NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY AND ATTACHMENT STYLE IN DATING: A COMPARASION BETWEEN CHINESE AND U.S. AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY AND ATTACHMENT STYLE IN DATING: A COMPARASION BETWEEN CHINESE AND U.S. AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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This study is a preliminary investigation to examine whether U.S. American and Chinese college students exhibit different nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship. Among 192 paper-pencil questionnaires, there were a total of 169 questionnaires that were filled out by participants who were born in either the U.S.A. or China, single, and had a dating relationship longer than two months. Among these 169 participants, there were 79 U.S. American students (47 females and 32 males) and 90 Chinese students (47 females and 43 males). The results show that there is a significant difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students on nonverbal immediacy; the patterns of relationships between attachment styles and nonverbal immediacy are inconsistent among these students of two cultures. Specifically, there is a significant negative relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and the sub-scale of “Fearful Avoidance” among Chinese college students. In terms of U.S. American college students, there was a significant negative relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and the sub-scale of “Lack of Confidence.” This study improves the understanding of how college students engage in romantic relationships in two cultures.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Relationships are one of the most widely studied topics in the interpersonal communication research. Maintenance of relationships depends on many factors. Individuals’ immediate behaviors and attachment styles are two of these factors. Immediacy is a means for psychological and physical closeness, which can be displayed both verbally and nonverbally. Immediate behaviors include actions that “… signal closeness, intimacy, and availability for communication rather than avoidance and greater psychological distance” (Andersen, 2012, p. 307). Specifically, nonverbal immediacy is the most widely studied concept in nonverbal communication. Nonverbal immediacy involves such physical behaviors as smiling, eye contact, proximities, body orientation, gesturing, vocal inflections, and physical contact when people communicate. Communicators can employ immediacy to stimulate and influence the responses of others. Scholars have also suggested immediate behaviors can be described as a translation of positive or negative emotions (Andersen, 2012; Cooper, 1995; Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003). Nonverbal immediacy is linked to the intimacy of both parties involved in a romantic relationship. In addition to studying immediacy itself, researchers have also studied attachment styles to improve the understanding of romantic relationships.
An attachment style is an interpersonal communication style that is related to the kind and quality of relationships people prefer to share with others (Bartholomew, 1990; Guerrero, 1996; Shaver, Collins, & Clark, 1996). Attachment style is built on dimensions of intimacy (approach vs. avoidance) and self-sufficiency (low vs. high needs for approval from the partner) (Bartholomew, 1990). Originally, studies regarding attachment focused on infant-caregivers’ relationships. Bowlby (1969) proposed that it is the nature of infants to get in touch with, and derive comfort or pleasure from, their primary caregivers, and because an infant experiences more social interaction with one person, he/she will become more attached to that person. Subsequently, Hazan and Shaver (1987) suggested that the development, maintenance, and separation of affectional bonds in adult romantic relationships can be understood by employing the identical principles that have been outlined with regard to infant-caregivers’ attachment relationships.

Love delineates romantic relationship across social, cultural, and national boundaries despite the fact that its signification and utility may vary from one relationship to another and from one culture to another (Gao, 2001). Issues regarding immediacy and attachment style are central to romantic relationships (Bachman & Bippus, 2005; Guerrero, 1996; Guerrero, Farinelli, & McEwan, 2009; Tucker & Anders, 1998). Especially, when it comes to dating, the immediacy found between both parties can affect the quality, duration, and success of relationships. In addition, individuals with different attachment styles may vary in the extent to which they exhibit intimacy and nonverbal involvement to their relational partners (Guerrero, 1996). Thus, research of
nonverbal immediacy and attachment style should provide helpful information for understanding individuals’ behavior during a dating relationship.

In terms of attachment style and nonverbal immediacy, researchers have investigated the attachment style among U.S. American dating dyads in romantic relationships, the effect of instructors’ immediacy behaviors on students’ perceptions of instructor’s credibility and likability, and the effect of nonverbal immediacy in the organizational setting regarding the relationship between superiors and subordinates (e.g., Bachman & Bippus, 2005; Bippus & Rollin, 2003; Guerrero, 1998; Guerrero & Burgoon, 1996; Kay & Christophel, 1995; Madlock, 2006). In addition, several studies suggest there are cultural differences in regard to nonverbal immediacy (e.g., Andersen, 2012; Dion & Dion, 1993; Gao, 2001; Park, Lee, Yun, & Kim, 2009; Zhang, 2005, 2006; Santilli & Miller, 2011). For example, Park, Lee, Yun, and Kim (2009) argued that two factors can have an effect on the perception of immediacy, including cultural and contextual factors. In a situation where individuals have been involved in a dating relationship, nonverbal immediacy can be influenced by the culture of these individuals and the romantic nature of the relationship between these individuals. In other words, in a dating relationship, patterns of nonverbal immediacy observed in one culture may or may not apply to another culture. In addition, with regard to cross-cultural effects on immediacy, Mehrabian (1972) proposed that differences in immediacy behaviors based upon power differentials in relationships would be more evident in cultures with more levels of hierarchy (high power distance).

This current study is a preliminary investigation to examine whether U.S. American and Chinese college students exhibit different nonverbal immediacy behaviors.
and attachment styles in a dating relationship. Moreover, this current study is one of the first explorations the author is aware of which centers on how attachment styles are connected with the nonverbal immediacy behavior in a romantic relationship among Chinese college students and U.S. American college students. The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of how college students engage in romantic relationships in two respectful cultures.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nonverbal Immediacy

Mehrabian (1971) originally defined the concept of immediacy stating that immediacy behaviors could reduce distance between communicators, demonstrate liking and affection, and enhance sensory stimulations between communicators. More specifically, the principle of immediacy corresponds to the actions of like versus dislike or attraction versus repulsion that people deal with when interacting with others (Slane & Leak, 1978). Cooper (1995) further defined communication immediacy as:

Varying voice pitch, loudness, and tempo; smiling; leaning toward a person; face-to-face body position; decreasing physical barriers (such as standing or sitting behind a desk); gestures; using overall body movements; being relaxed and spending time with someone can all communicate immediacy. (p.58)

One of the most important areas in nonverbal communication which has attracted a large portion of research is the topic of nonverbal immediacy (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003; Slane & Leak, 1978). Specifically, much research of nonverbal immediacy has been conducted in the areas of instructional, organizational, and interpersonal communication in recent years. Andersen (1979) first broadened the immediacy concept to instructional communication studies by introducing the construct of nonverbal immediacy, “the nonverbal behavior manifestation of high affect” (p. 545). Andersen and Andersen (1982) described nonverbal immediacy as behaviors that are
non-spoken, show signals for communication, have multichannel attributes, and typically show signs of interpersonal closeness and warmth of communication. In addition, Mehrabian (1971) indicated a slight relationship between emotion and nonverbal immediacy. As he stated, “Immediacy and liking are two sides of the same coin. That is, liking encourages greater immediacy and immediacy produces more liking” (p.77).

Sometimes immediacy behaviors are displayed unintentionally, and people may not realize the messages they are sending (Hinkle, 1999). Regardless whether individuals are consciously sending these messages, Myers and Ferry (2001) explained that nonverbal immediacy plays a significant role in people’s daily interpersonal communication and may be a predictor of the motive of individuals to communicate. Nonverbal immediacy is displayed in many different types of interpersonal relationships; namely, the use of nonverbal immediacy behaviors can be observed in many relational contexts. The development of the concept of nonverbal immediacy has created an area of research in communication. This area of research includes studies conducted in instructional setting, organizational setting, and romantic setting.

In instructional setting, nonverbal immediacy is described by many scholars as one of the most important kinds of teacher behaviors that affect students. Positive immediacy behaviors, such as smiling, nodding heads, and the eye contact from instructors have produced many positive outcomes. Researchers have connected immediacy behaviors with positive outcomes such as affective learning (e.g., Martin & Mottet, 2011; Pogue & AhYun, 2006), teacher credibility (Schrodt & Witt, 2006), and cognitive learning (Burroughs, 2007). In organizational setting, nonverbal immediacy is also described by many scholars as one of the most important kinds of supervisor behaviors that affect
subordinates. Several studies have been done in particular regard to the relationship between superiors and subordinates. Researchers have connected nonverbal immediacy behaviors with positive outcomes such as job satisfaction (Madlock, 2006), supervisor credibility (Teven, 2007), liking (Teven, 2007), and subordinates’ motivation (Kay and Christophel, 1995). Of a particular interest of the current study, studies of nonverbal immediacy in romantic setting are further reviewed in the following section.

Nonverbal Immediacy in Romantic Setting

In terms of romantic relationships, a study by Guerrero (1997) indicated that many nonverbal immediacy hints (e.g., gazing, smiling) are more frequently and intensely observed in romantic relationships than in friendships. Many studies found people most frequently use nonverbal immediacy behaviors in intimate relationships. For example, Duck (1991) explained that people gaze at their romantic partners at least eight times more than strangers would during moments of silence. In addition, Gonzaga, Turner, Keltner, and Altemus (2006) found people give more sexual hints such as the touching of lips and/or the licking of lips in more intimate romantic relationships. As Sidelinger, Frisby, and McMullen (2012) concluded, “Given its intensity and prevalence in romantic relationships, nonverbal immediacy is an important communicative, rewarding resource for individuals” (p.75). Nonverbal immediacy can have an influence on both speed-dating communications and established relationships. In original speed-dating communications, nonverbal immediacy behaviors can indicate the possibility of future exchanges and the trend of relationships (Houser, Horan, and Furler, 2008). In established relationships, synchrony of nonverbal immediacy behaviors between two parties can contribute to the degree of satisfaction within the relationship. This
satisfaction is seen particularly in regard to marital relations (Julien, Brault, Chartrand, & Begin, 2000). In addition to the above review of the research regarding nonverbal immediacy in different settings, the following section reviews studies focusing on exploring the culture differences of nonverbal immediacy.

Cultural Differences of Nonverbal Immediacy

According to Andersen (2012), “Culture shapes the display rules of when, how, what, and with whom certain nonverbal expressions should be revealed or suppressed and dictates which displays are appropriate in which specific situations” (p. 293). Cultures that demonstrate higher levels of interpersonal intimacy or immediacy have been labeled as “contact cultures.” Individuals in high-contact cultures tend to stand closer to other people and touch more. Individuals in low-contact cultures usually stand apart and touch less. The following part will focus on exploring culture differences of nonverbal immediacy in the instruction setting. In addition to studying basic classroom interaction, comparative studies have been conducted to explore cultural differences. Those comparative studies are relevant to the topic of this proposed study. Zhang (2005) did a cross-cultural investigation regarding teacher immediacy and classroom communication apprehension. The data suggested the views of teacher nonverbal immediacy were not significantly different between Chinese and U.S. American college students. In addition, classroom communication apprehension is negatively associated with U.S. American students’ perceptions of teacher nonverbal immediacy. However, classroom communication apprehension is not negatively associated with Chinese students’ views of teacher nonverbal immediacy.

Zhang (2006) also examined the differences in U.S. American and Chinese
Classrooms regarding the immediacy behavior and out-of-class communication (OCC) between instructors and students. The findings indicated that Chinese instructor nonverbal immediacy has significant effects on OCC frequency, but has no impact on OCC satisfaction.

In addition to examining cultural differences regarding the instructor communication in American and Chinese classrooms, Roach and Byrne (2001) made a cross-cultural comparison regarding students’ perceptions of instructor nonverbal immediacy in U.S. American and German classrooms. The results indicated that students reported U.S. American instructors have significantly higher level of nonverbal immediacy than German instructors. Compared with the influence of instructors’ nonverbal immediacy on the outcomes of cognitive learning of German students, the nonverbal immediacy of instructors has more significant influence on U.S. American students. In addition, Roach, Cornett-DeVito and DeVito (2005) made a comparison regarding instructor communication between U.S. American and French classrooms. The results indicated that significant cultural differences existed regarding the instructor communication in both two cultures. Specifically, U.S. American instructors are perceived as employing a much higher level of nonverbal immediacy behaviors than French instructors. Regardless of the cultural differences, the result also indicated there is a positive relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and students’ learning outcomes.

Finally, Santilli, Miller, and Katt (2011) also explored cultural differences regarding the relationship between instructor nonverbal immediacy and teacher credibility in Brazilian and U.S. university classrooms. In terms of teacher credibility,
this study focused on three dimensions of credibility, including trustworthiness, competence, and caring. The results indicated that U.S. American students’ perceptions regarding the level of their instructor’s nonverbal immediacy have a positive relationship with all three teacher credibility dimensions. However, Brazilian students’ perceptions regarding their instructors’ nonverbal immediacy levels just have positive relationships with two of those teacher credibility dimensions, including competence and caring. Contrary to the expectation, the Brazilian students’ perceptions regarding their instructors’ nonverbal immediacy level are not significantly related to their perceptions regarding the trustworthy of their instructors. To conclude, there are cultural differences in regard to nonverbal immediacy between different cultures. Nonverbal immediacy has improved the understanding of different kinds of interpersonal relationships in the instructional, organizational, and romantic setting. In order to have more comprehensive understanding regarding different kinds of interpersonal relationships, especially romantic relationships, the studies regarding attachment styles also were reviewed.

Attachment Styles

Attachment styles have been defined as “relatively coherent and stable patterns of emotion and behaviors that are exhibited in close relationship” (Shaver, Collins, & Clark, 1996, p. 25). A person’s attachment style, demonstrated by the communication during the social interaction, relates to the way he or she experiences, interprets, and responds to the behavior of other people (Bartholomew, 1990). The primary concept of attachment styles is the topic of intimacy/distance. More specifically, people with positive models of others engage in communication styles that demonstrate intimacy and attachment, whereas individuals who have negative models of others demonstrate communication styles that
reflect avoidance and detachment. Attachment style is presumed to have significant influence on issues of intimacy and distance in a romantic relationship because proximity-seeking is a critical element of the attachment system (Feeney, 1999).

Attachment Theory was originally conceptualized as a theoretical framework for examining the effect of parent-child interaction on the development of infants’ mental models of self and others and then the development of children’s personality and security (as cited in Guerrero & Burgoon, 1996). Those early studies regarding parent-child interaction attachment and Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) extension of attachment theory to adult romantic relationships focused on three attachment styles: secure; anxious-ambivalent (preoccupied); and avoidant. Subsequently, Bartholomew (1990) extended this framework by proposing that two kinds of avoidant attachments are found in adult romantic relationships: dismissing and fearful. Accordingly, Bartholomew (1990) proposed a four-category model of adult attachment styles (See Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Bartholow's (1990) styles of adult attachment (adapted from Bartholow, 1990, p163)]
“Secure” have positive models of self and others. They tend to be self-confident, comfortable with closeness, and trust others. “Preoccupied” have negative models of self but positive models of others. They tend to lack confidence, be overly dependent, and require continuous external validation. “Dismissing” have positive views of themselves but negative views of others. They tend to be self-sufficient and confident, avoid intimate relationships, perceive relationships as relatively nonessential and unrewarding, and be excessively independent. “Fearful” have negative models of self and others. They tend to have low self-esteem, fear intimacy and commitment, and have low trust in others, because they fear being rejected or abandoned.

During the last two decades, the concept of attachment has been applied by many scholars to study adults’ intimate relationships. Approaches to the measurement of adult attachment indicate a variety of content and assumptions (Feeney, Noller, & Hanrahan, 1994). A traditional way to measure individuals’ attachment styles is to ask participants of the study to indicate which of the four attachment styles best characterizes them. Previous studies employed Bartholomew’s (1990) four attachment styles to characterize participants. Those four attachment styles include secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Each categorical description was a short paragraph. For example, the paragraph describing fearful reads: “I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others” (as cited in Guerrero, Farinelli, & McEwan, 2009). However, many researchers argued that categorical descriptions are too simplistic to comprehensively describe the differences in attachment styles (e.g., Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney, Noller, &
Hanrahan, 1994; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Guerrero, 1996; Guerrero, Farinelli, & McEwan, 2009). Guerrero (2008) also argued that only two dimensions of attachment styles (generally anxiety and avoidance) do not cover unique attributes of each attachment style. In addition, Bippus and Rollin (2003) ascribed few valuable findings to the use of the categorical measure of attachment style. Similarly, in the study of Guerrero and Burgoon (1996), 15% of the participants accredited themselves with two attachment styles strongly and equally. Those findings gave rise to a call for more perfect measures (contrary to categorical measures) to further seek the dimensions underlying attachment, indicate more elaborate differences in attachment styles, and acquire a more precise assessment of the construct (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney et al., 1994; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Thus, a newer 30-item Likert-type scale measuring attachment-style dimensions was developed by Guerrero (1996). Guerrero (1996) believed this newer operationalization was superior to the one-item categorical measures of attachment styles. This measure consists of five sub-scales: “General avoidance”; “Lack of confidence”; “Preoccupation”; “Fearful avoidance”; and “Relationships as secondary.” Specifically, “Secure,” “Preoccupied,” “Dismissing,” and “Fearful” in Bartholomew’s (1990) fours attachment styles are equivalent to “Lack of confidence,” “Preoccupation,” “Relationships as secondary,” and “Fearful avoidance,” in newer measures, respectively. More specifically, “Secure” is equivalent to “Lack of confidence,” “Preoccupied” is equivalent to “Preoccupation,” “Dismissing” is equivalent to “Relationship as secondary,” and “Fearful” is equivalent to “Fearful avoidance.” In order to fully describe the differences in attachment styles, the present study will employ the newer continuous measure.
Considerable research regarding attachment styles in romantic relationships has been conducted. Bachman and Bippus (2005) examined the relationship between attachment style dimensions and evaluations of supportive messages provided by close friends and romantic partners. The results revealed that individuals who are secure and comfortable with intimacy and closeness will have positive perceptions of supportive messages provided by their romantic partners and friends. On the other hand, people who are preoccupied and uncomfortable with intimacy and closeness will have negative evaluations of supportive messages provided by their romantic partners and friends. In addition, this study also explored gender differences regarding the perceptions of supportive messages. Male participants were more likely to view their romantic partners as not caring much about their problems, which raised doubts about their romantic partners when they were disappointed. Conversely females perceived that their romantic partners make every effort to help them to solve problems, throw in more emotion, and care more about their feelings.

Guerrero (1998) examined attachment style differences in the experience and expression of romantic jealousy. The results showed participants with negative models of self, reported they experience more mental jealousy than people who have positive models of self. Participants with negative models of others reported feeling lower amounts of fear, engaging in less relationship-maintaining behaviors, and displaying more avoidance/rejection than people who have positive models of others. In addition, preoccupied respondents reported that they demonstrate more negative affect and display more surveillance behaviors than people who have other attachment styles. Finally, when experiencing jealousy, participants labeled as “dismissings” reported they feel less panic.
than those labeled as “secures” and “preoccupieds,” and less depression than “preoccupieds.”

In terms of the association between attachment styles and friendship, Bippus and Rollin (2003) did a study to examine attachment style differences in relational maintenance and conflict behaviors from the perspectives of friends. Findings indicated friends of those labeled as “secures” reported they have higher relationship satisfaction, employ more frequently pro-social maintenance strategies, and integrate and compromise conflict behaviors more frequently as compared to “preoccupieds,” “dismissings,” and “fearfuls.” Regarding the relationship between attachment styles and the nonverbal immediacy behaviors, Feeney (1999) examined the effects of gender and attachment styles on issues of closeness and distance in a dating relationship. The result of the study suggested that issues regarding closeness and distance occurred more often among young insecurely attached individuals in a long-term dating relationship. These findings may indicate the characteristic and presence of those reported differences in partners’ needs for closeness-distance by gender and attachment styles of both parties. In addition, couples with two secure partners commonly did not report issues regarding closeness and distance. Findings also indicated the existence of only one insecure partner in a dating relationship may cause closeness and distance issues. Recurrent conflicts regarding closeness-distance within the dating partners are also linked to attachment insecurity.

Guerrero (1996) investigated attachment-style differences in intimacy and nonverbal involvement and tested the hypothesis that people with different attachment styles may vary in the extent to which they demonstrate intimacy and nonverbal involvement toward their relational partners. Findings showed that “secures” and
“preoccupieds” rated higher than “dismissings” and “fearfuls” on measures of gaze, facial pleasantness, vocal pleasantness, trust/receptivity, general interest, and attentiveness.

“Fearfuls” sat farthest away from their romantic partners and displayed less fluency and longer response latencies. “Preoccupieds” engaged in more dialogues with an insight than “dismissings.” Finally, “preoccupieds” and “fearfuls” displayed the greatest amount of vocally anxiety during the interaction.

Attachment-theory principles suggest that individuals with different attachment styles will respond to nonverbal involvement change in accordance with their approach/avoidance orientations and mental working models of self and others (Guerrero & Burgoon, 1996). Thus, based on patterns of reciprocity and compensation, Guerrero and Burgoon (1996) examined how individuals with different attachment styles respond to nonverbal involvement change in a romantic relationship. The result revealed that without regard to attachment style, respondents reciprocated confederate actions (e.g., immediacy/affection, gaze, proxemic distancing, smiling, facial pleasantness, and vocal pleasantness), underlying the increase-involvement status. Respondents also engaged in actions that indicate both compensation and reciprocity in the decrease-involvement status. Finally, “preoccupieds” demonstrated the strongest pattern of reciprocating increase in involvement and compensating for decreases in involvement.

Guerrero et al. (2009) examined how emotional communication and attachment styles function together to influence relational satisfaction. The results indicated that romantic partners who reported high in security and low in dismissiveness and preoccupation would engage in higher relational satisfaction. In addition, the way the partner reported the emotional communication can partially mediate the connections
between attachment styles and relational satisfaction. More specifically, respondents with preoccupied partners who reported using more destructive communication to display anger were less satisfied in relationships. Respondents with dismissive partners who reported engaging in detached emotional communication were also less satisfied in relationships. Finally, respondents with secure partners who reported engaging in more pro-social emotional communication were more satisfied in relationships.

Tucker and Anders (1998) also examined the relationship between adult attachment styles and nonverbal closeness in dating relationships. They also focused on exploring how attachment style may make contributions to relationship satisfaction and stability. The results indicated that participants who scored higher on the secure attachment scale would be engaged in more nonverbal intimacy and would seem to be more nonverbally expressive, and respondents who scored higher on the avoidant attachment scale would be engaged in less nonverbal closeness. As Tucker and Anders (1998) stated, “a more secure attachment style was associated with more laughing, touching, gazing, and smiling during the interaction” (p. 120-121). In addition, “preoccupieds” were expected to display more intimacy behaviors (e.g., touching their partners, sitting close to their partners, and gazing at their partners). Contrary to expectations, as Tucker and Anders (1998) explained, “more preoccupied individuals were actually less likely to touch their partners during the interaction and were rated as less nonverbally expressive” (p.121). More specifically, individuals who scored higher on the preoccupied subscale might display more proximity-maintaining actions (e.g., gazing at their partners, touching their partners, and leaning toward their partners).

Simultaneously, “preoccupieds” also demonstrated signs of negative affection (low
frequency of laughing and smiling). Finally, individuals who scored higher on secure attachment style were considered as experiencing more enjoyment of the interaction and looked less tense during the conversation. In contrast with “secures,” individuals who rated higher on preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles seemed to experience less enjoyment of the interaction. Additionally, individuals who scored higher on avoidant attachment styles also seemed to be tenser during the communication. In terms of the rating of love, although it had no significant relationships with attachment styles, both parties in a romantic relationship were saliently securely attached were reported more “in love” during the interaction than romantic dyads with at least one predominantly insecurely attached partner.

To conclude, considerable work focused on examining attachment style differences among Americans in a romantic relationship. It is evident that there are some differences among American dating dyads regarding attachment styles in a dating relationship. In order to provide a well-rounded look at relationship dyads, and the attachment styles they employ, it is necessary to look at these variables through a cross-cultural lens.

Cultural differences and Relationships

The U.S. American and Chinese cultures are different regarding their value orientations and patterns of communication (e.g., Gao & Gudykunst, 1995; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). In fact, the United States is usually identified as the most individualistic nation, and China is commonly considered as one of the most collectivistic societies (e.g., Hofstede, 1991). According to Hofstede (1980), individualist societies emphasize “I” consciousness, autonomy, emotional independence, individual imitative, privacy rights,
pleasure seeking, financial security, need for specific friendship, and universalism. In contrast with individualistic societies, collectivistic societies emphasize “we” consciousness, collective identity, emotional dependence, group solidarity, sharing, duties and obligations, harmony, need for stable friendship, group decision, and particularism.

Bond and Hwang (1986) explained Chinese culture lays emphasis on relational intimacy and harmony. Yum (1988) also insisted that human relationships are the root of Chinese society. Chinese culture places the importance on the interdependency between relational partners and their strong “other-orientation.” Specifically, maintainable relationships are based on attending to and responding to the needs and wishes of other people (Goodwin & Tang, 1996). Bond and Hwang (1986) argued that qualities (or abilities) that can improve intimacy and harmony should be especially attractive to potential relational partners in Chinese culture. Pimentel (2000) also explained that maintaining harmony in the marital relationship is perceived as a very significant thing among couples in urban China. In addition, cultural collectivism has a negative influence on the preference for independence or autonomy in relationships in Hong Kong (Hui & Villareal, 1989).

In some East Asian cultures, romantic relationships commonly start with close friendship, enduring commitment, compassion, the elimination of boundaries, and the assurance or unconditional loyalty to relational partners. In addition, in comparison with Western cultures, romantic relationships in East Asian cultures place more emphasis on commitment and loyalty and less on romantic love. East Asian cultures placed more emphasis on the pragmatics of relationships which can have positive effect on harmony,
cohesion, intolerance for conflicts, and a cherishing of the relationship (Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000). Goodwin (1999) suggested that it is vital for people who are prone to collectivist orientation to meet the needs of affiliation and nurturance in close relationships.

Individualism and collectivism, as one of the five cultural dimensions, have been utilized to understand and to explain differences in close relationships across cultures (Dion & Dion, 1988, 1993). Dion and Dion (1993) argued that people in individualistic cultures are more likely to perceive romantic love as a significant basis for marriage and to consider psychological intimacy as more important for marital satisfaction and personal well-being than people in collectivistic cultures. Moreover, independence and autonomy prevail in individualistic cultures, while dependence prevails in collectivistic cultures (Dion & Dion, 1988). In addition, people’s support networks are broad, including both their intimate relationships and in-groups in collectivistic cultures. In comparison with collectivistic cultures, people’s support networks consist of intimate relationships in individualistic cultures; thus, intimacy tends to be more salient between relationship partners (Dion & Dion, 1988).

For the Chinese people, the central components underlying the term “romantic relationship” or “dating relationship” are necessary for seriousness and long-term commitment. A romantic relationship is commonly considered to have happened prior to marriage. Gao (2001) examined intimacy, passion, and commitment in Chinese and American romantic relationships. The results revealed that the amount of passion is significantly higher among American couples than in Chinese couples, whereas the amount of intimacy and commitment did not vary cross-culturally.
Dion and Dion (1993) examined the relationship between gender and the cultural context of love and intimacy from individualistic and collectivistic perspectives. They also explained that the dimension of individualism and collectivism helps to explain culture-related differences in romantic love and in the perceived importance of emotional intimacy in marriage. The result suggested romantic love is more likely to be an important foundation for marriage in individualistic than in collectivistic societies. Moreover, psychological intimacy in marriage is more important for marital satisfaction and personal well-being in individualistic than in collectivistic societies.

Based on all the research that has been reviewed, it is evident that, while studies about adult attachment style in romantic relationships among American dating couples were well documented, no attempts have been made to explore differences regarding adult attachment styles and the nonverbal immediacy behavior in a romantic relationship among the Chinese population and the American population. There have been some direct comparisons between Chinese college students and American college students regarding their perceptions of instructors’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in the instructional setting; however, there have been no direct comparisons between these Chinese and American college students with regard to their attachment styles and the nonverbal immediacy behavior in romantic relationships. Thus, based on those findings, the following research questions were stated:

RQ1: Is there a difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their nonverbal immediacy behaviors in a dating relationship?
RQ2: What is the relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship among Chinese college students?

RQ3: What is the relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship among U.S. American college students?

RQ4: Is there a difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their attachment styles in a dating relationship?
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study were U.S. American students at a large U.S. Midwestern university and Chinese students who studied at several large U.S. universities in the Midwestern and central region. There were no existing Chinese versions of nonverbal immediacy and attachment style scales. If this study employed a translation of either scale, it would create implications for the validity of these two scales. Therefore, instead of surveying domestic Chinese college students in China who need Chinese versions of those two scales, this study selected Chinese college students who would be capable of reading those two scales in English and studied in the United States as participants. All of them participated voluntarily in this study. A total of 192 questionnaires (94 U.S. American college students and 98 Chinese college students) were returned. A question regarding how long Chinese college students have been in United States of America was included in the questionnaire to make sure all the participants demonstrate adequate level of English language to understand the instruments well. Since the focus of this study was on individuals in a dating relationship, any participant who was married during the time of the survey and whose current or most recent dating relationship was shorter than two months was excluded from the study. In the end, a total of 169 participants were qualified for this study and their questionnaires were used for the
further data analysis. Among these 169 participants, there were 79 U.S. American students (47 females and 32 males) and 90 Chinese students (47 females and 43 males). The age of U.S. American students ranged from 18 to 36 ($M = 21.78$, $SD = 3.91$), and the age of Chinese students ranged from 19 to 29 ($M = 23.81$, $SD = 2.26$).

Procedures

This study employed a paper-pencil questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographic questions, the personal response to Richmond, McCroskey and Johnson’s (2003) Nonverbal Immediacy Scale and Guerrero’s Attachment Style Measure (1996). To collect data from U.S. American college students, instructors had been contacted for permission to invite students in their classrooms to participate in this study. The researcher contacted Chinese friends and the Associations of Chinese Students and Scholars at the respective U.S. American universities to help distribute the paper-pencil questionnaires. Hard copies of questionnaires were shipped to those friends and associations by priority mail. After participants returned the questionnaires, those paper-based questionnaires were sent back to the researcher.

Instrumentation

Nonverbal Immediacy. To assess nonverbal immediacy in a dating relationship, the 26-item Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003) was used (13 positively worded, 13 negatively worded). For example, some of the positive items stated, “I maintain eye contact with my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.” Some of the negative items stated “I avoid gesturing while talking to my boy/girlfriend,” “I lean away from my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.” Responses were solicited using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (very often) to 1 (never). The previous
studies employing the Nonverbal-Immediacy Scale reported the reliabilities ranging from .90 to .91. (e.g., Madlock, 2006; Santill & Miller, 2011; Santilli, Miller, & Katt, 2011). Reliability assessment of this scale in the present study suggested an acceptable level of measurement consistency: Cronbach’s alpha = .76, \( M = 74.80, SD = 9.54 \) for Chinese college student samples, and Cronbach’s alpha = .69, \( M = 72.87, SD = 7.35 \) for U.S. American college student samples.

Attachment Styles. Attachment Style Measure (Guerrero, 1996) was adapted for the current study to access attachment style. All items were rated using 5-point Likert-type scales, with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement. Four aspects of attachment style were assessed: “Lack of confidence,” “Preoccupation,” “Relationship as secondary,” and “Fearful avoidance”; those attachment styles were equivalent to “Secure,” “Preoccupied,” “Dismissing,” and “Fearful,” as defined in Bartholow’s (1990) styles of adult attachment figure, respectively. Lack of confidence, which was equivalent to that of “Secure” in the earlier four-category measure of attachment styles, was also measured with five items (e.g., “I feel confident that my boy/girlfriend or spouse will like and respect me”—recoded; “I worry that my boy/girlfriend or spouse will reject me”). Preoccupation, which was equivalent to that of “Preoccupied” in the earlier four-category measure of attachment styles, was measured with eight items (e.g., “I worry that my boy/girlfriend or spouse does not care about me as much as I care about him/her”; “I do not know how I would cope without my boy/girlfriend or spouse to love me”). Fearful Avoidance, which was equivalent to that of “Fearful” in the earlier four-category measure of attachment styles, was measured with five items (e.g., “I would like to have closer relationships, but getting close makes me
uneasy”; “I worry that I might get hurt if I get too close to my boy/girlfriend or spouse”). Finally, relationships as secondary, which was equivalent to that of “Dismissing” in the earlier four-category measure of attachment styles, was measured with five items (e.g., “Doing my best is more important than getting along with my boy/girlfriend or spouse”; “relationships are the most central priority in my life.”). The previous studies employing the attachment style measure reported the alpha reliabilities ranging from .80 to .83 for “Lack of Confidence,” .74 to .81 for “Preoccupation,” .79 to .78 for “Fearful Avoidance,” and .83 to .84 for “Relationship as Secondary” (e.g., Guerrero, 1996; Guerrero, 1998). Reliability assessment of these scales in the present study suggested various levels of measurement consistency. “Lack of confidence”: Cronbach’s alpha = .36, M = 13.30, SD = 2.56 for Chinese college student samples, and Cronbach’s alpha = .42, M = 12.20, SD = 2.86 for U.S. American college student samples; “Preoccupation with relationships”: Cronbach’s alpha = .65, M = 22.46, SD = 4.51 for Chinese college student samples, and Cronbach’s alpha = .72, M = 21.53, SD = 5.31 for U.S. American college student samples; “Fear Avoidance”: Cronbach’s alpha = .82, M = 10.98, SD = 3.65 for Chinese college student samples, and Cronbach’s alpha = .89, M = 10.54, SD = 4.88 for U.S. American college student samples; and “Relationship as Secondary”: Cronbach’s alpha = .63, M = 16.40, SD = 3.09 for Chinese college student samples, and Cronbach’s alpha = .72, M = 15.80, SD = 3.89 for U.S. American college student samples, respectively. Since the Cronbach’s alpha of “Lack of Confidence” was below 0.60, which was unacceptable. After checking the “Cronbach’s Alpha if item deleted” in the category of “Lack of Confidence,” one item “I am confident that my boy/girlfriend will accept me” was identified as the cause of reducing the reliability of the category. This item was deleted
from the category of “Lack of Confidence.” Finally, the reliability assessment of “Lack of Confidence” was: Cronbach’s alpha = .77, $M = 9.51$, $SD = 3.03$ for Chinese college student samples, and Cronbach’s alpha = .88, $M = 8.19$, $SD = 3.56$ for U.S. American college student samples.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The first research question was: Is there a difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their nonverbal immediacy in a dating relationship? An independent samples t-test was conducted to answer this research question. The independent variable was culture (U.S. American vs. Chinese), and the dependent variable was nonverbal immediacy behavior reported by the participants. The Levene’s test for equality of variances was significant ($F = 1.53, p < .05$), so equality of variances cannot be assumed, $t (152.90) = -4.20, p < .05$. This analysis revealed a significant difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their nonverbal immediacy in dating relationships. The sample means are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Nonverbal Immediacy Scores of U.S. American and Chinese Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>U.S. Americans ($n = 77$)</th>
<th>Chinese ($n = 90$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Immediacy</td>
<td>107.08</td>
<td>11.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: $p < .05$. 
The second research question was: What is the relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship among Chinese college students? The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to help assess the nature of the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and the four attachment styles among Chinese college students. Among Chinese students, as Table 2 showed, significant relationships existed between their nonverbal immediacy and “Fearful avoidance” (r = - .24, p < .05). This meant that there was a significant negative relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and the sub-scale of “Fearful avoidance.” Specifically among Chinese college students, people who had low self-esteem, feared intimacy and commitment, had low trust in others, and feared being rejected or abandoned would exhibit less nonverbal immediacy behaviors during the dating relationship.

Table 2
Summary of Intercorrelations for Scores on the Nonverbal Immediacy and Attachment Styles among Chinese College Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nonverbal immediacy</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>- .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lack of confidence</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preoccupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fearful avoidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Relationship as secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p < .05

**: p < .01.

The third research question was: What is the relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship among U.S.
American college students? The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to help assess the nature of the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and those four attachment styles among U.S. American college students. Similarly, as Table 3 showed, among U.S. American students, significant relationships were found between their nonverbal immediacy and “Lack of Confidence” (r = -.38, p < .01). This meant that there was a significant negative relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and the sub-scale of “Lack of Confidence.” Specifically among U.S. American college students, individuals who reported to have experienced more enjoyment of the interaction and to have appeared less tense during the conversation would report to have exhibited more nonverbal immediacy behaviors.

Table 3
Summary of Intercorrelations for Scores on the Nonverbal Immediacy and Attachment Styles among U.S. American College Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nonverbal immediacy</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lack of confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preoccupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fearful avoidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Relationship as secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p < .05

**: p < .01.

The fourth research question was: Is there a difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their attachment styles in a dating relationship? A
MANOVA test was conducted to answer the fourth research question. The independent variable was culture (U.S. American vs. Chinese), and the dependent variables were four attachment styles. As shown in Table 4, this analysis did not reveal a significant difference between Chinese and U.S. American college students regarding their attachment styles in a dating relationship, Wilks’ lambda = .94, $F(4, 163) = 2.40, p > .05$. Specifically, there was no difference between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their attachment styles in a dating relationship.

Table 4

Main Effects Means in Relation to U.S. American and Chinese Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>U.S. Americans</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>10.18 (4.42)</td>
<td>11.67 (3.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupation</td>
<td>21.53 (5.31)</td>
<td>22.46 (4.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful avoidance</td>
<td>8.35 (3.80)</td>
<td>8.79 (3.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship as secondary</td>
<td>15.80 (3.89)</td>
<td>16.40 (3.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Standard Deviations are in the parentheses.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study added to existing knowledge about a variety of nonverbal immediacy behaviors and corresponding perceptions regarding dating intimacy exhibited between Chinese and U.S. American college students. The present study sought to examine potential differences in nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in U.S. American and Chinese college students and improve the understanding of the dating relationship of college students. Any comparison of communication between cultures requires careful consideration of each culture. In order to have a comprehensive understanding regarding potential dating relationship differences in two cultures, strong foundational literature had been reviewed regarding U.S. American and Chinese cultural values and orientations.

The first research question sought to explore the potential differences between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their nonverbal immediacy behaviors in a dating relationship. The results indicated that there were significant differences between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their nonverbal immediacy behaviors. Specifically, U.S. American college students were more intimate than Chinese college students in a dating relationship. This finding was consistent with that of other studies suggesting China is a “distinctly nontactile” culture and the United States is a contact culture (Andersen, 2012, p. 308). When explaining the
finding that there was a significant difference in the amount of intimacy between U.S. American and Chinese individuals in romantic relationships, Gao (2001) suggests that “the presence of intimacy is a culture universal, but the way in which intimacy is expressed differs from culture to culture” (p. 340). Nonverbal immediacy behaviors were certainly very important ways for people to express intimacy with their partners. The answer of research question one provided a piece of strong evidence to support Gao’s (2001) explanation.

This finding was also consistent with the research suggesting people’s support networks are broad, including both their intimate relationships and in-groups in collectivistic cultures. In comparison with collectivistic cultures, in individualistic cultures, people’s support networks consist of intimate relationships; thus, intimacy tends to be more salient between relationship partners in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures (Dion & Dion, 1988). Individualism and collectivism helps to explain culture-related differences in romantic love and in the perceived importance of emotional intimacy in marriage. The answer to research question one also produced evidence in support of Dion and Dion’s (1988) explanation, suggesting romantic love is more likely to be an important foundation for marriage in individualistic than in collectivistic societies. Moreover, psychological intimacy in marriage is more important for marital satisfaction and personal well-being in individualistic than in collectivistic societies. In addition, different cultural values and orientations have played a significant role in shaping the observed differences in dating attitudes and behaviours. According to the study of Tang and Zuo (2000), differences regarding social influences from peers and the broader society, as well as the personal meaning attributed to dating may also provide
the evidence to support the research question one. In America, social pressures, from peer
groups and the broader society, are in favor of dating rather than against it. The society
provides a favorable environment for dating among adolescents. In addition, individuals’
freedom and rights are usually acknowledged and respected by their parents and different
social institutions in America. Adolescent dating receives fewer controls and less
supervision from parents and schools. On the other hand, the Chinese culture tends to
suppress the individual freedom and personal rights. Especially, Chinese parents and
different social institutions try their best to suppress puppy love among adolescents by
monitoring the conversion, phone usage, and computer usage of adolescents. Chinese
adolescent dating receives much more controls and supervisions than U.S. American
adolescents (Tang & Zuo, 2000).

The second research question explained the possible relationship between
nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship among
Chinese college students. Overall, the results indicated that there was a relationship
between nonverbal immediacy and attachment styles in a dating relationship among
Chinese college students. Specifically, three out of four attachment styles had no
significant relationship with nonverbal immediacy behaviors in a dating relationship
among Chinese college students, and one of the aspects of attachment styles “Fearful
Avoidance” had significant negative relationship with nonverbal immediacy behaviors.
“Fearful Avoidance” suggested negative models of self and others. Individuals of
“Fearful Avoidance” tend to have low self-esteem, fear intimacy and commitment, and
have low trust in others, because they fear being rejected or abandoned. The results
indicated Chinese college students who exhibited more characteristics of “Fearful
Avoidance” were perceived to employ less nonverbal immediacy behavior. Findings regarding the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and attachment styles among Chinese college students were partially consistent with the study by Friedman et al. (2010). In collectivistic cultures, the result was a bit opposite to what partners of avoidant individuals had expected about a relatively good relationship, causing their disappointment and frustration. In turn, the dissatisfaction from partners may cause the dissatisfaction and other issues reported by the avoidant participants. When explaining the finding that there was a significant negative relationship between respondents labeled as “Fearful Avoidance” and the amount of intimacy they exhibited in a dating relationship, the closeness-distance issue might be one of the significant issues between avoidant individuals and their partners.

The third research question sought to explore the potential relationship between nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship among U.S. American college students. The results indicated that attachment styles were partially negatively related to nonverbal immediacy among U.S. American college students. One out of four attachment styles “Lack of Confidence” which is equivalent to “Secure,” had significant negative relationship with nonverbal immediacy. “Lack of Confidence” suggested negative models of self and others. Individuals of “Lack of Confidence” tend to be self-abased, uncomfortable with closeness, and distrust others. Three out of four attachment styles had no significant relationship with nonverbal immediacy, including “preoccupation,” “fearful avoidance,” and “relationship as secondary.” Specifically, the U.S. American college student who had more characteristics of “Lack of Confidence” will employ less nonverbal immediacy behaviors.
Findings regarding the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and attachment styles among U.S. American college students are partially consistent with the study by Tucker and Anders (1998). “Secures” are usually connected with more nonverbal closeness, while Avoidant individuals, who tend to possess the style “fearful avoidance,” or “relationship as secondary” are usually engaged in less nonverbal immediacy behaviors. A more secure attachment style is related to more laughing, touching, and smiling during the interpersonal communication, whereas a more avoidant attachment style is related to less nonverbal closeness. More avoidant individuals exhibit less nonverbal immediacy behaviors; they touch their partner less, gazed at their partners less, and smile less during the interaction. “Secures” are associated with experiencing more enjoyment of the interaction, whereas more avoidant individuals are perceived as more tense during the conversion. Tucker and Anders (1998) found that “preoccupieds” engaged in less nonverbal immediacy behaviors in dating relationships. More preoccupied individuals are perceived as less likely to touch their partners and less nonverbally expressive during the interaction. However, there was no significant relationship between preoccupation and nonverbal immediacy in the present study. In addition, the findings in the present study are also partially consistent with the study by Guerrero (1996). According to Guerrero (1996), individuals with different attachment styles differ in the degree to which they demonstrate intimacy and nonverbal involvement to their romantic partners. “Secures” and “preoccupieds” engaged more in nonverbal immediacy than “dismissives” and “fearful avodants.” Specifically, preoccupieds and secures rated higher on measures of trust/receptivity, gaze, facial pleasantness, vocal pleasantness, general interest, and attentiveness than dismissives and fearful avodants.
Fearful avodians sit further away from their partners and displayed least fluency and longest response latencies. In addition, preoccupieds and fearful avodians exhibit more vocal anxiety.

Finally, the fourth research question sought to determine whether there were differences between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their attachment styles in a dating relationship. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between Chinese and U.S. American college students regarding their attachment styles. There are several possible explanations for the lack of differences between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their attachment styles in a dating relationship which could be explored in further research. These possible explanations are related to the limitations of this study. The following section will provide the information regarding the limitations of this study.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. First, the sample size in this study was relatively small, and the participants were not representative of all Chinese college students in the United States. A small respondent pool could reflect biases in the statistical results wherein the results were only valid in the region where the participants were geographically located. U.S. American student samples were chosen from one university in Midwestern United States, and Chinese student samples were chosen from several universities in central region of the United States of America. Thus, generalizations to overall populations should be tentative at best. Second, the results were based on recalling the behavior during the current or most recent romantic relationships.
It was limited by not being able to verify how accurate the participants were when recalling these behaviors.

Third, in any cross-cultural study, subtle cultural differences might be existing below the surface that could have an impact on the study result. Although strong foundational literature had described American and Chinese cultural values and orientations, the author suggests readers not to over-generalize these findings and tendencies to either Chinese culture or American culture, and it is significant to recognize that there are individual differences within both cultures. Moreover, cultural values and orientations are not static; they are dynamic and tend to change over time. Readers should avoid the temptation to over-generalize, stereotype, or hold a part as the whole regarding cultures. Fourth, both nonverbal immediacy scale and attachment styles scale used in this study were developed and validated in U.S. American cultural setting. It is not unusual that instruments developed and validated in one culture may have lower reliability coefficients in data gathered from a second non-native culture. Many factors can cause those reliability differences, including differences in language, ways of interpretation, ways of life, and cultural norms. In addition, regardless of the strengths and advantages of employing self-report instruments, there may be some disadvantages in employing the self-report instrument to obtain data.

Finally, since Chinese college student samples chosen from the Chinese population who studied in the United States of America and most of Chinese college student samples have stayed in the United States of America for more than one year, American culture and life style may have subtly influenced their values and behaviors. For example, compared to the domestic Chinese college students in China,

students who studied abroad for more than a year or two may prefer to enjoy the current relationship rather than to make a long-term commitment to his/her partner. In addition, compared with the domestic Chinese college students in China, Chinese college students who study abroad live a totally different environment, which also can cause the significant differences in dating behaviors and the needs regarding the level of intimacy between domestic Chinese college students and those who study in the United States of America regarding their dating relationships.

Future Research

Past research also examined gender differences regarding nonverbal immediacy. Feeney (1999) found that females were eager to possess more closeness in their romantic relationships than their male partners. In addition, the study by Feeney (1999) also indicated that closeness-distance issues may be more salient to women than to men. The current study did not pay much attention to exploring gender differences regarding nonverbal immediacy and attachment styles among U.S. American and Chinese college students in a dating relationship. Future research can pay more attention to exploring gender differences between those two populations in a dating relationship. In addition, future research can explore the possible relationship between Chinese and U.S. American couples regarding their attachment styles and nonverbal immediacy behaviors in a marital relationship. Based on the developmental perspective, romantic relationships may change, because these relationships depend on relationship stages on which relational partners are living. Thus, future longitudinal studies may provide an ongoing understanding of the dynamic of these relationships. Future research might benefit by employing an open-ended interview to obtain unlimited perspectives from the study.
participants. In terms of the limitations of the current study, future research also can employ Chinese versions of those two scales and distribute to domestic Chinese college students in China. Finally, future research can also employ the qualitative method to do some interviews among Chinese and U.S. American college students and explore more specific perceptions and attitudes regarding the nonverbal immediacy and attachment styles in a dating relationship.

This study made an attempt to explore the possible differences between U.S. American and Chinese college students regarding their nonverbal immediacy behaviors and attachment styles in a dating relationship. Although there were limitations existing in the study, it provided evidence to support the findings of the earlier studies of nonverbal immediacy and attachment styles. Meanwhile, the results of this study demonstrated a direct comparison between U.S. American and Chinese college students with regard to their attachment styles and the nonverbal immediacy behavior in romantic relationships, which would help develop future studies in interpersonal and intercultural communication research, especially related to the romantic setting. This study improved the understanding of how Chinese and U.S. American college students engaged in romantic relationships.
REFERENCES


Oysterman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

Title of Study: College students in a romantic relationship

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a master thesis study being conducted by Ms. Huirui Gao, a graduate student, in the School of Communication at The University of Akron. This study attempts to collect information about how individual college students engage in a romantic relationship. It is estimated that 200 people are participating in this study.

Procedures: You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire. It will take approximately 15 minutes to finish.

Exclusion: You have to be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

Risks/Discomforts: There are no risks or discomforts associated with completing this survey.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researcher will learn more about how college students engage in a romantic relationship.

Confidentiality: All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than primary investigator listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the researcher’s laptop computer.

Compensation: There is no direct compensation.

Participation: Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without any consequence.

Questions about the Research: If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Huirui Gao, hg14@zips.uakron.edu, or Academic Advisor, Dr. Yang Lin, a professor in the School of Communication, ylin1@uakron.edu, 330-972-7600.

This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board at Akron, Ohio, the United States of America. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at 330-972-7666. If you agree to participate, please return the survey you have filled out to the researcher.

APPROVED

IRB

The University of Akron
APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Communication Study

Directions: Please fill out the section that applies.

1. Your Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Your Age: __________

3. What is your status at the University?
   _____ Freshman      _____ Sophomore      _____ Junior
   _____ Senior       _____ Graduate Student _____ Other

4. Which country were you born in?
   _____ China _____ U.S.A. _____ Other

5. If you are US American, what is your ethnicity?
   _____ White or Caucasian _____ Hispanic or Latino
   _____ Asian American      _____ Black or African American _____ Other

6. What is your current marital status?
   _____ Single          _____ Married

7. If you are an international student, how long have you been in the U.S.A? _______ month(s)

8. Length of your current/last romantic (e.g., dating) relationship in months: _____

9. On average, how many times do you see your romantic partner in person each week? ____

DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with their boy/girlfriend. Please "check" in the space to the right of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies TO YOU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. I use my hands and arms to gesture while talking to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I touch my boy/girlfriend on the shoulder or arm while talking to him/her.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I use a monotone or dull voice while talking to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I look over or away from my boy/girlfriend while talking to him/her.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I move away from my boy/girlfriend when she/he touches me while we are talking.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>15. I have a relaxed body position when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>16. I frown while talking to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>17. I avoid eye contact while talking to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>18. I have a tense body position while talking to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. I sit or stand close to my boy/girlfriend while talking with him/her.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with their boy/girlfriend. Please "check" in the space to the right of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies TO YOU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. My voice is monotone or dull when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>21. I use a variety of vocal expressions when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>22. I gesture when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>23. I am animated when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>24. I have a bland facial expression when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. I move closer to my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.</td>
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<td>26. I look directly at my boy/girlfriend while talking to him/her.</td>
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<td>27. I am stiff when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>28. I have a lot of vocal variety when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>29. I avoid gesturing while I am talking to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>30. I lean toward my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.</td>
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<td>31. I maintain eye contact with my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. I try not to sit or stand close to my boy/girlfriend when I talk with him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. I lean away from my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. I smile when I talk to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. I avoid touching my boy/girlfriend when I talk to him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>36. I kiss my boy/girlfriend while staying with him/her.</td>
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<td>37. I caress my boy/girlfriend while staying with him/her.</td>
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<td>38. I hold hands with my boy/girlfriends while staying with him/her.</td>
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<td>39. I hug my boy/girlfriend while staying with him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. I tickle my boy/girlfriend while staying with him/her.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the attachment styles some people adopt within their romantic relationships. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by checking "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral (neither agree nor disagree)," "agree," or "strongly agree."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I find it easy to trust my boy/girlfriend.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>I feel uncomfortable when my boy/girlfriend gets close to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I feel uneasy getting close to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I prefer to keep to myself.</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>I worry about my boy/girlfriend getting close to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I tend to avoid getting close to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I find it relatively easy to get close to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>I sometimes worry that I do not really fit in with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>I sometimes worry that I do not measure up to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>I am confident that my boy/girlfriend will like and respect me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>I worry that my boy/girlfriend will reject me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>I am confident that my boy/girlfriend will accept me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Intimate romantic relationships are the most central part of my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>I feel a very strong need to have close relationships with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>Sometimes my boy/girlfriend seems reluctant to get as close to me as I would like.</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>I worry a lot about the well-being of my romantic relationships.</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>I worry that my boy/girlfriend does not care about me as much as I care about him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>I wonder how I would cope without my boy/girlfriend to love me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>I rarely worry about what my boy/girlfriend think of me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>I sometimes worry that my boy/girlfriend will leave me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>I would like to trust my boy/girlfriend, but I have a hard time doing so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>I worry about getting hurt if I allow myself to get close to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the attachment styles some people adopt within their romantic relationships. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by checking "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral (neither agree nor disagree)," "agree," or "strongly agree."

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63. I would like to depend on my boy/girlfriend, but it makes me nervous to do so.</td>
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<td>64. I would like to have closer romantic relationships, but getting close makes me uneasy.</td>
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<td>65. I worry that I might get hurt if I get too close to my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>66. Achieving things is more important to me than building romantic relationships.</td>
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<td>67. If something needs to be done, I prefer to rely on myself rather than my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>68. I put more time and energy into my romantic relationships than I put into other activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>69. Maintaining good romantic relationships is always my top priority.</td>
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<td>70. Please myself is more important to me than getting along with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>71. In general, my boy/girlfriend meets my needs.</td>
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<td>72. In general, I am satisfied with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>73. My romantic relationship is good compared to any other relationships.</td>
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<td>74. My relationship meets my original expectations.</td>
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<td>75. I love my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>76. There are many problems in my relationship with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with their boy/girlfriend. Please check the space to the right of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies TO YOU.

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<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77. I use Facebook (or similar in China) to interact with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>78. I use text messages to interact with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>79. I use telephone to interact with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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<td>80. I use E-mail to interact with my boy/girlfriend.</td>
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</table>

Thank you for your time and participation in this survey
APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON IRB APPROVAL

Office of Research Administration
Akron, OH 44325-2102

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

September 19, 2013

Huilu Gao
63 Eber Ave,
Akron, Ohio 44305

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator

Re: IRB Number 201309099 "Nonverbal Immediacy and Attachment Style in Dating: A Comparison between Chinese and American College Students"

Thank you for submitting your IRB Application for Review of Research involving Human Subjects for the referenced project. Your application was approved on September 18, 2013. Your protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

☑ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.

☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. This office will hold your exemption application for a period of three years from the approval date. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit another Exemption Request. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

☑ Approved consent form/s enclosed

Cc: Yang Lin - Advisor
Cc: Valerie Gallivan - IRB Chair