workload, the human resources required.”

This worker also recognized that American workers talk little about religion in the workplace; they are more likely to talk about movies from Hollywood and news about football.

This same worker also felt more stressed when he was working in American companies than when he was learning in American schools. He explained, “There were supervisors and more experienced coworkers in the company, and your relationship was less equal than the relationship between you and your teachers. The misunderstanding could include both the misunderstanding caused by language or culture barriers and misunderstanding on professional levels.”

He also described his appreciation for the enthusiasm of American workers as they adapted to Chinese culture; he revealed his understanding of what it meant to be a “super American”. He described his coworkers when he said, “Those American workers are very active, and are willing to be involved in Chinese culture and to understand it. They did not show any sense of superiority or being a super American insisting on their own ways--every C Company employee that I recognized was having a willingness to understand the Chinese culture, though I’m not sure if they were planning on any formal efforts to learn Chinese culture through a class.”

Another Chinese worker (PC2ME) revealed a certain level of understanding about American culture. He described his understanding about the American culture’s emphasize on the basic research, American workers would sacrifice the speed of work progress for a well-developed basic research, or even take the risk of not being able to

finish the work before the deadline. PC2ME accepted the highlights on the basic research in American culture in some degree. “While Americans would say we shouldn’t be in that fast speed, we need to solid the foundation at the first time, so there’s a lot of the basic research before we can start to do this, we can start to that.” “They felt like in a newly established company, it’s hard to stride forward, if the basic research is lacking,”

From his perspective, he believe “no matter in China or America, workers have a respect or even a fear to the upper level”. He believes that’s the reason why American employees chose to be silent instead of stating their disagreement in their communication with Chinese managers. American workers’ also showed some controversies in the intercultural communication. “They didn’t accept the idea in their heart, just pretend to accept because of the subordinates and supervisor relationship between them and the Chinese manager”. He understands the American worker’s thoughts as “boss, if that’s your decision, and you are pretty sure about it, it’s hard for us subordinates to say no.”

This worker (PC2ME) also described the conservation in the vertical communication that he observed in the communication between his American team member and the Chinese manager.

He said American workers hold some preexisted cultural perspectives to the Chinese company, which he as a Chinese worker didn’t agree with, “seems like American workers had some preexisting picture of a Chinese company, American workers said, ‘this is what we did in American company, not like you did in the Chinese company, if you keep on using Chinese way, you would never be any better.’”

He found the communication failed to change the American workers' priority on the basic research that "though the oral agreement was reached during discussion, but they would still forward to another direction in the real action/practical implementation."

A Chinese worker (PC2ME) described the American workers as proud of American culture, and some were proud without clear thought, he described "American's ideas were easily accepted within the American group, even some (Americans) who did not understand would follow without a reason, and they believe you must be right, because you're an American, and me too."

Another Chinese worker (PC3FE) had a preexisted cultural perspective from her former experience of working in the American company, that subgroups was not encouraged in the American culture, or American company culture, she had more in-depth conversation related with some close topics in her previous work experience.

Her previous of experience with intercultural communication on an American campus gave her confidence in her ability to develop a close relationship with a member of another cultural group, and also provided her a perspective; the close relationship within the cultural group and the close relationship across the cultural groups were different. She said "we were very good friends when we are about to graduate. On the graduation ceremony, they introduced me to their parents, brothers and sisters, and I introduced them to my husband, and we kept corresponding through mails and telephones after our graduation, and communicating our current situation and thoughts and feelings. However, it's still hard to compare with the close relationship with Chinese friends. I shared happiness with them, and saved my frustration and sadness to share with my Chinese friends, even though they are very close to me."

She realized from her communication experience that varied cultural perspectives existed even between her and her close American friends, who had known each other for more than four years. She said, “for example, when I had some arguments with my husband, they will say ‘you are totally free...it does not matter...the worst thing is divorce, it’s no big deal’. However, Chinese would say, ‘There are many other things that need to be considered, such as your family, career, children and other social relationships that may be influenced. All these need to be taken into account.’ However, Americans won’t be able to understand these considerations, because they don’t care. So, I would rather keep a close relationship with Chinese friends and talk with them about this, because of this culture difference”. So she sensed some controversies in her intercultural communication. She said “I would share happiness with them (American friends), but saved my frustration and sadness for my Chinese friends.”

She had a certain level of understanding about American culture, in her own words, “I know their traditions, what can be said, what cannot be spoken out.” and she believed her understanding of American culture contributed to her intercultural communication experience. She said, “real intercultural communication is based on a full understanding of the other culture; the communication purposed could only be reached after you understand their culture. So it’s necessary for you to understand the culture.” She provided an example of how her cultural knowledge about the differences in communication between American and Chinese workers to better understand her intercultural communication experience, “Chinese ways of communicating are not direct, they like some transitions ...between, if I’m going to tell you something, I am not going to tell you directly, I’ll add some small talk in front, then unfold it step by step in the

middle, and eventually end up with a conclusion, while American said, 'you should say it directly, small talk was only accepted after communication point were sent out, and there are some spare time left.' She said her understanding about this cultural perspective difference is very helpful. "Because if you communicated indirectly, they would say, 'what are you talking about?' they were confused. So I took some adaptation, I paid special attention to be clear with my points '1-2-3-4-5' clearly, and communicate directly". She thought that understanding the efficiency of intercultural communication was based on a deep understanding of the speaker's culture. And in addition, she thought the efforts to understand culture should not be limited to the work issue, but also included many aspects of daily lives. She provided two examples, one is food culture, and the other is religious culture,

This worker also described her understanding of the personal relationships between American workers as "polite but distant, elegant and detached". "individuals had much more freedom in American culture—on the other side, this means when you're falling into any trouble, having any problems, or saying you are going to leave, they will keep the same elegance and detachment, and nothing has been changed for them."

She described the American company's culture as discouraging the "subgroup", they want the employees to unite as an "entire family"; however, she thought the American workers in this company still showed a "strong sense of subgroups", and "American workers spent every minute with Americans—go for dinner, chat, talk about central humor and so on...Americans have similar ideas, experience, even families. They even clustered into a group on work issues."

This worker believed her acceptance of American culture in her work life was different than it was in her personal life. She said, “If it’s in the company, I would behave according to the requirement. Regarding my appreciation, I would separate it into work life and personal life...In the personal life I prefer Chinese traditional culture...I want a comfortable personal lifestyle that followed my own desire, like I said, there are some things that I didn’t appreciate in the American culture—the way they treat friends—so I prefer a more traditional Chinese lifestyle in the personal life. It brought me comforts and a feeling of being at home.” She completed her thought, “while in the work life, I’d prefer multi-culture based company, I believe it’s better to adopt more from another culture, it’s a great challenge for you to make yourself adapted to another culture, I don’t like to work in a mono-culture based company because it limits and narrows down your world”. Her understanding of other Chinese persons in the American society and how they treated the culture adaptation process, “I believe, as far as most of them being concerned, it’s a need rather than an individual preference to understand American culture. That’s why they made great efforts to integrate into American culture, however, I would say there are not many who are very comfortable with this process.”

Another Chinese worker (PC4ME) also agreed that his communication with Americans developed from his years of communication experience; in most cases he was direct with the communication purpose, such as requesting someone to do “12345”. “Basically it will be something that needs to be done or other specific direction.”

4-4 Chinese Workers’ Preexisting Cultural Perspectives on Chinese Culture

Chinese workers identified or exhibited preexisting cultural perspectives about Chinese culture that influenced intercultural communication.

A Chinese worker (PC1MM) believed that in this Chinese company the requirements for vertical communication were unclear; on the one hand, vertical communication was included in almost every little piece of work and this shows the influence of conservative Chinese culture, which believed that when there's no clear direction or definition from an upper level, people faced confusion in their job, so conservative strategies were used by lower and upper level employees to clarify the direction of upper level leadership. American participants reported and complained that vertical communication was required in every little piece of work. The uncertain requirement for vertical communication brought confusion to the middle level manager's work. A Chinese middle manager said, "I need to be very careful working in the Chinese company, you need to figure out by yourself. Some things don't need a boss' decision, while others required the decision from the boss."

This worker also pointed out how a worker's responsibilities were changed continuously. He said it's because, "the company was a new start, only 3 years operation in the U.S....facing a new culture. The company had little similar experience to borrow from". Both the Chinese manager and Chinese workers faced many challenges, much confusion, and had little confidence that they could cope without conservative communication strategies. The Chinese manager was conservative in providing the direction to the worker's behavior, Chinese workers were conservative in participating in communications, and this created consistency in their conservative approach to communication.

This worker continued to point out the conservative influence of Chinese culture on both Chinese workers and Chinese managers, when he said, "Chinese would be

somewhat conservative when they don't know how to deal with the new problems. We believe it is always better to say less or nothing. There is a conservative tradition in Chinese culture, we had this culture education, for example, 'eat too much cause disease, say too much cause trouble.'" The influence of conservative Chinese culture leads to a hesitance in Chinese managers to provide instructions about coping strategies in intercultural communication, because this is the situation that they had never experienced in Chinese locations and without confidence, they could not encourage coping strategies. There are some cases between Chinese worker and American workers happening in other Chinese locations in America and he explained, "Chinese manager had a strong concern that this problem may take place in this company...though this problem had never happened in Chinese locations before, so it's hard to predict the possibilities of the problem occurring in American locations. Even though a new problem had never occurred in Chinese locations, managers tended to be somewhat conservative when they were not sure about coping strategies." Secondly, conservative Chinese culture also influenced worker behaviors in intercultural communication, because clear instructions from the leadership was still lacking, he said, "Chinese workers tend to communicate less with American workers—when I'm not sure if it's OK to provide the resources that American workers asked for, then being conservative and providing nothing was a better choice, and it's the same with the information sharing—say or not—saying nothing was a better choice." He also attributed the silence and hesitation of the managers to the influence of preexisting cultural perspectives among Chinese workers about Chinese culture.

He also believed that conservative Chinese culture also influenced the approval process at both the worker and manager levels. He also found out Chinese workers' have a concern on "face issue" in the communication with American workers. He explained that in order to avoid 'losing face' when the Chinese workers found something wrong with the product, they would limit the flow of information to inside the group of Chinese workers and avoided communicating quality problems with American workers.

Another Chinese worker (PC2ME) believed that both Chinese and American workers held preexisting cultural perspectives about work priorities. He described the priority of efficiency in Chinese culture and he said, "There is a project with a deadline, Chinese may have a concentration on the efficiency, fast speed with low cost, do whatever it takes to finish the project before the deadline". Chinese workers, especially those who used to work in the Chinese locations of C Company, were confident about their priority on efficiency based on their successful experience in the Chinese market with Chinese customers. He said, "C Company developed fast in the last 20 years...we all know some basic research is lacking, but we can always see a completed product, produced quickly, forwarded to the market, and sold to the customers." Chinese workers believed the Americans didn't understand them, didn't understand C.

This worker also appreciated the willingness of workers to sacrifice individual benefits for group benefits, which he believed was the most important thing in team work. He said, "You could give up some of your own benefits, and do some basic work to prepare for your team members. When the project was completed, people may ignore what you did, but you knew about your contributions. I think if you had a spirit like this, that it would be called a team spirit/team work."

Another Chinese worker (PC3FE) expressed a strong agreement with Chinese culture, "I felt very comfortable to stay within my own Chinese culture, I would rather stay within the Chinese culture I brought along with...I still prefer my Chinese culture, and I expect my children could inherit this Chinese culture...I still prefer my original lifestyle, the Chinese lifestyle in which sensed that I belonged...I wouldn't say I'm uncomfortable with speaking English, but it generates a sense of alienation, while I find a sense of belonging when I stay with Chinese and speak Chinese...I was very attracted by the western culture when I was studying in Shanghai at a young age--I was allured by the western lifestyles, and regarded it as super cool, however years later, I've been sunk in the western lifestyle, I'd really wish to go back. Very often, my brain was filled up with memories of my childhood, the years in high school and university".

Research Question Five: How Does Stress Occur during Intercultural Communication?

To answer question five, I used the following constructs from the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Glanz & Schwartz, 2008): stressor, primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, coping efforts, dispositional coping strategies, social support, and coping outcomes.

I have organized my findings about the occurrence of stress during intercultural communication using the experience of seven workers. In each workers experience I looked to find one or more stressors, primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, coping efforts, coping outcomes, dispositional coping strategies, and social support.

5-1 Stress of an American Worker (PA2ME): Difficulty Getting Information

5-1-a) Stressor. This American worker was an engineer with experience of making similar products in another company. He was hired by C Company to perform work consistent with his experience. The problems or challenges of designing good components were expected as part this type of job with any company. Like any other company, his specialized work required coordination and information from other individuals or teams working on other parts of a piece of equipment.

He did not expect that he would have a hard time getting information from his company; getting information to do his work became a stressor for this worker. He described the difficulty of getting information and how that was different from his experience and training. He had strong confidence in his ability and high expectations for his performance; he said, “so I feel that I’m professional,..., I’ve never worked on a concrete pump truck before, I came to C-America, but I knew what the concrete pump truck was, I had experience with diesel engine controls—I mean, I designed control systems for a diesel engine manufacturer, I worked on all different types of applications on different chasses before—you know—this is just a piece of the puzzle to me,”

5-1-b) Primary appraisal. As an “engineer for C-America, for a certain project/produce”, he was dependent on easy access to information about this equipment. Any disruption in his access to information about this product necessarily disrupted his work on the product. He pointed out several barriers to accessing information: first, he thought his communication on the technical level was limited by the English language proficiency among his Chinese coworkers, he said, “(the technical communication) hardly existed in the company”, and this created problems with accuracy and credibility.

Less accurate information resulted in more risk and less confidence about the quality of his work. Secondly, the restrictions on sharing information were imposed by workers in S city – a location in China. He described the communication with and through S city as complicated, “so first time I have to explain to Mr. Mao what I need, secondly, he would have to find the right person in S city to get the information, thirdly, there may even be a process of approval for me to even obtain that information.” He went on to explain the difficulties of communication with the S city location, “it could take a week, sometimes it could take two weeks, it could take a lot of time...if I could just reach out there and grab it, I could have completed the design and validated the design within that whole two week period while we were waiting.”

This engineer did not directly share how this stressor influenced his physical or psychological well-being. Instead, he explained how this stressor kept him from meeting his high expectations that he do a good job. Since he also explained how the lack of access to information was holding him back in ways that were beyond his control, I sensed that he was frustrated. I also sensed that his level of frustration would increase if he continued to experience this stressor.

5-1-c) Secondary appraisal. This worker used previous work experience to suggest that access to information could be improved, when he recalled that, “every Chinese employee I worked with could speak fluent English ... so the communication was actually very easy, because they would always speak English to us and they would always understand, we could even talk on a technical level”. He did not say how likely he thought it was that his current Chinese coworkers would be willing to improve their English proficiency.

At the same time this worker contrasted C Company to his previous employer, “I mean my previous company, we openly share, if an engineer from China called me and needed a wire diagram, I didn’t think twice about it, I send it to him. You know I was not worrying about ... anything, because we all work for the same project, they need it to do some work that I asked them to do, so I gave it to them.” He did not think that changing the restriction on sharing information inside the Chinese company he worked for today was within his capability as a normal electric engineer.

5-1-d) Coping efforts. This worker used problem management, emotional regulation, and meaning-based coping as part of his efforts to cope with the stress he experience when he was unable to access important information.

Problem management: He actively made efforts to solve the problem when he attempted to, “look for other meanings, don’t be afraid to repeat yourself, or just explain: ‘I’m sorry, I don’t understand,’ and no harm...we just work together to get the point across”, and he illustrated a solution to language barriers when he said, “I would definitely be open to learning Chinese if that opportunity were given to me, you know, as part of my work plan, I would definitely be open to learning Chinese, cause I just think that would definitely help to bridge the communication gap between the employees”.

Though changing restrictions on information sharing in this Chinese company was not within his capability as an electrical engineer, he still suggested to upper level managers that if, “we as engineers in C-America could openly, collectively work together with C-China group on the concrete pump team, and openly, collectively share that information C-America and C-China, or working together for one common goal, ... that could decrease the delay drastically”

Emotional regulation: for this worker included seeking social support from more than one source.

He sought social support from the upper level managers, such as “vice president or president”, by making suggestions to them and proposing that workers would be allowed to, “openly, collectively, freely shared information”.

He used his travel to China to build a social relationship with the people who had access to the information he required, especially Chinese workers, “who do work on the pump truck team”. When he returned to the US and needed information from the Chinese location, he usually sought a person whom he had a social relationship or as he said, “a person who knows me and I know them”. He said, “that (traveling to China) also helped me to build a relationship with engineers in China who do work on the pump truck team, so if I have a question, I have a relationship with a person who knows me and I know them, so I can communicate through email”.

In addition, he also sought support from Chinese co-workers in the American location to help with translation or act as a middle person in his communication seeking information. He established a relationship with “Li Ming” (pseudonym), who served as the middle person in his communications with China; they shared lunch times together, which he said, “it’s kind of hard for me ... honestly I don’t—outside of work—really socialize with any employees, Chinese or American, because I’m far away, I live far away.” He described the communication “through Li Ming”, “I may ask Li Ming (when) I don’t know the answer to this question—‘Do you know?’, he would say: ‘No, I don’t know, but tonight I will phone the Chinese engineer, and I’ll get you the answer tomorrow.’”

Meaning-based coping: this worker used positive reappraisal and revised goals as forms of meaning-based coping.

He used positive reappraisal to translate “a problem” into “a challenge”. He said, “I say it bothers me now, but it also brings more of a challenge to me, because I do like challenge, and accepting the challenge. I can say that when we do get the point—that I know we are going to be at...we can look back and say, ‘You know, look how far we have come.’ and you can have that satisfaction like yes, you know, come into work and instead of waiting two days to get an answer from China, I can just email my friends, that we both work together, and I know they can easily email me back, and they will email me in a reasonable amount of time”.

He also seemed to revise his goal for his technical communication from, “communication was actually very easy ... we could actually hold technical conversation in English,” to something with less reliance on improved English when he said, “we just work together to get the point across.” He explained his revised expectations when he expressed his understanding of “difficulties” experienced by Chinese workers when he said, “I mean I don’t fault anyone, I don’t point a finger at anyone, because I know I can’t speak Chinese, so it’s not equal, so I can understand how difficult that would be coming into a situation like this.”

5-1-e) Outcomes of coping.

I sensed that this worker was satisfied with his efforts to cope with the stress he associated with the difficulties he experienced trying to get important information. He shared optimism and specific efforts to cope with his stressor. The long term outcomes

of his coping efforts were not yet apparent; I believe long term outcomes will require improved access to information.

5-1-f) Dispositional coping style. He chose an active coping strategy to make suggestions to the leadership and trying to solve problems. Despite his active efforts, he also said, “I mean—I’m just a senior electrical engineer. I’m not a vice president or president or anything like that”.

5-1-g) Social support. This American sought to build social support as a coping effort in the form of emotional regulation. As I described earlier, he did this by building relations with workers in China and by building a relationship with a pivotal Chinese worker in the U.S. who helped him communicate with the S city location. The social support he built as part of his coping efforts became social support that favorably moderated his subsequent coping efforts.

His coping efforts to develop social support created a pool of social support that influenced his other coping efforts. He perceived a good social support from his Chinese workers, he described a good relationship with the Chinese workers, and the positive feedbacks he received from his Chinese co-workers reinforced this perception. “I do think that I built good rapport with some employees, we talk on a personal level, and they show the gratitude to me as well, I know, by taking care when I was in China to always want to translate for me and help me understands certain situations, to help me understand different foods that I wasn’t used to eating, to explain meal, what it may be, you know, I don’t know if you would like this...but this is what it is, please try, but if you don’t like it, I understand.”

5-2 Stress of an American Worker (PA5ME): Accepting Poor Quality

5-2-a) Stressor. The American worker was employed by a similar heavy industrial machine company before he was hired by C-Company. His previous work was consistent with his current job and he used his experience from his previous jobs. And he described the work responsibilities as, “pretty much anything related to cranes, primarily to help to refine the cranes (that will) come to America, and help the designers in China to design the product and test it, and develop a marketing plan strategy for introducing the crane, and help service...any issue related to cranes.” He explained that, “the Chinese’ attention to detail are lacking, the Chinese level of quality is low”. The acceptance of poor quality among his Chinese co-workers was inconsistent with his work goal to improve the product quality. The work experience in the American crane company didn’t provide him with the experience to deal with the general acceptance to the poor quality among the Chinese co-workers in this company. This inconsistency was a stressor because he said, “with Americans, you don’t compromise a quality, if you pay attention to the details, you don’t want to cut the corner do that to save a buck ... there is certain quality level you don’t want to go below.”

5-2-b) Primary appraisal. this participant did not discuss how the stress of this inconsistency influenced his physical well-being, but he was clear about the psychological dissonance it created in his mind, “My responsibility is pretty much anything related to cranes, primarily to help to refine the cranes that come to America, and help with the designers in China to design the product and test it, and develop a marketing plan strategy for introducing the crane, and help service to with any issue be related to crane.” The gravity of this situation was summarized when he said, “it limited

the progress of the company". While he clearly explained that he thought he was responsible for quality, he also explained that other views about quality were wide spread in the company.

5-2-c) Secondary appraisal. This manager was confident that he could understand Chinese culture, he explained that he did, "have a lot more insights, Chinese...been over to China more than anybody...understand Chinese culture, and C Company culture...I think pretty well like Chinese, so I understand...I'm half Chinese". This confidence about understanding Chinese culture was not the same as confidence about being able to change those parts of culture that support cranes that would not meet the expectations of the American market.

Later he explained the difficulty of changing the thinking of his Chinese coworkers, "it's hard, it's a cultural thing, it's years of being that way, or it just so many people there, you have to compromise somehow, or you just accept". His secondary appraisal about his ability to cope with the stress of differing standards of quality is mixed; he was confident in his understanding of cultural differences, but not certain of how to influence change.

5-2-d) Coping efforts.

Problem management: he used a great deal of face-to-face communication to manage the problem of a mismatch between how he understood Chinese/C Company thinking about crane quality and how he thought American customers were thinking about crane quality. He said, "We struggle with that in C Company constantly, part of our job, at least part of my job is to be a teacher for Chinese engineer and whoever comes here". He described how he used communication tools to increase awareness about

product quality among Chinese workers, “this is the way we do it in the west, if you want to compete in the world, on the world stage, against world class companies, this is the way world class companies do it. You either have to change, or you are not going to be able to, you can’t compete”.

Emotional regulation: I did not sense that this manager was actively using emotional regulation. He did seek and receive support from high level management in China, but this did not translate to widespread acceptance of his quality initiatives by more local Chinese managers and workers.

Meaning-based coping: he reappraised the stressor from a cultural perspective, and he connected it with his understanding of Chinese flexible “traffic lines”. He explained that in China, “they’re traffic laws, but I called them ‘traffic lines’. It can’t be called traffic laws ‘cause no one follows. It’s kind of guidelines, cause no one really, it can’t be laws cause no one follows it.” And he drew a parallel to his understanding about quality at C Company to his understanding of traffic laws in China; he believed that Chinese workers were like Chinese drivers, there were concepts about quality and only some of them were being used. He thought it was important to recognize and to “accept something as culture,” which means accept it as something “you can’t decide”. While other Americans are bothered by this difference, he said, “I’m used to it, so I’m like, OK, accept something as a cultural...you can’t decide the things that really don’t matter”.

He also used meaning based coping when he reappraised the quality problem as a quality “challenge”; he was surprisingly light-hearted when he said that this challenge would, “provide him more opportunities to practice Chinese”. “so you know it’s just like joy for me, I love working here.”

5-2-e) Outcomes of coping. The size and breadth of this challenge was not amenable to solution during the time of my research.

He described a lack of understanding and support among the Chinese workers, “especially the middle manager and down”. His challenge seemed more difficult, he repeated what Chinese workers said, “I’m not understanding.’ there is a lack of understanding,” and he believed that, “you have to compromise somehow, or you just accept that”. He seemed down when he said, “we were talking about the things you don’t want to compromise, it’s stressful.” This didn’t influence his satisfaction with his current job, he said, “I love Chinese, so you know it’s just like joy for me, I love working here, otherwise if I work for a German company (it) might be harder for me...no, that wouldn’t for me.”

As he thought about his work performance, he said,, “It was very good. If I defined it, this job was well suited for me, it takes a lot of interaction with Chinese, different people, different cultures, I do that well, being multi-cultural (in my) thinking, my special interest in China, Chinese, so (I’m) well suited for that, pretty effective, performing the job. I know a lot about cranes, so, so it’s a good role for me, I think I fit very well to what C Company needs.”

5-2-f) Dispositional coping style. His previous efforts in learning about Chinese, Chinese culture, and his extensive experience with intercultural communication gave him the confidence to cope with the stress. He said, “I’m culturally diverse, my mind is culturally diverse...I grew up...some places we lived were half immigrants—half Mexicans. I’ve always been cultural, different cultural oriented, I was gravitated to ethnic people.” And this optimism helped him.

5-2-g) Social support. He describe how his integration with a network of Chinese social support moderated his coping efforts. He said, “Chinese, they’re very perceptive. They are—you know, they honor things that are very important, how hard you work...I think they know I’m a C Company guy, the president knows, the vice president knows...I make the company work better...if I’ve got to bend the rules a little, they will give me some latitude.” These words also revealed his strong confidence in the social support he built with some Chinese. However, this social support from Chinese workers was not universal; he lacked support, “especially from the middle managers and down to employees”, many of them expressed misunderstanding and they disapproved of some of his efforts to align Chinese/C Company thinking about quality with the American market.

5-3 Stress of an American Worker (PA3MM) Communicate to Seeking Approval

5-3-a) Stressor. This participant was an expert who worked in construction equipment for 25 years and reached a high management position in the previous company; this worker had strong confidence and expected much from him. As a high position manager who was able to “sign expenditure, expense for over hundred thousand dollars”, to a “manager” for one single type of product with much less decision making power, I assumed that he had adjusted his expectations to a level consistent with his new position. However, he said, “the levels and number of approvals working for C Company in particular ... you get a project approved, you still have to get the approval of the details”. He did not have any similar experience working in either American or Asian companies during his 25 years of experience. His anger and disequilibrium showed in his words when he said, “I ran a company that had a hundred and eighty million dollars of sales. I could sign off on...expenses for over hundred thousand dollars. I spent over one hundred

million dollars worth of material expenses on my own authority. For this company, I cannot sign off on a ten dollar expense for people who work for me without having the president of the company approve it; that's insulting for me." He thought of the vertical communication he used to seek approval in C Company as a stressor—not only because it brought delays into his work performance and the progress of his team, but it also limited his decision power as a team leader.

5-3-b) Primary appraisal. As a team leader, he was responsible for most of the communication with the upper level of management. The vertical communication required to seek approval in this company interfered with the efficiency and quality of his work and his team's work as well. He said the communication to seek approval was required whenever "we (his team) are asked to give plans, development plans, what needs to be done, what resources are required." In the specific examples he provided later, this communication was required and influenced his decision when he wanted to "hire that person to do this job" and seek "some engineering models in drawing of the excavations". He explained that there are times that, "even though a program is approved, the items are randomly removed." He offered another example of the degree of detail necessary to seek approval when he stated, "we had a list of engineering changes that we need this or otherwise the U.S. customers won't buy this machine, only half of them were approved, while some others were rejected, and some of them were still being looked at."

He described how the vertical communication used to seek approval in this company interfered with the efficiency and quality of both his work and his team's work. For instance he explained, "I have a whole team of people wanting to work on a project...they have to wait, and wait, and wait...we don't get the approval." He reported

how some of the delayed approvals eventually denied requests for “tools they need to get the job done”. He also reported denials when he asked to, “hire that person to do this job” and when he requested “some engineering models in the form of drawings of the excavators”. His perception of the severity of these problems were revealed when he said, “the problematic communication for approval will influence the competitiveness of the whole company...I think our progress is seriously limited...C Company will fail if they are not going to change the approval process, and give the people they hired the tools they need to get the job done.”

He clearly stated his frustration four times saying, “it’s frustrating a lot of times ... the frustration level is high.” His emotion was strongly revealed when describing his experience with vertical communication in this company.

5-3-c) Secondary appraisal. As a manager, This participant perceived little control of the situation. His limited power to make decisions about resources decreased his perceptions about his ability to resolve problems. He said, “For this company, I cannot sign off on a ten dollar expense for people who work for me without having the president of the company to approve it.” He described how his access to “engineering information... (which) is required to do the job” was prevented; he said, “here is someone who doesn’t have a technical background telling you, ‘you don’t need it’, when they have never done that job, and then again engineering experts say ‘this is what I need to get the job done,’ they (engineering experts) are told ‘you can’t have it, but you still need to get the job done’”. The limited social support he perceived on his position also influenced his appraisal of his own ability to change the situation. He commented, “You

hired me because of my expertise in this area, now you are telling me my expertise is not correct with no explanation.”

5-3-d) Coping strategies.

Problem management: I did not find problem management in this workers experience.

Emotional regulation: this worker described his use of avoidance as a coping tool when he said, “there is some frustration that’s developed, why don’t they understand what I’m saying, on both directions, so instead of resolving the problem you give up and move on to something else.” Denial was also used as a way of coping for this worker when he said, “C Company will fail if they are not going to change the approval process, and give the people they hired the tools they need to get the job done.” He seemed to be denying that his success is inextricably linked to the success of C Company.

Meaning-based coping: first he explained how he interpreted the many requirements for approval as a “trust factor” between Chinese and American workers. He said, “I think that goes back to the trust factor—the Chinese leadership trust the information they get from the Chinese sources, but they don’t trust the information they get from a source that’s not Chinese”. Second, he demonstrated a growing understanding of the influence of cultural difference when he suggested, “there might be some cultural differences, but (I) don’t take that personally, (I) just become aware of the difference and find out if it is that cultural difference or if it is something I need to be more aware of and more tolerant of. And, I’m sure there is—as a person in United States—we probably do a lot of things that are socially unacceptable in other countries not just in China”.

5-3-e) Outcomes of coping. His state of emotional well-being was limited by his frustration level. He said, "It's frustrating a lot of times...the frustration level is very high", and he told about how his frustrations led to low job satisfaction when he concluded, "to be honest, my job satisfaction is at best neutral, not nearly to the level of ...working with Japanese or American companies."

5-3-f) Dispositional coping style. He wants trust because trust by C Company leaders would have given him the authority and information he required to do his work successfully. His motivation to have trust was revealed in his remarks, "working with people, working for C Company... it's going to take a while to develop a trust between people from different cultural background," and he described his communication as "sometimes our initial interaction are really tentative about what our expectations are and ... when you ask for something to be done, you'll have to provide something to meet the expectations for the other people." He seemed uncertain about how he would gain trust as a non-Chinese worker when he said, "I think that goes back to the trust factors, the Chinese leadership trust the information they get from the Chinese sources, but they don't trust the information they get from a source that's not Chinese". His results were limited, but he consistently sought the trust of company leadership.

5-3-g) Social support. He perceived little social support in this company from the upper managers "the Chinese leadership trust the information they get from the Chinese sources, but they don't trust the information they get form a source that's not Chinese". He did not complain about his relationships with American workers, and I observed positive and supportive interactions with his American colleagues.

5-4 Chinese Manager (PC1MM): Stress Due to Limited Intercultural Communication

5-4-a) Stressor. The Chinese worker was employed by C Company to assist the company president. He said, "I'm mainly responsible for most of the work in supply and service, helping to build a business process for these two departments, to increase their efficiency, including the level of customer service and management of costs." He used to work as a "supply chain manager" and "channel direction manager" at a diesel engine company. His previous job of working as a manager provided experience relevant to his current job responsibility as manager of purchasing and service departments. Additionally, the supply and service departments were mainly composed of Chinese workers, so the Chinese background of this worker helped him to cooperate effectively with the Chinese workers. He could communicate and understand them without any barriers. As a manager, he was satisfied with the decision making power he was given to fulfill his work responsibilities. He commented, "I felt I was able to make an impact in many places in this company."

However, this worker was uncertain about his work and the future of the company. He said, "The biggest challenge in my work was that we are so new that nothing was defined, nothing has a standard process, everything needs to be controlled, we have to start from the very beginning, start with supplies." He described his work in "supplies" where he needed clear definition and direction. He said another part of his work as "president's assistant" was to "report to the boss". However, it was also lacking a clear definition and guidelines. He said, "There's no clear definition about what things should be reported to the supervisor... I have to figure out by myself... I have to be very

careful.” He concluded that, “C Company was starting from the very beginning, and we were faced with different issues every day, so my work target was changed frequently, my work responsibilities were also changed frequently.” Besides, his uncertainty about the future of the company translated to increased uncertainty about his future with the company. As I mentioned before, this manager was satisfied with the decision making power he was given. It’s very likely that the sense of responsibility came with the feeling that he “was able to make an impact in many places in this company.” And a close relationship between his personal goal and the company’s success was something characteristic of Chinese culture. Uncertainty was revealed when he said, “C Company is changing frequently, C Company had a 50% increase in the revenue every year for more than ten years, without a doubt that’s a big pressure on us...fast development is a challenge by itself, the support to back up the fast development is another challenge. Besides, C-America, the American location of C Company, is a pioneer for Chinese companies (expanding) overseas investments. There’s little experience that could be borrowed from (other overseas Chinese companies). A few other companies have overseas investments – such as, Hua Wei, Lenovo, Haier – are in different area, ran different way, and with few experience by themselves. So C-America are facing many challenges because of a different location and a totally different culture.” This worker’s uncertainty about his work and the future of the company was a stressor that brought disequilibrium to him.

5-4-b) Primary appraisal. This manager described the uncertainty in his work “that nothing was defined, nothing has a standard process”, and he said that is the “biggest challenge to my work”. This uncertainty was more important because he

reported directly to the President of C Company, and he had no guidelines for what he could say or do without involving the President. He said, "I have to figure out by myself... I have to be very careful"; the uncertainty seemed to be undermining his confidence.

His primary appraisal of this stressor was based in part on his experience with another employer, "In my previous job in CM (an American company), CM had a very successful investment in China, and one of its competitors, CT company, also invested in China at the same time in a similar place. The result was CM's investment was like a money machine with extremely high profit, while CT became bankrupt. The reason was, CM only sent a couple of American employees, and these employees were forced to communicate with the local group. While CT sent a large group there and communication was limited within the American group, they didn't open the communication with the local Chinese group—so many of the decisions didn't work well." He simplified the complicated factors that determined success or failure for international business; he thought successful international businesses invested in intercultural communication.

5-4-c) Secondary appraisal. He felt he had the necessary authority to make changes and build meaningful systems for purchasing and service; he said, "I am able to make an impact in many places" in this company. But he also acknowledged that some things were out of his control as a manager, such as the challenges facing C Company, "fast development is a challenge by itself, the support to back up the fast development is another challenge. Besides, C-American, the American location of C Company, is a pioneer of Chinese company's overseas investments ... So C-America are facing many challenges because of a different location and a totally different culture."

5-4-d) Coping efforts.

Problem management: this worker described his active coping efforts that focused on increasing intercultural communication. He described his efforts in “building more frequent intercultural communication throughout the company to increase the effectiveness of peer intercultural communication.” He said, “I also made some efforts at promoting information sharing. For example, the first problem I solved for this job was to overcome a lack of information sharing that existed in the customer service department. What I did first was make a requirement for short report about problems workers faced in customer service every day, and the problem lists were sent to both the Chinese and American managers. And this received good feedback from workers who said, ‘at least we have an understanding of the existing problems from these daily reports.’ Secondly, from tomorrow, all the problems we faced in the service department within a month will be reported to the research and designing department, I asked one worker from the research and design department in each product line to attend the meeting with the service department every month... tomorrow is the first time, and the next month will be a communication in both directions. The service department will provide problem reports within a month, and the responsible worker from each product line in the research and designing department will be asked to provide a solution to the problems proposed last time.” He used his decision power to increase the frequency of intercultural communication both within a department and across several departments. He also described his efforts to seek information. His efforts at managing problems included research about other companies; he concluded, “there’s little experience that could be borrowed; the other cases (of Chinese overseas investment in America), such as HuaWei,

Lenovo, and Haier, are the companies in different fields and in different situations. And they have little history by themselves.”

Emotional regulation: He described his desire to seek a social support from the upper level managers by asking for “clear instruction from upper level managers, to dispel some unnecessary concern among the workers and encourage intercultural communication between the workers.” He said, “there needs to be instruction from the upper level manager to describe what communication between Chinese workers and American workers should look like. It should be totally free and open, and treat everybody the same, like family members, or should we still hold some concerns, keep some reservations about some topics, consider some legal issues.”

Meaning-based coping: he revised his goal as a form of meaning-based coping. He narrowed his focus to increasing intercultural communication. He was hopeful that he could assure sufficient intercultural communication so that purchasing and service functions will contribute to C Company’s success.

Initially this worker perceived that there were no problems in purchasing and services functions at C-Company. He altered his understanding of events to accept that were problems and that intercultural communication may be a viable approach to “problem management”. His active coping efforts were aimed at solving problems through concentrated intercultural communication.

He used positive reappraisal by taking social support into consideration. He described the situation at this time from a positive perspective by saying that, “the Chinese managers all hold an expectation to integrate and to be integrated, didn’t insist on the original ways in China, ... the American workers are also willing to integrate into

Chinese culture and understand Chinese culture without holding (a sense of) superiority of being a “super American” and insisting on their ways. At least until now, every C Company employee I know is willing to understand, though I’m not sure if they are going to take any (language) classes or not ... basically the workers are holding understandings and expectations about integration with each other, so we had a very good beginning, so I’m very confident.”

5-4-e) Outcomes of coping. He experienced higher work stress and higher work satisfaction working in this Chinese company when compared to his previous work experience. He said, “I had a higher position in C Company, and besides, as a newly started company, C Company has a lot of things needing to be done—like making decisions—and I’m able to feel my impact. I feel that I’m able to make an impact on many things... I don’t care about money, but I feel I can make something different. ... It’s hard to say, if my satisfaction is from working in a Chinese company, or is it because I’m in a different position from my previous work experience. ” He explained his stress as “the continuously changing work scope and responsibilities without clear definition”, which is closely related to the uncertainty about his work scope and responsibilities. He said, “it (work stress) is bigger in the Chinese company, because when you work in the American company, you’re very clear about your work responsibility, your work load; when it’s over loaded, you could ask for more resources. And the management level also has a clear idea about the amount of working load matched with certain human resources.”

5-4-f) Dispositional coping style. This key manager did not overtly describe his dispositional coping style; he left me with the impression that he is always balancing his

appreciation for having authority with his uncertainty about how his decisions will influence the future of the company and his success as a manager.

5-4-g) Social support. He described strong sense of social support in his job. As he said, “I was able to make impact in many things” and this could be attributed to the support he received from the persons who supervise him. He communicated effectively with the Chinese managers, Chinese workers, American managers, and American workers. Communication allowed him to seek more social support from either cultural group. He also mentioned that workers who had both Chinese and American cultural backgrounds were expected to play important roles in intercultural communication.

5-5 Chinese Worker (PC2ME): Stress of Misunderstanding and Disagreement

5-5-a) Stressor. The Chinese worker was employed as a professional engineer by C Company. He had both a Chinese background (finished college education in China and had work experience in China) and an educational background from an American university (PhD) and work experience in America. He described divergent work goals between his American team members and his Chinese supervisor. His American team members had a priority on product quality and basic research, while his Chinese supervisor had a priority for the quick and timely performance of work. He understood both groups and believed “both have their own reasons”. He said, “I’m trying to find a way to reach these two goals at the same time”, but he also realized that “it’s hard ... these two goals are conflicted”, this difference caused a conflict over the best use of human resources, time, and budget. He conceded that, “in most cases, we reached little progress after months had passed, and the deadline was in front of us.” He admitted he

had lost his ability to balance these two ideas saying that, “these two ideas fight with each other in my mind.”

5-5-b) Primary appraisal. He described a loss of equilibrium. He explained, “Of course I had (distress). I’m trying to make my team and project going forward. However, the team is moving forward in a different direction rather than the Chinese managers expected. I’m not sure if this direction is correct, it might be right, might be wrong, but it’s different from the managers’ expectations anyway. I’m trying to draw them closer, and wishing that both groups would be satisfied when the project is finished—otherwise you’re not going to receive any affirmation or appraisal if your continuing in this direction ... I knew that what the team wanted is different from what was expected by our managers, the president and vice president, what shall I do? ... I realized the divergence existed in the communication but wasn’t able to control it, it was very distressing.” He believed that, “if we failed to reach an agreement, my team will become dangerous, and my career will be threatened, I might get fired, so I believe this is my biggest stress.”

5-5-c) Secondary appraisal. This worker was not specific about his confidence that he could resolve the difference between these two groups, but I thought he did illustrate confidence and determination in his active coping efforts. He actively persuaded and arranged a face-to-face meeting between these two groups. Since the two sides seemed to resist his efforts to resolve their differences, he began to reappraise his ability to solve the problem and reach an agreement, when he said, “Though I give thought and effort to this problem, those efforts do not make any effect”. He was realistic about the

results of his efforts, but he planned to engage more support from upper management as part of his belief that this was a solvable problem.

5-5-d) Coping efforts.

Problem management: he first used active coping efforts when he said, “the most direct solution appeared to be more face-to-face communication (between the two groups), make the two groups sit together and have a discussion about the source of the problem, people sit down and talk, exchange the ideas with each other and try to understand each other.” And he turned the plan into real actions, he said, “I told my team member that ‘we need to talk with our managers’, I also told the managers that ‘there’s a need for you to communicate with all team members’.” he successfully persuaded his team members and his Chinese manager to sit around for face-to-face communication.

Emotional regulation: after his active coping efforts mentioned above, he described his temptation to seek social support from upper level managers – to ask for “upper-management coordination”.

Meaning-based coping: I did not choose to highlight any meaning-based coping in this example.

5-5-e) Outcomes of coping. He thought his efforts at direct communication had “some effects, but in most cases, the disagreement still existed”. He said, “the Chinese workers said, ‘The Americans didn’t understand us or understand C Company.’ while the American workers said, ‘Why do the Chinese workers think this way? The way we did it in an American company was totally different from how they want us to do it in the Chinese company. If they keep on doing that, the quality of the products will never increase.’” and he said that, “though the superficial agreement was reached through

communication, they (American workers) still went in a different direction in the following actions...it failed to solve the problem in the long term.” He described the communication as ineffective. On an emotional level, this worker used “distress” to describe his emotional well-being, and admitted that this difference was his main source of general work stress. He said, “Of course I had (distress). I’m trying to make my team and project going forward. However, the team is moving forward in a different direction rather than the Chinese managers expected. I’m not sure if this direction is correct, it might be right, might be wrong, but it’s different from the managers’ expectations anyway. I’m trying to draw them closer, and wishing that both groups would be satisfied when the project is finished—otherwise you’re not going to receive any affirmation or appraisal if your continuing in this direction ... I knew that what the team wanted is different from what was expected by upper management, what shall I do? ... I realized the divergence existed in the communication but wasn’t able to control it, it was very distressing.” His stress and anxiety about the future of his team and himself were revealed when he said, “if we failed to reach an agreement, my team will become dangerous, and my career will be threatened, I might get fired, so I believe this is my biggest stress.”

He promoted direct communication between cultural groups but this only produced incomplete outcomes. He said, “Though the oral agreement was reached (through the communication), they (American team members) didn’t accept the idea in their deep hearts, the superficial acceptance may be due to a consideration of a relationships between subordinates and supervisor; their real actions were inconsistent with their espoused agreements.” He found that both American workers and Chinese

managers did not share their complete thoughts during communication, which decreased the effectiveness of the communication. He described how, "the workers talked about their opinions, then when the manager responded, 'this is what we should do' (which was contrary to the opinions of the workers), the workers didn't object strongly". The workers reacted in ways that showed they hadn't accepted the manager's directions. He also said, "after all, at the end of communication, it seems like the two groups had reached an agreement, however, the real thoughts were still not revealed because people knew that once it was spoken, the atmosphere around the communication would become intense and may be turned into argument with dirty words." He explained his understanding of each group. First, he was concerned that the type of relationship between the Chinese supervisor and subordinate American workers was a barrier to communication. He said, "I believed the workers always hold respect or fear of the managers; it's applicable in both China and America, it's hard for the workers to say no, if the supervisor has already stated his/her opinion clearly and with certainty." Second, he pointed out that the limited language level of the Chinese manager was another barrier in this communication. He said, "As far as the president and vice president (both Chinese) were concerned, they found differences between the American workers' opinion and their own opinion; they were not able to point it out exactly, maybe they attributed it to the language barrier, 'this is what I want to say, but how can I clearly express myself for them to understand?'" Thirdly, he pointed out the resistance in both cultural groups to changing their own cultural perspective. He described the activities of these communicators, "when you made efforts to persuade others to understand, or made efforts to be understood. You gave up after a short effort because you realized it was hard

for you to change the other's perspective, and on the other hand you were not able to accept the other's idea."

5-5-f) Dispositional coping style. This manager seemed to be transitioning and did not seem to have a dispositional coping style.

5-5-g) Social support. As a Chinese worker with some American education, he held an important position in this company. This Chinese manager (PC1MM) agreed with an American team leader (PA3MM) when each shared the high expectations each person had for Chinese workers who had American education backgrounds and/or experience working in America. The American team leader said, "I think that for a Chinese company wanting to do business in America, they have to have a large number of team members who are proficient in English, and people who understand American culture quite bit". A Chinese manager also stated his trust in the "people with multi-cultural backgrounds" and a similar awareness from the upper level managers. He explained, "I was asked to recruit 10 workers in the beginning of this year, 10 Chinese workers with work experience in American companies and higher education backgrounds in America. These 10 positions were on the manager level. I received new instructions from the boss that the number of positions was raised up to 30 people ... so C Company was aware of the importance of multi-culture backgrounds for their human resources". One of the workers in that group, (PC2ME) was able to get more social support from both the Chinese managers and his American team members. And his ability to understand and communicate effectively with both sides gave him a much freer and open access to both groups. And his successful persuasion in both groups also revealed the trust he received from both groups.

5-6 A Chinese Worker (PC5ME): Stress of Vertical Communication

5-6-a) Stressor. This Chinese worker said, when he was recruited in to C Company, “there were originally four persons in our ... department, but now just (another American) and me are left; the other two workers were fired”. The other American worker also left employment the day of this worker’s interview. As the only person, this worker was responsible for the whole ... project. The main reason he continued working in his position was to complete this project.

He described vertical communication as a stressor when he said, “the instructions from the upper level managers changed continuously, in many situations the plans were changed more than once...so some projects originally required a short time—however the plan was changed later—changes took place several times—....many of the projects I’m working on right now have been repeated several times, and I’m still working on them.” The inconsistent instructions from the managers had a great influence on the schedule of the ... project for which he was responsible. The time allotted to complete this project was extended another year, because he is required to “start from the very beginning, go through the whole process again”. The delays changing the project schedule extended his time on this job, and it made the completion date of this job unreachable. The flexible schedule without clear deadlines created uncertainty in his personal plan and goals, and in turn caused disequilibrium in this individual.

5-6-b) Primary appraisal. This worker believed his project was highly susceptible to delay due to inconsistent communication from higher levels of management. He said, “first, our plan was to catch up with speed. The instruction from the manager is to complete the construction within 10 months, later the instruction

became 'completed within 6 months'...however, the economic crisis came, the schedule was delayed. In addition, the managers' original requirements was in a design prior to most of the construction in America, changing this design added to the budget, when the economic crisis came, the original three buildings in the plan were cut to only one, and no longer the environmental friendly construction with high cost, the requirement now is a building with lowest cost." His attitude towards the project was cooling when he said, "I just did what I was asked to do." I found that he was not distracted by upper level instructions to change the design. The influence on his personal plan and goals made him very frustrated and exhausted

5-6-c) Secondary appraisal. This worker reported little ability to control the problem and change the situation. He explained, "I just did what the manager said, did whatever I was told, if it's too hard for me, I'll just do it bit by bit, and get it done slowly." He said, "in many cases, the managers' instructions were not flexible at all, there was no room for your advice and innovation." While he recalled arguing more in the beginning, his secondary appraisal has made him less likely to challenge directions from upper level managers.

5-6-d) Coping efforts.

Problem management: this worker repeatedly used direct communication with his supervisor to attempt to manage problems created by frequent changes in the construction project. At the time of the interview, he had abandoned this strategy in favor of complying with each change or new direction.

Emotional regulation: perhaps because of the limited success he had with direct communication, he used "avoidance" as a form of emotional regulation in his work. He

limited his work responsibilities for this job. He used to have some disagreements with his supervisor, however, when he faced these disagreements again he said, "I just do what the manager says...I only do the work within my responsibilities; give little consideration to the other issues." As a person responsible of a construction project, He only "do what the manager said", and "give little consideration to the other issue" and believed it as a full completion of his responsibilities, he utilized a very limited definition of his responsibilities. He also restricted his emotional devotion to the current job and this company. When he worked overtime in the previous company with little overtime payment, "I worked from 7am till 9 pm without a break in the noon, and earned little after months of work there, but I thought it (work overtime) is no big deal and enjoy that time." However, he described the intuition to be involved in his current work as "now you want to me to work overtime, I'm not going to do it without a payment." He described his little passion and motivation to devote to his current work, "I'm tired, don't want to work on this anymore," "my original belief is that I will finish my job even though I have to work overtime, (work overtime) is not a big deal, now I think, it's time off now, there's no need to finish it today, I'll just save it for tomorrow, that won't cause any trouble." "I wasn't able to take C Company like my family, like what I did in my previous job ... I won't able to take this job as my career." He also described a tendency to distance his relationship with the company. He said, he didn't have a sense of "not belonging" to this company, "I wasn't able to take C Company as my family", "We (workers) were expected to contribute for the company without a limitation, while the company rewards was very limited."

Meaning-based coping: This worker does what is required, but the meaning of work has changed for him.

5-6-e) Coping outcomes. Emotional well-being: he described his work stress and work satisfaction separately. Frequent changes in instructions were the main source of his work stress. As he anticipated more changes, he said, "I felt tired to keep working on it, for example, most of the work I'm doing right now were repetitions of the original work, and were repeated more than once, and still not finished yet." At the same time he thought the intensity of the stress was lower, "I had little work stress right now, because, as I said, I just acted according to the order from managers", and he said "C Company treated us just so-so, then my personal connection with it (C Company) was just 'so-so'".

His adaptation to minimize the influence of so many construction changes on his life occurred at the same time he was reporting lower job satisfaction. He was concerned when he said, "the managers give little consideration to the subordinates". He was unsettled by mixed messages from managers, "if the design is OK, the supervisor complained the cost is higher, it's worse if the design is not good, the supervisor would complain about both the design and cost."

5-6-g) Dispositional coping styles. This worker also seemed to be in transition and did not seem to have a dispositional coping style.

5-6-h) Social support. He perceived little social support from the company. He received little agreement and acceptance from the supervisor. He did not describe supportive relationships with his co-workers; his communications with Chinese or American workers were limited. He also described limited communication with Chinese workers outside of work hours, even though they shared an apartment. He said, "We had

little communication, most times we just stay in our own rooms when we get back to the apartment at night.” It seemed unusual for a Chinese worker to be isolated from Americans and Chinese.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The Discussion section is organized into three parts: 1) interesting and important findings; 2) future implication in practice; and 3) future implication in research.

Interesting and Important Findings

It was surprising that both Chinese and American workers initially described their relationships with workers from the other cultural group as positive or neutral. Despite the existence of individual problems and conflicts, people described the relationships with workers from another cultural group as positive. However, as the interview questions became more specific, individuals recalled specific situations which included stressful events or difficult experiences. This seemed consistent with Beehr and Franz (1987) who indicated that the hypothetical concept of stress can only be understood in reference to an individual's stressor (quantitatively and qualitatively) and also by measurement of the strain of the actual consequence exhibited (psychologically and physiologically).

I was less surprised to hear that comments offered by Chinese and American workers illustrated an awareness of cultural difference. Workers in this multicultural context were aware of cultural difference regardless of how frequently they participated in intercultural communication. Cultural difference was found everywhere in this work setting. The conscious awareness of cultural difference was not always associated with stressful events or stressors, some sensitivity to difference seemed without consequence.

An observed cultural difference may be perceived differently by different individuals; when someone saw a stressor proximal to observed cultural difference, I searched for signs of their primary and secondary appraisal to better understand what made their experience different. These situations reinforced the functionality and utility of the two types of appraisal in the Stress and Coping Model for Health Behavior.

As described in chapter four, a Chinese female participant said “she considered her American friends as ‘prime mate’, while Chinese friends are ‘soul mates’, she had a very close relationship with her American friends from her American university, but she would only share happiness with the Americans. She said ‘when I felt sad or frustrated, I still wanted to share with a Chinese’.” I found it interesting that she had these enduring ties to members of her culture. It appeared to me that she considered her moments of unhappiness as moments of vulnerability; she said she was unwilling to share these moments outside her cultural group. Moments of happiness were easy for this person to share beyond her cultural group. Even though her relationships with American friends had developed since college life and have lasted for years, there was still a difference in her willingness to share moments of unhappiness.

I listened to both American workers and Chinese workers as they described how members of each cultural group participated in culturally homogeneous groups in the workplace; the workers also described some misunderstandings and suspicions between two groups when each group was from a different culture. Some American and Chinese workers realized the invisible lines between the groups. From my on-site observation, I agreed with a Chinese worker who said, “subgroups in the company are very obvious”, newcomers avoided isolation by choosing one of the existing cultural subgroups. This

seemed to illustrate something like social identity theory where people found affinity with members of their cultural group. This Defacto segregation caused one American worker to suggest the need for integration. I sensed that others had similar sentiments, especially when I participated in a “girls lunch” and the members of our group were both Chinese and American. Regardless of the prevalence of workers preferring integration, segregation was more common in small groups in and around the workplace.

Several American workers expressed concern about relationships between subordinates and supervisors. I think this was partly attributable to the fact that more Chinese workers than American workers were in management positions; the president and vice president are both Chinese. I American workers described their experience as subordinates in relationships with Chinese supervisors; they often contrasted this from their previous work experience. Just one Chinese worker reported this type of experience.

I collected detailed and rich descriptions from both the Chinese and American workers about their communication efforts to seek information and approval. I think information and approval were very important to these workers, but I thought that the importance of information and approval was not something that set this workplace apart from other workplaces.

Both Chinese and American workers reported problems in vertical communication and many of those problems seemed to result in stressful events. Less often people reported problems in peer-to-peer communications, and seldom did these reported peer-to-peer communications result in stressful events. This difference seemed to emerge maybe due to a preoccupation with work-related communication, and vertical communication may be more exclusively oriented toward work tasks. Peer-to-peer was

not exclusively used for work-related tasks. I also thought that the differences in what workers reported were in part attributable to differences in their cognitive appraisal of their situations.

Some workers identified an observed cultural difference as a reason for one or more difficulties at work, while other workers did not. I thought this could be explained by the particular type of cultural difference observed by the worker or how the workers perceived this difference.

In my findings I explained how two Chinese workers understood ideological or political differences between Chinese and American workers. I was surprised to hear the Chinese worker use the word “ideological” when they describe conflict between American and Chinese workers. I understood that China and America represent very different political and economic systems, but I did not expect workers to openly discuss these differences in the workplace setting. I thought all workers would realize the potential for conflict about political economy and therefore all workers would avoid the topic. A Chinese manager said, “if one of the departments was composed of American employees, and the other was composed of Chinese employees...normal conflicts between departments can be turned into a conflicts between cultures...both work issues and non-work issues.” I agree with the adverse potential of conflicts about political economy between American and Chinese workers.

Personal communication was much more limited than the work-related communication, and workers described personal communication as predominantly inside their cultural group. I think that personal communication is primarily voluntary, and few workers identified personal communication as a stressor.

Some of the American workers and Chinese workers suggested that increasing peer-to-peer intercultural communication would improve communication overall. This thinking could be explained as the workers seeking social support, and it revealed that they believed their individual capabilities could be enhanced through friendship that would lead to more effective work-related collaboration.

All the Chinese workers who had previous study experience in America described their intercultural education as a pleasant and efficient experience. Some workers said, "it's a short-cut to increase your competence/capability in intercultural communication." These workers were describing how they acquired the competence describe by Spitzberg as, "communication behavior that is both effective and appropriate" (1988). I thought participants exhibited this type of competence when they report avoiding the discussion of religion in the workplace, and when their communication is direct and to-the-point. This is much like my experience as a Chinese student at an American University where people are sensitive to differences and communicate in ways that are productive and usually free of offensive contact or tone.

The workers in this research described a wide variety of communication on cultural, sociological and/or ideological levels. It was a surprise for me to listen to the various examples of cultural difference occurring in work-related communication, because it is seldom mentioned or recorded in previous research. I found that some American workers and Chinese workers differed in their understandings about the same or similar communication experiences. This reminds me of what Adichie (2009) said in her speech "The Danger of a Single Story" , when she said that, "stereotype is not the wrong concept, it's just incomplete." I think these misunderstandings between cultural

groups represented “incomplete understandings of another cultural group”, and I believe incomplete understanding of the other group contributed to misunderstanding during communication. Indeed, Hamilton, Sherman, and Ruvolo (1990) seem to agree, and generalized that “stereotypes were generated when specific information is lacking or open to interpretation” (p.37).

A Chinese worker described his communication efforts to seek specific information about the disagreement between his American team workers and his Chinese supervisors. He identified inefficient worker language skills as one of the barriers, and he also observed that sharing less information and resisting new information were two barriers when workers were seeking specific information.

Implications for Practice

As described in Chapter four, some workers reported stressful experiences involving intercultural communication. Americans communicating with Chinese reported difficulties communicating their need for technical information., during disagreements about product quality, during uncomfortable situations requiring approval from Chinese workers, sensing they were not trusted, and sensing they did not accept his expertise and experience. Chinese workers communicating with Americans were disappointed when all efforts at intercultural communication seemed to be unrecognized as beneficial, when stress was caused by disagreements between his American coworkers and their Chinese supervisor, and when vertical communication led to stress. These were some of the examples describing how intercultural communication was involved in the stress experienced by workers.

Professionals who provide health education and health promotion services in companies with culturally diverse workforces may experience similar examples. As a health educator, I believe stress may directly influence health through each individual's physiologic or psychological response or less-directly by how stress contributes to behaviors that may increase risk to health problems. The findings in this research might help health educators understand how intercultural communication may lead to worker stress. Health educators can work to minimize stress when they are communicating across cultural boundaries. Health educators can help workers learn how to minimize stress when they are communicating with other workers both inside and outside of the multicultural workplace. The stress of intercultural communication found in this study provides opportunities to apply concepts about communication developed by Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005). "A competent communicator is effective in one's ability to achieve one's goals, and appropriate in one's ability to exhibit behavior that is accepted as well as expected in a given situation." (Arasaratnam, 2009, p. 2). Arasaratnam and Doerfel suggested two characteristic of intercultural communication competence: effective (accomplishing one's goals) and appropriate (expected, accepted) behavior in intercultural communication (cite both sources). To develop these characteristics they identified five constructs: empathy, intercultural experience/training, motivation, global attitude, and an ability to listen well in conversation (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). Arasaratnam and Doerfel suggested that the constructs were transferable between populations from different cultures.

Arasaratnam (2006) identified experience as one of the intercultural communication competence and included a number of varieties as the experience in

intercultural communication, such as “the experience of living abroad, traveling abroad, specific training in intercultural communication, and close personal relationships with people from other cultures” and so on (p. 94). I also found both American and Chinese workers tend to use their previous experience in intercultural communication to facilitate their current intercultural communication activities. All the Chinese workers in this research who had previous study experience in America felt that experience helped them with intercultural communication. And their experience in intercultural communication also received attention from managers who expected these workers to contribute more to essential intercultural communication in the company. And I also believe that the experience won't be a helpful source to improve intercultural communication unless communicators have the ability to change the knowledge into real action. Arasaratnam (2004) emphasized in her explanation of this construct that, “a person (with experience) is able to learn from past experiences and utilized this knowledge to improve future behavior” (p. 3). So if a health educator who is planning a health program about intercultural communication focusing on the “experience”, I believe it would be helpful to increase the transition rate from knowledge to behavior and facilitate the workers adapt their behavior according to their experience.

Arasaratnam (2004) identified another important intercultural communication competence as empathy. And she defined “empathy” as an individual's ability to participate in cognitive and emotional role-taking, and to adapt his/her behavior appropriately to the situation (Arasaratnam, 2004). The results of this study show an emotional connection between an American worker and his Chinese co-workers. Facing the Chinese workers with insufficient language level of English, the American worker

said, it's not equal to propose a language requirement on Chinese employees' English level instead of American employees' Chinese level. He was also able to put himself in the Chinese worker's shoes and imagine what difficulties that the Chinese workers are facing, "I can understand how difficult that would be coming to a situation like this... So I'm sure it can be frustrating for them ...for those who don't understand English very well." I believe his ability to understand the feeling of workers from another cultural group is an important reason for his effective communication with Chinese workers and the acceptance among the Chinese workers. My suspect was supported by Arasaratnam (2006) who also believed a direct relationship existed between empathy and intercultural communication competence. She even said, "being an empathetic person, he/she does not necessarily have to rely on prior intercultural experience to know how to relate to the person from another culture" (Arasaratnam, 2004, p. 4). I agree with her assertion that empathy of the communicator can compensate a lack of "experience", at least to some degree. This suggested to our health educators that initiating empathy in the workers participated in intercultural communication would of a great importance of an intercultural communication education program.

A global attitude was also suggested in this model. It was described as a positive, non-ethnocentric disposition toward people from other cultures (Arasaratnam, 2004). And Arasaratnam (2004) pointed out a person with global attitude, "is open to different cultural perspectives ... is not threatened by the existence of multiple worldviews" (p. 2). I heard an American worker described his positive expectation to the future of the company in his interview. He realized the advantages of this Chinese company besides all the difference with an American company he used to work with, and said, "C-America is

going to do well”. But I also found there is a tendency to impose one’s beliefs and values over another culture. Being global attitude was not easy for the workers in this multicultural work setting. A Chinese worker described a misunderstanding between Chinese and American workers, which revealed a lack of global attitudes from both groups, “the Chinese workers said, ‘The Americans didn’t understand us or understand C Company.’ while the American workers said, ‘Why do the Chinese workers think this way? The way we did it in an American company was totally different from how they want us to do it in the Chinese company. If they keep on doing that, the quality of the products will never increase.’” Though Arasaratnam predicted a close relationship between global attitudes and the empathy (Arasaratnam, 2004), global attitudes that I found on the participants are relatively independent constructs from the empathy. And some workers may differ on his/her positive and non-ethnocentric attitudes regard different issues. For example, a worker who claimed to hold a global attitude still showed a western cultural centered perspective to a specific issue. Based on my findings, I may suggest that health educators take global attitude as a higher requirement for the workers rather than an emotional empathy, and be prepared to spend more efforts on developing a global attitude among workers if it’s necessary. It’s also important for the health educators to develop a global attitude in health education to avoid the risk of imposing one’s belief, values and patterns of behavior over the workers’ culture.

The ability to listen well in the conversation is another concept involved in Arasaratnam’s model, and it was almost the same concept with “interaction involvement” proposed by Cegala (1981). Arasaratnam (2004) said, “It refers to the extent of one’s cognitive and behavioral engagement in a conversation. An involved conversationalist is

one who is attentive to other's needs" (p. 5). I believe this concept would not only be helpful to the worker who participated in intercultural communication, but also to the health educators who are conducting a health education about intercultural communication. Health educators should not only include this concept in their education, but also arise one's awareness to the worker's need when they conducted health education programs. I have heard some workers described their frustration when they failed to receive any attention or fulfillment to their requirement of a piece of technical information. And he described a resistance to sharing more information when the need was not appropriately satisfied. And a Chinese worker experienced the difficulties of an ineffective intercultural communication because of the hesitance of sharing one's real thought between the communicators. Health educators could also be easily facing these difficulties if they failed to satisfy the workers needs to the health information. To better involved in an intercultural communication, An American worker emphasize a need to have the same frame work with the person one is talking with, besides the language skills. Though it is hard to describe what a "frame work" exactly stands for, this might provide some directions to the health educators when they choose the priority for their health education program about intercultural communication, and also a direction to my future research.

The fifth concept included was motivation. It was defined as the desire to engage in intercultural interactions for the purpose of understanding and learning about other cultures (Arasaratnam, 2004). The motivation could be explained as "want to" rather than "have to" be involved in intercultural communication. In my research, the workers' motivation to be involved in intercultural communication showed a big variance in less

work-related communications. Some workers described both Chinese and American workers within this site were less likely to participate in the less work-related intercultural communication, which is not required by the job. But there are also workers reported a strong willingness and real effort to be involved in less-work related intercultural communications. Arasaratnam (2006) predicted “a relationship between empathy and listening, experience and positive global attitude; this in turn leads to motivation, which then may lead to more experience” (p. 94). How these concepts cooperated and contributed to an effective and appropriate intercultural communication experience, can be partly illustrated by one of the quotes from my participants. One of the Chinese workers compared his experience of intercultural communication on campus with those experiences in workplaces, and he identified three reasons contributed to the pleasant intercultural communication experience, which corresponded with the three constructs that we mentioned before, Global attitude, Experience and Empathy. So I believe the health education with a tendency to improve a greater empathy and global attitude, better ability to listen well in the conversation, and more positive experience of intercultural communication among workers, will enable a stronger motivation to be involved in intercultural communication among the workers.

This research has practical implications for workers in multicultural work settings who have experienced stress during intercultural communication. Health educators can be alert to the stress potential during intercultural communication and can use The implication of these constructs in the practice of health education and health promotion, should not only functioned as a guide of education plan when the health educators work in a multi-cultural workplace settings, but also as a guide for the heal educators to

increase their own intercultural communication competence to better transmit information to the workers from different culture.

The Implications for Future Research

The findings of this research led me to create and propose two models for future research. The first model adapts the Transactional Model for Stress and Coping to propose a model for Stress and Coping in Work-Related Communication and the second model further adapts the Transactional Model to create a model for Stress and Coping during Work-related Intercultural Communication.

The model for Stress and Coping in Work-related communication is divided into two planes of phenomenal fields—one to understand receiving communication (see figure 5.1) and one for sending communication (see figure 5.2). On the receiver's plane of field, the familiar constructs of primary and secondary appraisal help the receiver evaluate messages as potential stressors and evaluate the receiver's ability to respond. These appraisals lead to the receiver's coping efforts through problem management and emotional regulation; the coping efforts are influenced by moderators such as the receiver's dispositional coping style and social support. Coping efforts may also include meaning-based coping about the receiver's work role and work performance. The outcomes include the receivers: management of the stressor, emotional and physical well-being, and social functioning including work role performance. On the sender's plane of field, the sender thinks about how the receiver will appraise messages as a form of stress and how the receiver will assess self-efficacy relative to the demands of the stressor. The sender will use an understanding of the receiver's primary and secondary appraisal of the sender's

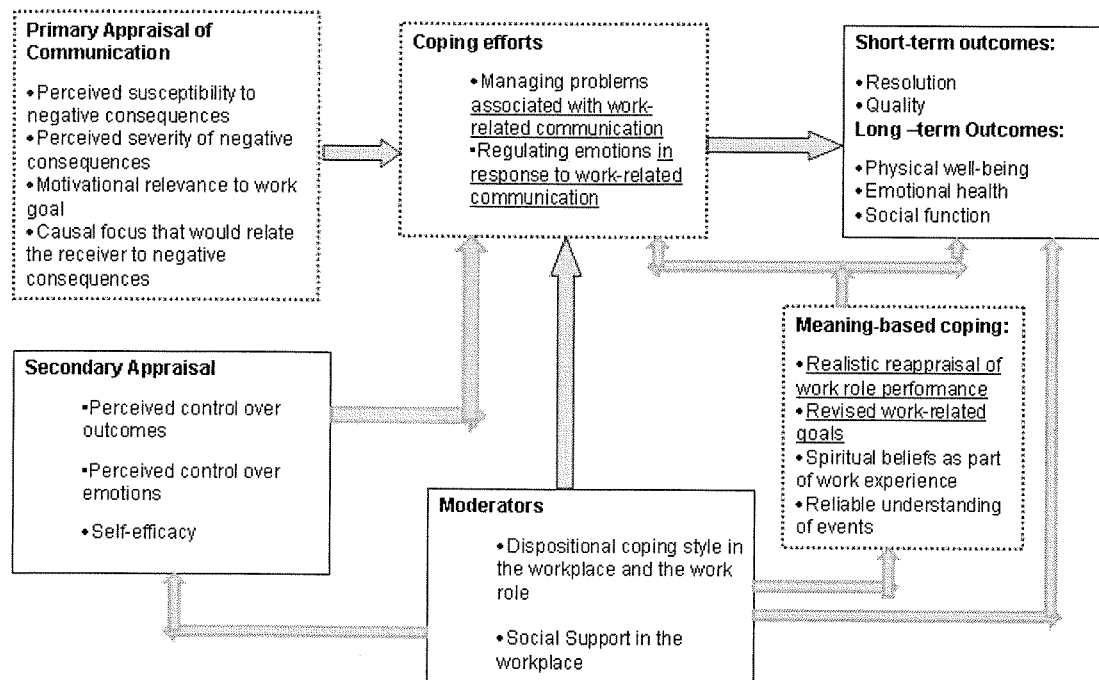


Figure 5.1 Stress and Coping Specific to Effectively Receiving Work-related Communication

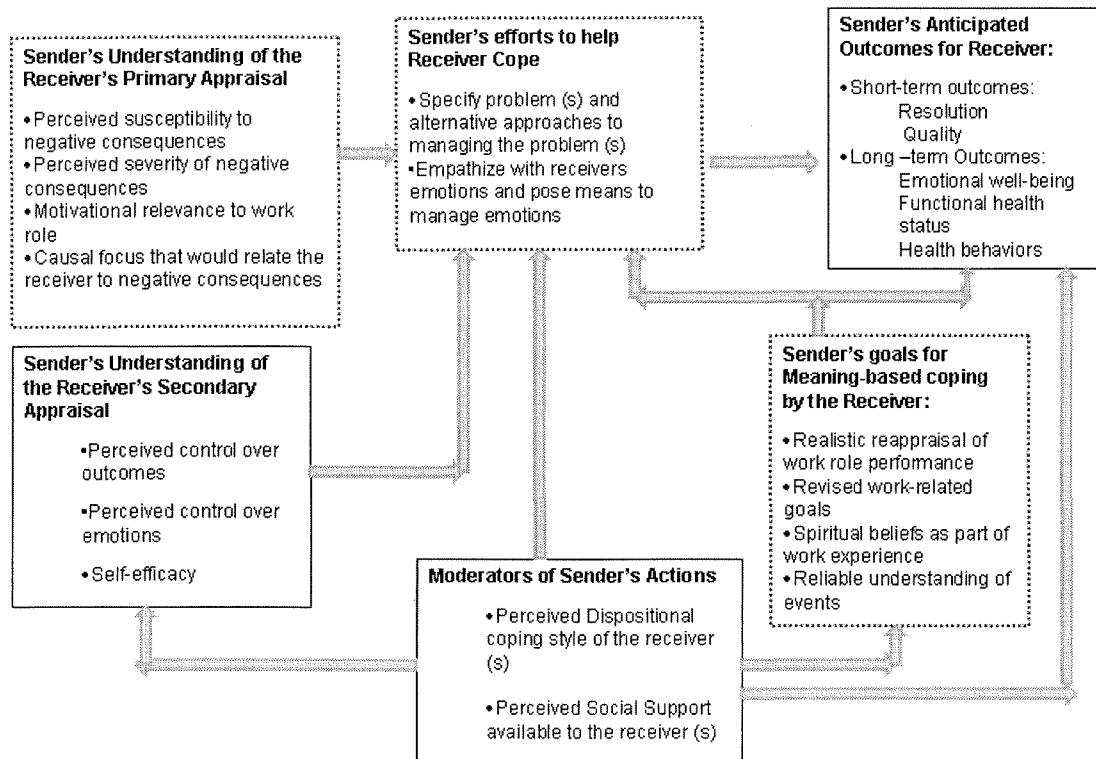


Figure 5.2 Stress and Coping Specific to Effectively Sending Work-related Communication

message to formulate encouragement to help the receiver cope with stress using problem management and emotional regulation. The sender's creation and selection of messages are also influenced by sender's dispositional coping style and social support.

The second model proposes constructs for explaining Stress and Coping During Work-related Intercultural Communication. It also uses two planes of phenomenal influence—one to understand receiving communication (see figure 5.3) and one to understand sending communication (see figure 5.4). A model about stress and coping during work-related intercultural communication is different because it portrays the influence of cultural competence.

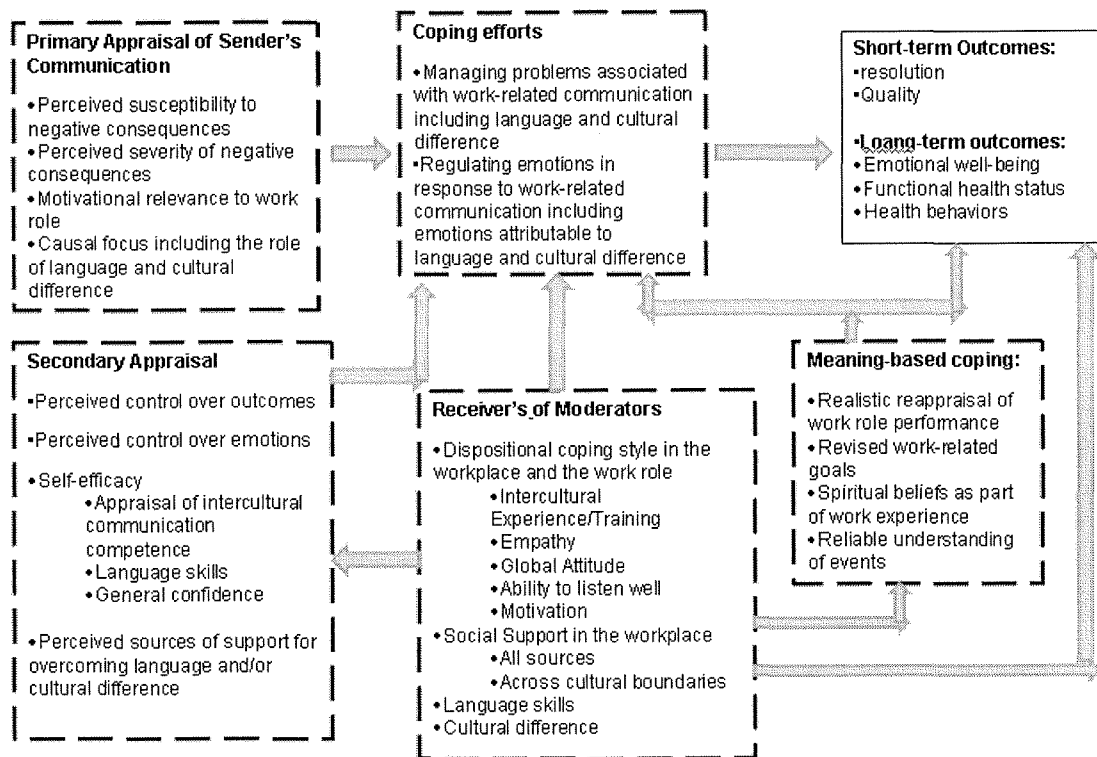


Figure 5.3 Stress and Coping While Effectively Receiving Work-related Intercultural Communication

On the receiver's plane of influence, the receiver uses primary appraisal to evaluate the sender's messages as stressors and uses secondary appraisal to evaluate his or her ability to effectively respond to the stressor. In addition to perceived susceptibility and severity, primary appraisal considers language and cultural difference as adding stress to messages received from the sender. In addition to the receiver's perceptions of control over outcomes and personal emotions, the receiver's ability to respond to stress-laden messages are also determined by intercultural communication competence, language skills, cultural knowledge, general confidence, and sources of support to overcome language or cultural difference.

The receiver's primary and secondary appraisals lead to the receiver's coping efforts including problem management and emotional regulation strategies; during intercultural communication, problem management and emotional regulation must be expanded beyond direct work concerns to include efforts to manage and overcome language and cultural difference. Coping efforts are influenced by moderators such as language and cultural difference, the receiver's dispositional coping style and social support from the sources within and across cultural boundaries. A receiver's dispositional coping style may include intercultural communication competence, such as intercultural experience/training, empathy, global attitudes, ability to listen well, and motivation in intercultural communication. Receivers may also use meaning-based coping to refine their understanding of their work role and work performance.

The outcomes of using coping efforts to respond to stressors occurring during the receipt of intercultural messages may include: receiver management of the stressor, emotional and physical well-being for the receiver, and social functioning including work role performance by the receiver.

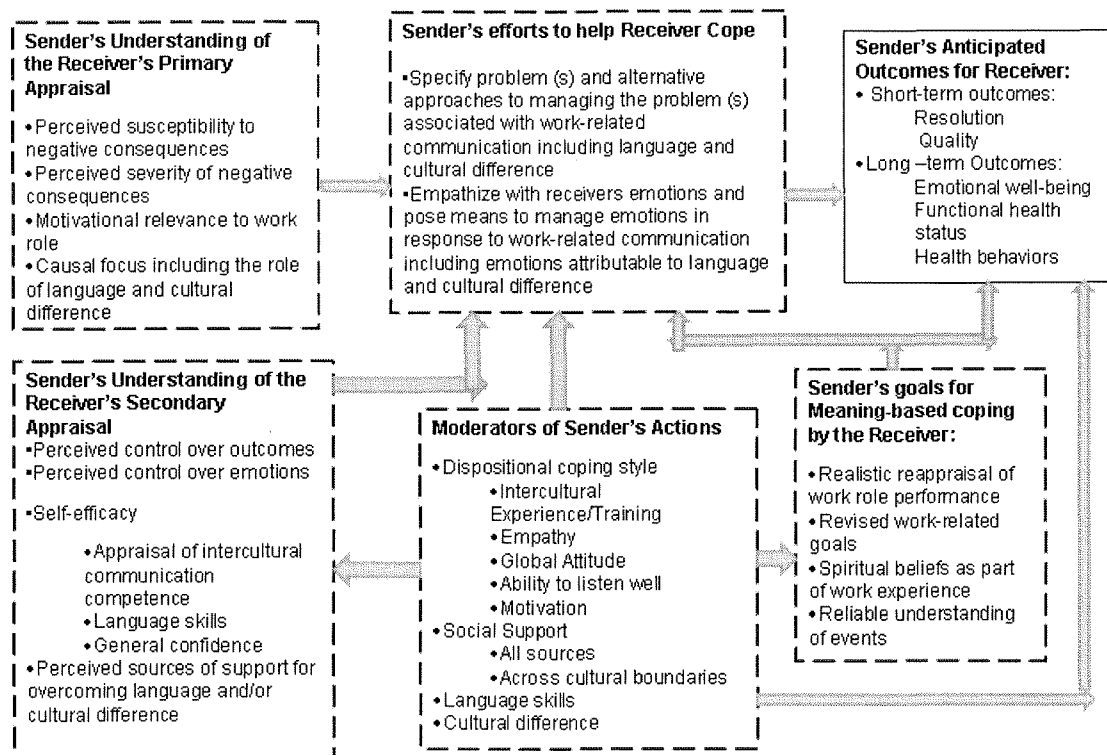


Figure 5.4 Stress and Coping While effectively Sending Work-related Intercultural Communication

On the sender's plane of influence, the sender anticipates the receiver's primary appraisal of alternative messages as stressors, and the sender also anticipates the receiver's secondary appraisal of his or her ability to respond effectively to a stress-laden message. In addition to understanding the receiver's perceived susceptibility and severity, the sender is also concerned with motivational relevance and causal focus of the stressor relative to the receiver's work role. In addition to the receiver's perceptions of control over outcomes and personal emotions, the sender tries to understand the receiver's social support and self-efficacy including confidence about intercultural competence, language skills, and confidence in general.

The sender will use an understanding of the receiver's primary and secondary appraisal to formulate effective messages which include encouragement to use applicable forms of problem management and emotional regulation. The sender's messages are also influenced by the sender's dispositional coping style which includes intercultural communication competence, and social support. Language competence and cultural knowledge will also moderate the sender's approach to developing messages.

Researchers may find these models helpful as they conceptualize research questions about stress and coping during work-related communication; in a globalized economy, researchers may also find the second model helpful in conceptualizing research questions in a multicultural setting.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

To: Yuanying Liang

From: Bart Van Voorhis, Coordinator

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the
Protection of Human Subjects

Date: April 21, 2009

Re: RESEARCH PROTOCOL SUBMITTED TO IRB

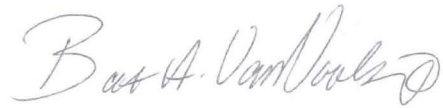
The IRB Executive Committee has reviewed your proposed research project entitled:

"Stress and Communication across Cultural Boundaries in a Chinese-American Business"

The Committee has determined that your research protocol will not place human subjects at risk. **The protocol has been approved under expedited review procedures, and declared exempt from further review in accordance with 45CFR46, 46.110(a)(b).** However, it is strongly suggested that Informed Consent always be used. Remember to provide participants a copy of the consent form and to keep a copy for your records. Consent documentation and IRB records should be retained for at least 3 years after completion of the project.

Since you are not seeking federal funding for this research, the review process is complete and you may proceed with your project.

Good luck with your project.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bart A. VanNostrand". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the distribution list.

cc: IRB File

Robert Jecklin, Faculty Advisor

Graduate Studies and Research & Sponsored Program

145 Graff Main Hall, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

1725 State Street, La Crosse, WI 54601

Phone (608)785-8124 and (608) 785-8007

An affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: Stress and communication Across Cultural Boundaries
In a Chinese-American Business

Principal Investigator: Liang Yuanying
209 Mitchell Hall
Department of Health Education and Health Promotion
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
1725 State Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
(608) 498-9363, liang.yuan@students.uwlax.edu

Emergency Contact: Liang Yuanying
(608) 498-9363, liang.yuan@students.uwlax.edu

Purpose and Procedure for Participants

- This research explores how stress occurs during intercultural communication in a Chinese-American business.
- My participation in this research will involve one recorded interview conducted by the principal investigator. I will tell this researcher the examples and the details of the intercultural communication I involved in.
- My participation will require the time it takes to provide written informed consent and 30 to 60 minutes to record one interview.
- If my initials appear at the end of this sentence, I am willing to answer short follow-up questions by telephone during the next 1 month. _____
- The interview will take place at a quiet location that is mutually acceptable.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

- Talking about being stress or other problems might make me feel uneasy. Hopefully, any unease from talking about problems will end a short time after my interview. I can choose not to answer any question that causes me to feel uneasy. I may choose to end the interview at any time.

Potential Benefits to Participants

- It is not likely that I will benefit personally from taking part in this research.
- By taking the time to talk about it, I may think more clearly about my experience.
- The information I share may help others who experience and stress the intercultural communication.

Alternatives to this Study

- My decision to participate or not to participate in this research will not affect my job or other benefits I would otherwise receive.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- I am the only source of private information used in this research. This research will not involve my family, friends, or coworkers. My interview will only include the private information I choose to share. It may include:
 - ✓ Past work experience,
 - ✓ Current work experience,
 - ✓ Episodes of intercultural communication.
 - ✓ Examples of what is easy and what is difficult about intercultural communication.
- My name and contact information will be known by the principal investigator listed at the top of this form.
- My name and contact information will only appear on this form.
- The privacy of my information will be protected by placing all forms in a locked drawer only accessible to the principal investigator. Recordings and transcripts will be labeled with a code and the key to the code will be kept in a locked drawer.
- When my experience is retold by the researchers, my name or contact information will not be used. My identity will be hidden with false names. The retelling of my experience will be used in talks, electronic text, and print text. The researcher will retell my experience to students, professionals, and the general public.

Audio recordings make it hard to hide my identity. Only the principal investigator will hear my recording. All recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of this research.

Costs for Participation

- There is no cost for my participation in this research.

Questions regarding study procedures may be directed to the Principal Investigator Liang Yuanying, Department of Health Education and Health Promotion, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (608-498-9363). Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (608-785-8124 or irb@uwlax.edu).

Signing of this Consent

A signature below means that:

- You have read the above or someone has read this to you.
- You have freely decided to take part in the research study described above.
- The study's general purposes, details of involvement and possible risks and discomforts have been explained to you.

You will receive a signed copy of this consent/authorization form.

Statement of Consent

I have read the consent form or it has been read to me. I have freely decided to take part in the research described. The reasons for doing the research, procedures, possible risks and benefits, and my non-research options have been explained to me.

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

Telephone for follow-up questions: _____

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT IN CHINESE

知情同意书

题目： 美国的中资企业中的跨文化交流和压力

主要研究者： 梁源颖

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参与过程 and 目的

- 研究目的：探讨在美的中资企业中工作环境中的跨文化交流以及工作压力的情况。
- 参与这课题，我将与研究进行一次谈话并被录音。我将告诉研究者我在跨文化交流中的详细情况，并且举例说明。
- 在了解该同意书内容后，该课题将占用我 30 — 60 分钟的时间进行一次录音谈话
- 如果我愿意在采访结束后的一个月内接受简短的电话提问，我将在此签名 _____。
- 采访将在我认可的安静场合进行。

可能的伤害 and 不适

- 当我谈到压力或其他问题时，可能会感到不自在。但是预计这种不安的情绪将随着采访结束而很快消失。我可以选择任何让我感觉不安的问题。我可以选择在任何时候结束采访。

可能的好处

- 参与该研究将不会给我个人带来福利。
- 讨论这个问题，可能会帮助我对自己的经历进行清晰地思考。
- 我提供的信息可能会帮助其他经历过跨文化交流甚至压力的人。

选择权

- 参与该研究与否将不会影响我的工作和相关的福利。

隐私和保密

- 这项研究中我只提供我的私人信息，不涉及我的家庭，朋友和同事。我提供的将只限于我愿意讲述的私人信息，可能包括：
 - ✓ 过去的工作经历，
 - ✓ 现在的工作经历，
 - ✓ 跨文化交流的场景，
 - ✓ 跨文化交流中的感受。
- 我的名字和联系方式将告知本表格最上方的主要调查员。
- 我的名字和联系方式将只出现在该表格中。
- 为了保护我的隐私权，所有的表格将保存于一个只能由研究员（梁源颖）开启的带锁抽屉中。原始录音资料和誊抄副本也将被置于一个带锁的抽屉中。
- 研究者将需要对学生，专家或公众描述我的经历。研究者转述我的经历时，将不会涉及我的姓名和联系方式。我的身份将隐藏在假名字下，我的经历将在谈话，电子文本和纸质文本中被转述。
- 由于原始录音容易暴露我的身份，所以它只会被研究员（梁源颖）听到。所有的原始录音将在该研究结束后被销毁。

参与成本

- 本研究没有参与成本。

有关研究过程的问题可与主要研究员梁源颖联系， Department of Health Education and Health Promotion, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (608-498-9363). 有关被采访对象的保护问题 可咨询 UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (608-785-8124 or irb@uwlax.edu).

给同意书签名

下面的签名将意味着：

- 你已经知晓或被告知了以上所有信息。
- 你自愿决定参与该研究。
- 该研究的大致目的，参与的细节和可能造成的伤害和不适已经向您解释过了。

你将获得一份双方签名的同意书。

同意声明：

我已经阅读过这份同意书，或它已经被读给我听过了。

我已经了解了该研究的目的，程序，可能造成的利弊，和我不参与研究的权利。我自愿决定参加这项研究。

主要研究员：_____ 日期：_____，

参加者：_____ 日期：_____，

参加者全名：_____，

联系方式：_____，

APPENDIX D
DATA COLLECTION INTERVIEW GUIDES

- An introduction of participants history.

Give me a brief introduction of yourself

(What is your first experience of intercultural communication like?

What's your last job?

How long have you been working in C Company?

What did you do in C Company?)

- How would you describe your career life?

Whom are you working with?

How would you describe your relationship with the colleagues?

How would you describe the atmosphere in the company?

- Your own experience in Intercultural communication?

How would you define and describe the intercultural communication.

In what occasions, you will communicate with the Chinese colleagues?

How's the work-related communication going?

What other topics besides work?

How's the person-related communication going?

What's the difference between your communication with Chinese and with the other Americans?

How do you think your intercultural communication developed over the time?

Based on your experience, what did you do right to help you intercultural communication?

Give me an example.

Do you have any special experience that impressed in your mind?

- How would you evaluate your work stress?

You said you're (), Could you explain more details about your responsibility?

How would you describe your work performance here?

How would you describe your relationship with American colleagues?

How would you describe your relationship with Chinese colleagues?

What problem bothers you most during work?

How would you evaluate your work stress?

What do you think have contributed to your stress?

What did you do to cope with the stress?

Working in an intercultural organization, does it have anything to do with you stress and coping ways?

APPENDIX E

DATA COLLECTION INTERVIEW GUIDES IN CHINESE

采访提问

先请您介绍一下自己，

（你是什么时候到 C 公司工作的？

你之前的工作是？

你在 C 公司负责什么？

你是什么时候开始和不同文化背景的人打交道？）

在公司里，你经常和哪些人打交道？

你如何描绘你和同事们的关系？

您如何评价公司氛围？

你如何定义跨文化交流？

什么样的情况，你和美国同事交流？

你们工作上的交流进行的怎么样？

除了工作上的交流，你们还有什么其他的话题？

这些话题进行的如何？

你觉得和中国人交流与和美国人交流有差别吗？差别在哪？

随着你在美国呆的时间，你的跨文化交流经历了哪些阶段？

以你的经验，你觉得你的哪些方面帮助你 and 不同文化的人交流？

给我举个例子。

你说过你是（ ）， 能像我介绍一下你每天的具体工作范围吗？

你如何描述你在这儿的工作表现？

你如何评价你的工作环境？

你工作上最大的困扰是什么？

跟我讲讲你的工作压力。

是什么造成了你的工作压力？

你如何释放压力？

在一个多种文化的机构中工作， 对你的压力和压力的缓解有什么影响吗？