Does Culture Matter?

Relating Intercultural Communication Sensitivity to Conflict Management Styles, Technology Use, and Organizational Communication Satisfaction in Multinationals in China

A dissertation presented to

the faculty of

the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2010

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This dissertation titled

Does Culture Matter?

Relating Intercultural Communication Sensitivity to Conflict Management Styles,
Technology Use, and Organizational Communication Satisfaction

in Multinationals in China

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ABSTRACT

MAO, YUPING, Ph.D., August 2010, Communication Studies

Does Culture Matter? Relating Intercultural Communication Sensitivity to Conflict Management Styles, Technology Use, and Organizational Communication Satisfaction in Multinationals in China (259 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Claudia L. Hale

Communication is very complex in multinational companies due to the diverse body of employees with different social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Organizational communication among employees in China branches of multinational companies remains largely unexplored in previous literature. Taking an Asiacentric approach, this study examines the relationships among intercultural sensitivity, organizational communication satisfaction, organizational conflict management, and use of technologies in China branches of multinational companies. This study also compares the organizational communication experiences of Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience.

An online survey was conducted with Chinese employees of multinational companies. Comparisons were made between those with some degree of overseas living experience and those without any overseas living experience. The survey included the Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000), a revised version of the Technology Usage Scale (TUS) (Scott & Timmerman, 2005), the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) (Putnam & Wilson, 1982), and the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) (Downs & Hazen, 1977). The
following pairs of variables were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlations: intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction, intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles, intercultural sensitivity and use of technologies, organizational communication satisfaction and conflict management styles, organizational communication satisfaction and use of technologies, conflict management styles and use of technologies. Significant correlations were found in the above six pairs of variables and their factors. Overall no significant differences between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience were found in the following key variables: intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, organizational communication satisfaction level, and use of technology in organizational communication. Although minor differences existed between those two groups of participants, in general, the two groups revealed similar organizational communication behavior.

This study is one of very few extant studies that focus on organizational communication in the Chinese context. This study enriches the literature on Asian organizational communication studies, and contributes to the development of the Asi centric approach. The correlations among the variables identified by this study build the empirical foundation for future research to further develop communication models that include those variables and which will have significant theoretical and practical implications.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this dissertation is an important milestone of my academic journey. I truly appreciate the support and guidance I received from my dissertation chair, Dr. Claudia L. Hale, and my committee members, Drs. Anita James, Andrew M. Ledbetter, and Gordon Brooks. I also sincerely appreciate Dr. Scott Titsworth and Dr. Negash Rao’s assistance when I developed my dissertation proposal.

My dissertation proposal committee and dissertation committee members provided me so many great insights to improve the quality of this dissertation research. Dr. Hale, thank you very much for your generous time commitment, continuous support, and detailed edits of this dissertation. The encouragement and understanding from you were extremely important for me to complete this dissertation off-campus while I tried to balance study, work, and life. Dr. Ledbetter, thank you very much for sharing your expertise in communication and technology and helping me refine my dissertation idea.

Dr. James, thank you very much for your valuable feedbacks on my dissertation. Dr. Brooks and Dr. Titsworth, thank you both for the great methodology and statistics classes I took with you. The knowledge and skills I learned from those classes are essential for this dissertation and my future research. Dr. Rao, thank you very much for pointing me to the related literature on intercultural communication, which greatly helped me develop my dissertation idea.
I would also like to thank my other two advisors during my Ph. D. studies, Dr. James Dearing and Dr. Arvind Singhal. Dr. Dearing, thank you for introducing me to organizational communication and the diffusion of innovations theory, and assisting me in passing comprehensive examinations. Dr. Singhal, thank you very much for stimulating my research interests through different narratives and academic publications.

I gratefully acknowledge several scholars outside of Ohio University who generously provided me academic support for my Ph. D. studies and the completion of this dissertation. Dr. Alberto Gonzalez, thank you for the continuous encouragement that instills confidence in me. Your academic guidance and life support make my academic journey in the U.S. a wonderful and memorable experience. As a student in intercultural communication, I am fortunate to learn from and collaborate with Dr. William Starosta. Dr. Starosta’s works on intercultural sensitivity provided important foundation for developing my dissertation idea. Dr. Starosta, thank you for sharing your collected research file on Asian communication and introducing me to Dr. Miike Yoshitaka, the author of several cornerstone pieces of Asiacentric approach. Dr. Yoshitaka, thank you for mailing me the big pile of publications related to the Asiacentric approach, which greatly helped me develop the theoretical framework of my dissertation. A special thanks goes to my colleague, Dr. Marco Adria, who has helped me to balance my study, work, and life, and provided me the great opportunity to start my academic career in Canada while I was working on my dissertation.
Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my family who sacrificed a lot to make this academic journey possible and rewarding, and to whom I dedicate this dissertation. I am indebted to my parents for being far away from them for so many years to pursue my academic interests. I cannot express my appreciation to my parents in the limited space for the numerous hours they spent to take care of my newborn baby and other housework when both my husband and I were busy working or studying. I deeply thank my husband for supporting me to conquer all the challenges in my life and academic journey, and for helping to recruit participants for my dissertation research. My most precious and dearest son Alistair was born during the process of writing this dissertation. He had been the reservoir of inspiration and motivation for me to accomplish this dissertation project. Without the love, support, and understanding from my family, I wouldn’t have the courage and strength to accomplish this doctoral degree. I love all of you from the bottom of my heart.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

With the dramatic globalization of the world, more and more organizations have begun to develop overseas businesses in China. Because of different cultural backgrounds, markets, and social morés, those multinational organizations are facing many challenges and trying to adjust themselves to new social settings. Communication is very complex in multinational companies due to the diverse body of employees with different social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Difficulties in cross-cultural communication create problems in decision-making, human resource management practices, supervisor-subordinate relationships, and other organizational arenas. This study used a survey to examine intercultural sensitivity, organizational communication satisfaction, and organizational conflict management of employees in multinational companies in China. In addition, this study assesses employee frequency of applying different technologies in organizational communication, and explores how different technologies are adopted by employees and are related to the employees’ levels of intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction. The research results provide insights for the management teams of multinational companies in China, informing more effective training so as to improve employee communication effectiveness and achieve higher levels of communication satisfaction.
Gamble (2003) argued that there are a range of external and internal factors that promote or inhibit the transfer of Human Resources Management (HRM) practices from the parent-country operations of multinational corporations to their overseas subsidiaries. External factors include the country of origin, the degree of international production integration and the nature of product markets, and the particular legislative, institutional and cultural framework of the host country. Internal factors at the firm level include the structure of the company, and its commitment to the dissemination of HRM practices and resources, especially in terms of expatriates (Gamble, 2003). China has a distinct social, legislative, and economic system when compared with most Western countries. Therefore, China branches of Western multinational companies encounter more differences in external factors that might affect their HRM practices. The HRM practices in Western parent companies might or might not work well in branches in China. This research focuses on communication issues in China branches of Western multinational corporations. The goal is to obtain important information that might lead to better HRM practices that can benefit both employees and companies.

In China, cross-cultural management issues of foreign ventures, especially for corporations with headquarters in Western countries, are very complex. This is partly due to a combination of human resources from different regions and cultures. In one venture there might be 1) employees with solely the parent company’s foreign cultural heritage, 2)
local Chinese without any overseas experience, 3) Chinese with overseas working, educational and/or visiting experience, and 4) overseas ethnic Chinese from Singapore, Malaysia, or another Southeast Asian country, or ethnic Chinese migrants who have gained citizenship in a Western country, or were born in a foreign country from parents who migrated. Living and working in the China branch of a Western company, those employees are more or less influenced by Chinese culture and social norms; therefore, their main cultural heritage, the Chinese culture, and the Western culture of the organization’s headquarters interplay with each other and influence employee communication behaviors. In multinational companies in China, a majority of employees are a combination of local Chinese without any overseas experience and Chinese with overseas experience. The communication behaviors of those two types of employees constitute the mainstream communication styles in their institutions. Therefore, my research focuses on examining these two types of employees.

Rationale for the Study

*Culture in International Business*

Cultural differences have been identified as a main source of misunderstandings and conflicts. Pye (1982) addressed the importance of studying culture in multinational companies as follows:
Unquestionably the largest and possibly the most intractable category of problems in Sino-American business negotiations can be traced to the cultural differences between the two societies. . . . The conscious efforts to take into account the other party’s cultural practices can eliminate gross misunderstandings, but cultural factors continue to surface and cause problems in more subtle and indirect ways. (pp. 20-23)

This research focuses on intercultural sensitivity, which represents the affective aspect of intercultural communication competence. Intercultural sensitivity is defined as a person’s “active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures” (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 231). Intercultural sensitivity is an important factor for successful intercultural communication. This research will compare the levels of intercultural sensitivity of Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience. Furthermore, this research will examine the relationships among employees’ intercultural sensitivity, communication satisfaction, use of technology, and conflict management style.

*Culture and Conflict Management*

Communication is central to conflict. As Putnam and Poole (1987) stated, “communication constitutes the essence of conflict in that it undergirds the formation of opposing issues, frames perceptions of the felt conflict, translates emotions and
perceptions into conflict behaviors, and sets the stage for future conflicts” (p. 552).

Gudykunst and colleagues have argued that culture is a key determinant of conflict management behaviors (e.g., Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Additionally, extensive research has been conducted to examine how individuals from Western cultures and Eastern cultures manage conflicts differently (e.g., Cai, Wilson, & Drake, 2000; Lee & Rogan, 1991). In multinational companies in China, employees with a Western educational background and working experience are influenced by both Western and Eastern cultures. Those employees might be more used to the Western aspects of corporate culture. Meanwhile, they might be uncomfortable reentering a Chinese culture that has changed with the dramatic social and economic development of China during the years they were away. Employees without overseas experience might be exposed to Western culture by working in a company with a Western base, or might retain more of an Asian influence due to limited Western exposure. Therefore, it is important to examine whether employees with different cultural experiences in multinational companies employ different conflict management styles.

**Media Usage**

In multinational companies, employees need to use a diversity of technologies to communicate with their colleagues in different areas all over the world. Communication technology, a common communication channel among organizational members, is a
variable investigated in this study, as technology-mediated communication has proven to play an important role in achieving effective communication across geographic boundaries. Akkirman and Harris (2005) used the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire in a survey of virtual office and traditional office workers from a single firm. Virtual office workers were found to be more satisfied with their organizational communication than were traditional office workers when the firm took the following steps for virtual office workers: provided upper level support, provided appropriate technology and technological support, provided cultural and technical training, restructured work to support a virtual workplace, and provided extra social support systems to reduce alienation. In my study, the frequency of using different technologies for organizational communication was measured, and the relationships between technology use and other communication variables, such as intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction, were examined.

Organizational Communication Satisfaction

Extensive literature has reported that communication satisfaction is related to different aspects of organizations. Downs (1988) reported a positive relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. Research also indicates a positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Pincus, 1986), organizational commitment, and turnover (Clampitt & Downs, 1993). Using path
analysis, Gregson (1990) built an empirical model of communication satisfaction and job satisfaction which indicates that communication satisfaction is related to intent to leave and intent to leave is directly related to the job-relevant feedback that an employee receives from his/her company. Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) concluded that ineffective organizational communication leads to employee role ambiguity and role conflict, which results in employee job dissatisfaction. Therefore, organizational communication satisfaction is essential for the success of an organization and is an important component of employee organizational experience.

With globalization of the world economy, employee organizational communication satisfaction has become more complex. The cultural diversity present in a multinational company makes employee intercultural sensitivity an important aspect of an employee’s organizational experience, and can influence that employee’s organizational communication satisfaction. New technologies are being more and more widely used to reduce geographic distances affecting different sectors of multinational companies. The use of different technologies in workplaces provides more communication channels as well as poses new communication and technology challenges for employees and their organizations. This research extends the literature by examining how organizational communication satisfaction relates to intercultural sensitivity, technology usage, and conflict management styles in multicultural working contexts. The
research results provide important information for multinational companies concerning communication training for their employees in order to increase organizational communication satisfaction, thus increasing employee job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

An Asiacentric Approach to this Study

Communication research has historically been dominated by a Eurocentric approach. In recent years, there has been more and more criticism of the Western influences present in communication education and research in Asia (e.g., Chen & Miike, 2006; Chen & Starosta, 2003). Miike (2007) pointed out a few biases that the Eurocentric approach has in communication studies, including an individuality and independence bias, ego-centeredness and self-enhancement bias, reason and rationality bias, rights and freedom bias, and pragmatism and materialism bias. Analyzing Asian communication phenomena purely through Western theoretical frameworks and methodologies is sometimes problematic because the assumption that Western communication theories can be generalized to human beings across cultures ignores the various communication contexts developed from different cultural, philosophical, historical, political, and social traditions.

Early in 1971, Robert T. Oliver addressed the importance of understanding Asian phenomena within its own contexts as follows:
The East is not the West. Cultures differ, and minds, feelings, and intentions in differing societies intermesh in differing ways. Discourse occurs, or is constrained, under different circumstances and has different styles for different reasons…. Any attempt to discover in Asia prototypes of the Western rhetorical canons would be unavailing. It would resemble trying to measure the salinity of water with a ruler. (p. 3)

Inspired by the Afrocentric idea, Miike (2006) propounded the Asiancentric approach of Asian communication, arguing Asian communication should be researched from an Asian theoretical perspective to really capture Asians as subjects and agents of their own communication worlds (Chen & Miike, 2006). Scholars taking an Asiancentric approach in their studies should “place Asian cultures as theoretical resources at the center of inquiry in describing, deciphering, and discerning the premises and practices of Asian communication” (Chen & Miike, 2006, p.4). The cultural particularity of an Asiancentric approach could lead to human universality. In the waves of globalization and localization of our world, the emerging Asiancentric approach is part of the multicultural turn in communication studies that takes account of non-Western experiences within their own contexts and cultural roots.

Asian communication theory has been an emerging concept in recent years. Dissanayake (2006) defined Asian communication theory as “a corpus of work that has
been produced by both Asian and Western scholars addressing the need to come up with Asian theories of communication” (p. 4). With the increasing number of studies of Asian communication, researchers have proposed and started to build an Asian communication paradigm (Chen, 2006). Miike (2006) suggested five agendas for the development of Asiacentricity: (1) deriving theoretical insights from Asian cultures, (2) expanding the geographical focus of study, (3) comparing and contrasting Asian cultures, (4) pluralizing and historicizing theoretical lenses, and (5) confronting metatheoretical and methodological questions.

Theoretically and methodologically, this empirical study answers the call for multicultural scholarship that encourages non-Western thinking and theorizing beyond the Western world. This research takes the Asiacentric approach to analyze Chinese employees’ organizational communication patterns in the China branch of multinational corporations. Both the procedure and the results of this study can contribute to the evolving Asiacentric approach in communication studies. This research contributes to the agenda of “comparing and contrasting Asian cultures” for developing Asiacentricity by comparing the intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, and other communication behaviors of Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience. This type of comparison of different Asian cultural groups’ communication is very important because Asiacentric comparisons can (1) demonstrate
internal diversity and complexity within Asia, (2) explore Asian collective identities and common values, (3) help Asians better understand Asian neighbors from Asian perspectives, and (4) articulate an Asian vision of the global village (Miike, 2006).

Methodologically, Miike (2003) suggested scholars include invisible and unobservable matters when researching Asian communication. This study adopts a quantitative research methodology, which is mainly a Eurocentric methodological approach. However, in order to adjust this study to the Asian context, research participants were offered the choice of participating in English or in Chinese. Three of the four survey scales used in this study have been successfully applied in other research in Asian contexts; therefore, although the scales used in this study were developed in Western context, they have all proven to be suitable for use in Asian contexts. The researcher grew up in China and has lived in North America for more than five years. In this study, the researcher will discuss some of her self-reflections when designing and conducting this study. The reflections are invisible and unobservable data of this study as Miike (2003) suggested; thus, their discussion provides readers an Asian insider’s perspective for understanding this study.

Research Questions

Global human resource development has expanded from Human Resource Development (HRD) methods, and has become an effective global business strategy that
provides members of a multinational company with the skills necessary to meet job demands (Petranek, 2004). Global human resources development takes the four C approach: Culture, Cooperation (working jointly toward the same goal), Collaboration (working jointly on an activity or project within a framework of group practice), and Communication (Petranek). By analyzing the relationships among intercultural sensitivity, conflict management style, and organizational communication satisfaction, this research examines the four Cs in multinational companies in China.

Furthermore, as electronic network communication, which involves use of different technologies, has been widely employed to share information throughout global organizations, this research also examines the role of technology use in improving employee organizational communication satisfaction. This research aims to explore the following research questions to compare the organizational communication experiences of Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without:

RQ 1: Does the average level of intercultural sensitivity of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 2: Do the dominant conflict management styles of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from those of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?
RQ 3: Does the average level of organizational communication satisfaction of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 4: Does the use of organizational communication technologies among mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

Another set of questions examines the relationships among intercultural sensitivity, conflict management style, organizational communication satisfaction, and technology use:

RQ 5: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 6: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 7: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?
RQ 8: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different conflict management styles of multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 9: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different technologies in organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 10: Is there a correlation between the frequency of using certain technologies in organizational communication and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

Definition of Key Concepts

Organizational Communication Satisfaction

Communication satisfaction is defined as the overall degree of satisfaction an employee experiences in his/her total communication environment (Redding, 1978), and includes multidimensional constructs (Downs & Hazen, 1977). Although organizational communication satisfaction is conceptualized differently by scholars, this study adopts Downs and Hazen’s definition that communication satisfaction includes eight primary dimensions: (1) general organizational perspective, (2) organizational integration, (3)
personal feedback, (4) relationship to supervisors, (5) horizontal and informal communication, (6) relationships with subordinates, (7) media quality, and (8) communication climate. Among the eight factors, personal feedback, communication climate, and relationship to supervisors are the strongest dimensions interacting with job satisfaction. Although Downs and Hazen’s definition of communication satisfaction is based on their study in North American context, it has been tested internationally including China, Nigeria, Mexico, and some other countries (Downs, 1994b).

The eight dimensions of communication satisfaction are defined by Downs and Hazen (1977) as follows. First, the general organizational perspective includes information about government actions affecting the organization, changes in the organization, company financial standing, and organizational policies and goals.

Second, organizational integration revolves around the degree to which individuals receive information about the organization and the immediate work environment. This type of information can include departmental policies and plans, information relevant to one’s job, and personnel news.

Third, personal feedback reflects communication relating to personal achievement and work. Personal feedback concerns the degree to which employees feel their supervisors understand and communicate the criteria that will be used to evaluate
employee work performance, and the degree to which the supervisors understand the challenges involved in their employees' work.

Fourth, relationship to supervisors includes both upward and downward dimensions of communication with supervisors. The communication with supervisors includes the openness of supervisors to subordinates, supervisors’ ability to listen, and the extent that supervisors offer subordinates guidance for solving job related problems.

Fifth, horizontal and informal communication is about the accuracy and the degree of free-flowing communication with one’s coworkers. Effective communication with coworkers is very important for developing satisfying relationships with colleagues so as to have a good working experience.

Sixth, relationship with subordinates focuses on supervisors’ evaluation of both upward and downward communication with subordinates. This construct includes subordinates’ responsiveness to downward communication, and subordinates’ willingness to initiate as well as the appropriateness of upward communication.

Seventh, media quality refers to employee perceptions of the degree of effectiveness of major forms of company media. Media quality can be evaluated by the effectiveness of meetings, the clarity of written documents and organizational publications, and the amount of communication in the organization.
Eighth, communication climate is the strongest dimension of organizational communication satisfaction. Individuals tend to think of climate when they are asked about communication satisfaction. Communication climate addresses communication at both the organizational and personal levels. Communication climate reflects the extent to which communication in the organization motivates and stimulates workers to meet organizational goals and the extent to which organizational communication encourages employee identification with the organization. Communication climate also addresses the degree of organizational communication competence that the employees perceive in support of their work.

*Intercultural Sensitivity*

In this increasingly globalized world, intercultural communication sensitivity has become a more and more important concept. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) defined intercultural sensitivity as follows:

To be effective in other cultures, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences and also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for people of other cultures. A reasonable term that summarizes these qualities of people is intercultural sensitivity. (p. 416)

Based on a comprehensive literature review of intercultural sensitivity, Chen and Starosta (1997) conceptualized intercultural sensitivity as “an individual’s ability to
develop a positive emotion to promote appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication” (p. 5). Chen and Starosta (1996, 1998) differentiated intercultural sensitivity from intercultural communication competence, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness. Intercultural communication competence includes “cognitive, affective, and behavioral ability of interactants in the process of intercultural communication” (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 3). Intercultural awareness represents the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication competence and refers to the understanding of the different cultures in which we live (Chen & Starosta, 1998).

Intercultural adroitness represents the behavioral aspect of intercultural competency, and refers to “the ability to get the job done and attain communication goals in intercultural interactions” (Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 367). Intercultural sensitivity represents the affective aspect of intercultural communication competence, and refers to an individual’s “active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures” (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 231). Although intercultural sensitivity is mainly concerned with emotion, it is related to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of communication. Chen and Starosta (1997) argued that intercultural awareness (cognition) is the foundation of intercultural sensitivity (affect) which eventually promotes intercultural competency.
Six constructs compose the concept of intercultural sensitivity: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and non-judgment (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Self-esteem is an individual’s sense of self-value and self-worth. Individuals with high levels of self-esteem are more able to deal with psychological stress and emotional difficulties in intercultural communication processes because they are more confident that they will be accepted by others and tend to think well of others. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to develop positive emotions and motivations to recognize and respect intercultural differences, which can lead to successful interpersonal relationships with their intercultural communication counterparts.

Self-monitoring is “a person’s ability to regulate behavior in response to situational constraints and to implement a conversationally competent behavior” (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p. 8). Individuals with high self-monitoring are more sensitive to the appropriateness of their social behaviors and self-representation in diverse communication situations (Snyder, 1974), and are more attentive and other-oriented in intercultural communication (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). With the ability to use situational cues to guide their self-presentation, high self-monitoring individuals are more adaptable to diverse communication situations (Chen & Starosta, 2000). As a construct of intercultural sensitivity, self-monitoring focuses on individual sensitivity with respect to
situational differences and individual differences, and willingness to adjust communication behaviors according to those differences.

Open-mindedness is defined by Chen and Starosta (1997) as “the willingness of individuals to openly and appropriately explain themselves and to accept other’s explanations” (p. 8). Open-minded individuals are more willing to “recognize, accept, and appreciate different views and ideas” (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p. 9), thus having a broadened concept of the world, and are more likely to embrace the multi-faceted world and be more actively involved in intercultural communication. Open-mindedness is the worldview that intercultural sensitivity is rooted in and stimulates an individual’s intercultural sensitivity when encountering any type of differences in communication.

Empathy is a central element for intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 1997), and refers to an individual’s ability to enter into a “culturally different counterparts’ mind to develop the same thoughts and emotions in interaction” (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 5). Empathy allows individuals to be more sensitive to other people’s internal thoughts and emotions, and to be more receptive to others’ reactions. Empathetic individuals are more likely to take other people’s perspectives into account in intercultural communication and show more understanding, identification, and consideration of an intercultural counterpart’s positions. The level of one’s empathy is a strong indicator of this person’s level of intercultural sensitivity.
Interaction involvement emphasizes “a person’s sensitivity ability in interaction” (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p.10). Interaction involvement is fundamental to the human communication process, and is comprised of responsiveness, perceptiveness, and attentiveness (Cegala, 1981, 1982, 1984). Interculturally sensitive individuals have the ability to be better involved in communication interactions through receiving and giving messages in appropriate ways and maintaining the smooth flow of the communication.

Non-judgment is an attitude “allowing oneself to sincerely listen to one’s culturally different counterparts, instead of jumping to conclusion without sufficient information” (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 5). Non-judgment can foster more enjoyment of the intercultural communication process by giving the other party chances to talk and to be listened to in an active manner. In turn, one can also develop a satisfactory feeling toward the intercultural interaction by listening, understanding, and acknowledging the cultural differences extant in intercultural communication. Non-judgment is the construct of intercultural sensitivity that leads to intercultural communication enjoyment. Chen and Starosta (1997) identified and described three types of enjoyment of intercultural communication as being related to intercultural sensitivity: (1) the enjoyment of interacting with people from different cultures (Randolph, Landis, & Tzeng, 1977), (2) the enjoyment of increasing good working relationships with others from different
cultures (Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971), and (3) the enjoyment of one’s duties in another culture (Gudykunst, Hammer, & Wiseman, 1977).

Conflict Management Styles

In the extensive literature on conflict management styles, researchers have identified different ways of conceptualizing conflict management styles. These different approaches can be clustered into four categories (Putnam, 1988): (a) conflict management style is a stable personal trait, habit, and is a constant and typical individual behavior; (b) conflict management is an orientation, expectation, predisposition, or attitude toward conflict; (c) conflict management style is a situational behavioral decision individuals make to achieve their goals; and, (d) conflict management style is a set of strategies and tactics used by individuals in conflict situations. The first two approaches are based on the assumption that individuals behave similarly in different conflict situations due to their own personal traits and attitudes. Scholars taking the last two approaches to define conflict management styles believe that the ways individuals choose to deal with conflicts are situational, and are strongly influenced by context and individual goals. Therefore, individuals might choose different conflict management styles across varying situations.

This study investigates Chinese employees’ conflict management styles in a unique context—the China branches of multinational companies. In order to serve this research purpose, this study adopts Putnam and Wilson’s (1982) approach which defines
conflict management styles as situational and contingent communication behavior, rather than constant personal characteristics. In this study, Chinese employees’ conflict management styles are analyzed in their social, cultural, and organizational contexts including organizational structures, power, culture, and other organizational communication factors.

Furthermore, this study focuses on a particular type of conflict—disagreements. Disagreements are generally content-oriented conflicts, and are different from misunderstandings (Bernard, 1965; Putnam & Wilson, 1982). Disagreements are based on underlying incompatibilities, and can lead to irreconcilable conflicts between individuals. Misunderstandings are normally a result of misinterpretation and miscommunication, and can be managed through more effective communication of the content. Disagreements are more fundamental differences among people than the differences created by misunderstandings because, with misunderstandings, the interactants might actually share the same values and opinions. Therefore, compared with misunderstandings, disagreements are likely to escalate to a higher level of tension in interpersonal relationships, and are more difficult to manage in organizational contexts. Due to differences in culture, educational background, and positions in organizations, Chinese employees in multinational organizations are more likely to have disagreements with their colleagues over different work-related issues than would employees in
organizational contexts where there are more similarities among employees. Therefore, this study focuses on the disagreement type of conflicts among employees in multinationals.

This study focuses on three conflict management strategies summarized by Putnam and Wilson (1982): nonconfrontation, solution-orientation, and control. Nonconfrontation strategies are indirect strategies for handling conflicts. Individuals using nonconfrontation strategies might use communicative behaviors such as silence, glossing over differences, and concealing ill feelings to avoid or withdraw from a disagreement. Solution-oriented strategies involve direct communication about a conflict. Individuals using solution-orientation strategies tend to strive for solutions that integrate the needs of both parties, and to give in or compromise in conflicts. Control strategies also involve direct communication about the disagreement. Individuals using control strategies tend to argue persistently for their own position, take control of the interaction, and advocate their position against that of others. As conflict management styles are situational, there is no optimal model for conflict management across different contexts. The three conflict management strategies are individual choices of ways to manage conflicts in certain contexts.
Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have explained the background of the communication phenomena that will be examined in this study, and have also defined the key concepts. Based on the rationale for this research, a few research questions were posed. To answer those questions, I took an Asiacentric approach to investigate how culture resonates with Chinese employees’ conflict management styles, use of technology, and organizational communication satisfaction levels in the China branch of multinationals.

In Chapter two, I will further discuss how this research is situated in the Asian communication literature, and then review the literature on the following areas: (1) culture and cross-cultural business communication, (2) culture and cross-cultural conflict management, (3) technology and global communication, (4) organizational communication satisfaction. Chapter three describes the research design and discusses the procedure for conducting this study, including sampling, data collection, and instrumentation. Chapter four reports the data analysis results. Chapter five interprets the major findings of the dissertation and includes some discussion of the overall study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to the key variables of Chinese employees’ communication patterns that will be investigated in this research. The review will lay the academic context for the research by reviewing the literature on key concepts and their relationships with the variables being investigated. This chapter has four sections: (1) culture and cross-cultural business communication, (2) culture and cross-cultural conflict management, (3) technology and global communication, and (4) organizational communication satisfaction.

Culture and Cross-Cultural Business Communication

Different cultures co-exist in multinational companies, with each culture affecting different dimensions of a company’s functioning and performance. Successful intercultural communication is essential for multinational companies, as some aspects of intercultural communication affect knowledge transfer directly. Aspects of intercultural communication affecting knowledge transfer include: marginality, stereotypes, style differences, linguistic ability, cosmopolitanism, and intercultural sensitivity (Taylor & Osland, 2003). Culture and economic activities are also intertwined with each other. Back in 1977, Kindleberger and Herrick argued that “sociocultural and economic factors interact in an ongoing process in which it is unlikely that one always dominates the other”
Therefore, it is very important to take a holistic approach to examine the role of culture in business communication in multinational companies.

Existing literature has demonstrated that cultural diversity can bring some positive outcomes for teamwork, which is also perceived as the strength of multinational companies. Puck, Rygl, and Kittler (2006) summarized that teams with culturally diverse members usually come up with more creative problem solutions, have more and better alternatives to a problem and better evaluation plans, develop accelerated individual and organizational learning processes, incorporate diversity into market strategies and achieve higher market objectives.

Cultural differences across different countries have posed new challenges to multiple aspects of multinational companies. Marquardt and Horvath (2001) identified the five typical challenges that multinational teams have: (1) managing cultural diversity, differences, and conflicts; (2) handling geographic distances, dispersion, and despair; (3) dealing with coordination and control issues; (4) maintaining communication richness; and (5) developing and maintaining teamness. Furthermore, cultural differences affect employee ethical behaviors and the extent to which an organization’s decisions are influenced by ethical concerns. Allmon, Chen, Pritchett and Forrest (1997) pointed out that employees with different cultural backgrounds vary in personal moral philosophies, ethical perceptions, ethical judgments, and ethical intentions. Therefore, organizational
members with different cultural backgrounds might react differently to ethical issues in their business, which could lead to conflicts between/among organizational members and some other challenges in organizational communication.

Cultural differences and global business have brought many new opportunities to multinational companies with all kinds of challenges in communication. Those challenges include cultivating trust among team members, overcoming communication barriers, aligning goals of individual team members, ensuring that the team possesses necessary knowledge and skills, and obtaining clarity regarding team objectives (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001). Research shows it takes longer for culturally diverse groups to perform well than it does for homogeneous teams (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000).

However, many multinational companies have not found good solutions to cope with those challenges. Govindarajan and Gupta (2001) reported that, among the 70 multinational business teams they researched, only 18% considered their performance “highly successful” and the remaining 82% were not satisfied with their performance. One third of the global business teams rated their performance as largely unsuccessful. To deal with the challenges posed by language and culture, Govindarajan and Gupta suggested multinational companies should provide some training on language and cross-cultural communication skills. Language training can help employees improve their
language ability and express themselves freely, thus effectively reducing misunderstandings caused by language barriers. Cross-cultural communication skills can help employees have a better understanding of different cultures and respect for diversity.

Moreover, Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1997) identified diversity initiatives in the following areas based on their research involving 8 multinational corporations: leadership and management, training and education, community relations, communication, performance and accountability, work-life balance, and career development. Among the above initiatives, education and training were determined to be the most effective diversity initiatives. However, companies put greatest efforts in leadership and management. My dissertation focuses on employees’ communication styles in multinational companies. The results should provide important information for multinational companies on education and training programs to improve employees’ communication effectiveness.

Culture and language are intertwined with each other. In many multinational companies, English is the preferred language for international business exchange (Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, & Piekkari, 2006). China branches of multinational companies are not the exception. Even in hiring new employees, English proficiency is considered an important criterion for many multinational companies in China. With the importance of communicating in English with employees in other branches and the
headquarters, English proficiency has been considered an important skill for future promotion in multinational companies whose headquarters is located in an English speaking country. Scholars have also noticed the dominance of English in global business. House (2002) explained that English has become a common international business language for the following reasons: the worldwide extension of the British Empire, the political and economic influence of the USA, the development of modern information and communication technologies, and the growth of international mergers and acquisitions. In addition, Tietze (2004) pointed out that much of professional management education originated from the U.S. and, thus, is in English, contributing to the popularity of English as a common language in global business. Some multinational companies have decided to embrace a common corporate language, believing that it will “increase efficiency by overcoming misunderstandings, reducing costs, avoiding time-consuming translations and creating a sense of belonging and cohesion within the firm” (Fredriksson et al., 2006).

Although English is promoted as a common language for communicating across borders in many multinational companies, linguistic diversity is the existing reality within the organization, and English is sometimes not as widely shared throughout the organization as management teams would assume (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, & Welch, 1999). Because Chinese language is very different from English, Chinese employees
might encounter more difficulties in communicating well in the English language work environment, especially for Chinese employees without any overseas experience. Chinese employees with overseas experience might benefit from their language training before they go abroad and during their stay in foreign countries. Fredriksson et al. (2006) noticed that “employees at lower hierarchical levels of multinational companies are more likely to speak only the local language” (p. 410). Furthermore, lack of competence in the company’s common language could prevent employees from effectively participating in critical information exchange (Goodall & Roberts, 2003). Employees who share a common language tend to build closer interpersonal relationships and exchange more information (Fredriksson et al., 2006). Therefore, language impacts multinational companies’ organizational communication at organizational, small group and interpersonal levels. In my dissertation research, English proficiency is a variable examined in relation with intercultural communication sensitivity, conflict management style and organizational communication satisfaction. The research results hold the potential for indicating how English proficiency is associated with some other organizational communication factors and whether some multinational companies should reconsider promoting English as working language or embrace the linguistic diversity in workplace.
Our world is changing rapidly to a global village. Chen and Starosta (1996) identified several important trends that transform the world into a global village as “technology development, globalization of the economy, widespread population migrations, the development of multiculturalism, and the demise of the nation-state in favor of sub- and supranational identifications” (p. 354). The economic, social-structural, and technology development has made our world more and more diverse. Individuals need to understand the role of culture in working places if they are to succeed in their careers, especially in multinational companies composed of professionals from different cultural backgrounds. Communication specialists are playing a significant role in assisting employees with different cultural backgrounds to engage in the organization. Multinational companies are expecting their communication specialists to achieve their external and internal communication goals in the complex multicultural contexts. Pounsford (2003) interviewed several communication experts in multinational companies and summarized the communication challenges in multinational companies as:

- developing influencing, facilitation and change skills;
- gathering intelligence from the business to understand internal audience needs;
- developing the central messages to support the business strategy and brand;
- managing without power – building the internal networks;
measuring the impact of communication. (p. 37)

Specifically, Chung and Smith (2007) summarized the challenges that multinational companies in China face as follows: “cross-cultural issues create difficulty at every level, from the interpersonal level relating to communication and negotiation, to the organizational level relating to decision making, human resource management practices, corporate legal institutions and liaison with government institutions” (p. 279).

Communication is imbedded in all the challenges at different levels.

Based on interviews with diverse managers and analysis of annual reports for fiscal 1996 and documents associated with eight U.S. based multinational corporations, Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1997) identified seven factors that influenced diversity in these corporations: demographic changes, diverse marketplace, need to improve productivity and remain competitive, globalization, top management’s focus on diversity as a business strategy, legal concerns, and diverse work teams. Based on the above factors, the China branches of multinational corporations are diverse in different ways. My dissertation research contributes to the discussion of diversity in multinational companies by examining communication among employees with diverse backgrounds, specifically, Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience.
Intercultural communication sensitivity has been identified in previous research as a factor that has important influences on communication within organizations. Taylor and Osland (2003) argued that intercultural sensitivity is an important factor that directly affects knowledge transfer in organizations. Govindarajan and Gupta (2001) identified cultural difference as an important hindrance to global business teams, and they argued that “unless the differences in assumptions and beliefs inherent in that diversity are explicitly addressed, the cohesiveness of the group is likely to suffer and impede effectiveness” (p. 65). Intercultural sensitivity, the desire and motivation that individuals have to understand cultural differences, is the requisite affective process in achieving effective intercultural communication among people from different cultures. Therefore, intercultural communication sensitivity arguably influences whether cultural differences within a work team can be acknowledged and negotiated in ways that result in effective team performance. Intercultural sensitivity, as a key to effective intercultural communication, is eventually an important factor in the operational success of multinational companies. O’Keeffe and Harington’s (2001) study of 119 Irish multinational companies revealed that effective and continuous communication is a key factor in the success of multinational companies. In Watveev and Milter’s (2004) study, American and Russian managers in multinational companies identified cultural sensitivity and access to technology as two common characteristics of high-performance
multicultural teams. In my dissertation study, cultural sensitivity was further examined in relation to employees’ frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication, conflict management styles, and organizational communication satisfaction. Thus, the research results can provide detailed information on whether cultural sensitivity relates to different aspects of multinational companies’ organizational communication.

Zimpfer and Underwood (1988) called for research identifying the communication skills needed by and common communication concerns of multinational companies’ employees, and urged scholars to develop an international business communication model for a better understanding of culture and its effect on business. My dissertation research focuses on several issues in communication such as intercultural communication sensitivity, conflict management style, and the use of technology; the results of this study provide a clearer picture of how those factors influence employees’ organizational communication satisfaction. Although my study does not intend to develop a model, the relationship among those variables discovered in this research can provide some foundation for the development of a model in future research. Doktor, Tung and Glinow (1991) argued that most contemporary management theories are based on Western thinking, and more theories should be developed that include a more diverse, culturally rich perspective. This research incorporates cultural perspectives and examines
the communication issues in the China branches of multinational companies. The research results provide new insights into global management and offer the potential for building new theories.

Culture and Cross-cultural Conflict Management

Conflict management skill is a crucial factor for intercultural communication satisfaction. Cross-cultural conflict management is even more challenging than conflict management within one cultural group, because the different values and norms held by various cultural groups frame their conflict expectations and the ways they choose to cope with conflicts. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001a) concluded that “If the different cultural members continue to engage in inappropriate or ineffective conflict behaviors, the miscommunication can easily spiral into a complex, polarized conflict situation” (p. 1). In our increasingly globalized world and increasingly diversified workplaces, studies of cross-cultural conflict management have significant social and practical effects including increasing interpersonal relationship satisfaction, enhancing individuals’ creative problem-solving abilities, and improving communication competency in a globalized and diverse workplace (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001a).

Extensive research has demonstrated that individuals with different cultural backgrounds vary in their conflict management behaviors. Siira, Rogan and Hall (2004) used the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) to measure conflict
approaches and concluded that Finns and Americans do not differ in their use of nonconfrontation, but Finns use more solution-orientated and less controlling behaviors than Americans. Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin (1991) compared cross-cultural conflict preferences in an individualistic culture with those of a collectivistic culture and concluded:

Overall, the evidence suggests that members of individualistic cultures tend to prefer direct conflict communication styles and solution-oriented styles. These two styles tend to emphasize the value of autonomy, competitiveness, and the need for control. Conversely, members of collectivistic cultures tend to prefer obliging and conflict-avoidance styles. These two styles tend to emphasize the value for passive compliance and for maintaining relational harmony in conflict interactions. (p. 70)

Conflict management has become a recurring theme in studies of international business. A survey of young managers in the U.S., China, Philippines, and India indicated that Chinese managers are more likely to use an avoiding style because of the relatively high value they place on conformity and tradition, while U.S. managers are more likely to use a competing style because of the relatively high value they place on individual achievement (Morris, Williams, Leung, Larrick, Mendoza, Bhatnagar et al., 1998). Employing a three-way factorial design (culture type × relational distance × power
relationship), Lee and Rogan (1991) compared organizational conflict management behaviors of Koreans with those of Americans and found that Koreans use solution-oriented strategies more extensively while Americans prefer to using either non-confrontation or control strategies.

With the complexities that culture adds to conflict management, the definition of intercultural conflict management needs to reflect the significant role that culture plays in the conflict management process. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001a) defined intercultural conflict management as:

the experience of emotional frustration in conjunction with perceived incompatibility of values, norms, face orientations, goals, scarce resources, processes, and/or outcomes between a minimum of two parties from two different cultural communities in an interactive situation. (p. 17)

In the present study, Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience are the two comparison groups. Both groups are strongly influenced by the Chinese culture, but those with overseas experience are more likely to be more influenced by their exposure to a foreign culture than those without overseas experience and, thus, have different thinking and behavioral patterns and different levels of ease when communicating in a foreign language. Furthermore, the common overseas experience that some employees share might tie them together to form a subgroup within
the company. Chinese employees with overseas experience have the advantage of knowing more about foreign culture, and this advantage could gain them some unique career development opportunities in multinational companies. The differences in career development opportunities can also create some boundaries between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without. Therefore, in this study, Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience are treated as members of two cultural communities in the diverse workplace. Chen and Starosta (1997-98) identified cultural context, language differences, and thinking patterns as three aspects of culture that strongly influence conflict management/resolution. With the co-existence of foreign culture and domestic culture in the China branches of multinational companies, the conflict management of those two groups of Chinese employees is an interesting and significant topic to investigate.

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001b) discussed the multiple sources of conflict in a culturally diverse group. First, cultural differences are a prevalent source of conflict as differences in beliefs and communication styles can cause misunderstanding in communication, which could eventually lead to intercultural conflict. For instance, individuals from an individualist culture tend to use direct communication styles while individuals from a collectivist culture tend to use indirect styles.
Second, the competing needs for assimilation and preservation of cultural identity could result in intercultural conflicts. On the one hand, members of organizations need to accept the cultural values of the larger society and the organization and deemphasize the unique traditions and norms of their own small cultural group; on the other hand, group members want to keep their own traditions and norms. There might be conflicts between individuals who feel everyone should sacrifice themselves for the good of the organization and those who believe group members can be themselves and remain a member of the organization.

Third, power discrepancies between culturally diverse groups can lead to intercultural conflicts. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001b) suggest that the proportion of representation in an organization is a measure of power. When power is unequal, there is a great potential for conflict and misunderstanding (Kanter, 1977; Larkey, 1996). In China branches of multinational companies, the power differences between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience are more complicated than the portion of representation. In most China branches, the majority of Chinese employees do not have overseas experience (Fan, 2006), and they are the “majority” in terms of representation of proportion. However, many Chinese employees with overseas experience are in positions with more power in the China branch because of their ability to bridge foreign cultures and the Chinese culture. Moreover, overseas
experience is normally perceived as an asset to the China branch and, as such, can result in employees with such experience having more promotion opportunities. Although Chinese employees with overseas experience compose a smaller portion of the whole branch, they might actually have more power in the organization than other groups. In addition, many China branches of multinational companies are struggling to balance the headquarters’ foreign culture and Chinese culture, which makes identifying the “dominant” culture in the China branch a complicated issue.

Other than the above sources, Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001b) also identified competing goals and competition for scarce resources as key sources of intercultural conflicts. Individuals from different cultures might have different goals in group work. For instance, individuals from collectivist cultures might be more relationship oriented, while individuals from individualist cultures might be more task oriented. The different goals individuals have could create conflicts. The competition for allocation of resources has been a source for all kinds of conflicts including intercultural conflicts when resources are defined as “any positively perceived physical, economic, or social consequence” (Miller & Steinberg, 1975, p. 65).

In sum, intercultural conflicts exist widely in the globalized world and diversified workplace, and they are difficult and challenging to manage. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001d) suggested individuals need to be creative, adaptable, and flexible in managing
intercultural conflicts through multiple approaches. Effective intercultural conflict management necessitates individuals who are sensitive to cultural differences and aware of their own ethnocentric biases and culturally-based attributions.

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001c) also provided some specific guidelines for managing intercultural conflicts between supervisors and subordinates. Supervisors should understand the power imbalances in the organization. With cultural sensitivity, supervisors could be a bridge for the employees in the organization and a bridge between cultural majority and minority members. Conflicts between supervisors and subordinates are common. Subordinates need to recognize the authority of the supervisors and try to use effective ways to confront those conflicts. Subordinates should avoid confronting their supervisors in public so as to avoid threatening their supervisor’s face. Talking with bosses in private could be a better solution. Subordinates should also be constructive in managing intercultural conflicts with their bosses by communicating directly about the conflict itself and providing potential solutions. Intercultural conflicts are normally perceived as delicate situations because many people are sensitive about racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Employees should facilitate proactive dialogue to stop intercultural conflict from escalating in the first place.

Chinese conflict management styles are different from the styles common in many other cultures. Chen and Starosta (1997-8) explained as follows:
Differences in cultural context, language system, and thinking patterns among the Chinese and people of other cultures unquestionably lead the Chinese to have their own conflict styles and unique ways of managing and resolving conflicts. (p. 2)

Furthermore, Chen and Starosta (1997-8) identified harmony, inter-relation (guanxi), face (mientze), and power as four important factors influencing the process of Chinese conflict management. Harmony is the goal rather than the means of Chinese conflict management; guanxi refers to relationships between two parties; mientze is the projected image of ourselves in a relationship network (Ting-Toomey, 1988); power is defined as the control of resources valued by the other party.

The above four factors identified by Chen and Starosta (1997-8) are important cultural and social components in Chinese society that influence the way that Chinese people communicate. Guanxi, the interpersonal relationship, is valued by most countries, and might even be valued more by Chinese people for its significant role in Chinese culture and society. For instance, Chang and Holt (1991) argued:

Interpersonal relations, then, can be seen as one of the very bases of Chinese social fabric – culture and relations are connected, weaving in and among one another, endlessly shifting within webs of Chinese “interpersonal relations.” (p. 269)
Furthermore, Gao (1998) identified five major speaking practices in Chinese culture: (1) implicit communication, (2) listening-centeredness, (3) politeness, (4) a focus on insiders, and (5) face-directed communication strategies or mientze. These five speaking practices coincide with the four factors influencing Chinese people’s conflict management as identified by Chen and Starosta (1997-8). Mientze is a common theme. The implicit communication and politeness are effective strategies to maintain harmony. Chang (2001) pointed out that sometimes Chinese people even try to maintain superficial harmony concealing underlying aggressiveness and ulterior motives that can lead to conflicts. In examining Chinese people’s conflict management style, one cannot neglect the important role that harmony, the core value of Chinese culture, plays in Chinese communication behaviors, because “the ultimate goal of Chinese communication is to pursue conflict-free interpersonal and social relationships” (Chen, 2008, pp. 2-3).

Taoism is one of the most influential philosophies in China, and affects many aspects of Chinese people’s work and life. Through close examination of the ancient Chinese texts on Taoism, Crawford (1997) concluded that Taoism suggests four interdependent rules for dealing with conflict: (1) do not fight and try to avoid contention; (2) take a holistic approach to resolve conflicts and recognize other factors that are related to the conflict in the system; (3) realize the potential role that conflicts play in interpersonal relationships, and sometimes conflicts can create solidarity with other
people or within a group; (4) based on the “exhausting the yang to return to the yin” frame, conflict is “a way of experiencing harmony, its complement, and becoming peaceful” (p. 367). In summary, Taoism connects conflicts with the key themes of “harmony” and “interconnectedness” in Chinese culture, and encourages individuals to find peaceful ways to solve conflicts and transit conflicts to positive interpersonal relationships. The Taoist way of dealing with conflicts can have direct or indirect effects on the majority Chinese people’s way of dealing with conflicts.

In dealing with interpersonal conflicts, Chinese people sometimes use mediators. Ma (1992) reported that Chinese people tend to choose a friend of the two parties in the conflict or an elder person respected by both as the mediator. In Chinese conflict mediation, impartiality and face maintenance are the two key factors in successful mediation.

Chung and Smith’s (2007) study is one of the first efforts to explore Chinese employees’ conflict management styles in relation to their motivations to learn their Western headquarters’ cultures. Chung and Smith identified lack of cultural understanding as an important source of conflict in their interview research in an Australian multinational company’s China branch. Their research demonstrated several differences between mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese employees with respect to cultural attitudes and conflict management styles. Compared with overseas Chinese,
mainland Chinese were more interested in learning the Australian culture and the culture of their organization’s headquarters, although neither mainland Chinese nor overseas Chinese knew much about those cultures. Both mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese used a high context communication style, but some overseas Chinese were also capable of a low context communication style. In decision-making, both mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese were emotion driven, while overseas Chinese were also self-interested and took a rational approach. When mainland Chinese were interviewed about conflict management, they were guarded and diplomatic, reflecting the Chinese value of maintaining harmony as much as possible. Overseas Chinese with mainland knowledge tended to seek the cause of the conflict and implement effective resolution strategies. Trust was deemed an important factor affecting interpersonal communication among employees. Mainland Chinese trusted their mainland Chinese peers first, then their Australian expatriates, and lastly their overseas Chinese peers. However, it was difficult to judge overseas Chinese employees’ trust level toward colleagues with different backgrounds.

Chung and Smith (2007) compared the mainland Chinese employee group and overseas Chinese employee group. That latter group is perceived, by their mainland work compatriots, as foreigners with very limited Chinese background. My dissertation attempted to compare two “Chinese” groups, one with overseas experience and the other
without overseas experience. The qualitative findings from Chung and Smith’s study provide a good foundation for further investigation of Chinese employees’ conflict management styles in multinational corporations. My research employs a quantitative approach to analyze Chinese employees’ conflict management styles in relation to other communication factors and, as a result, yields more generalizable results concerning this topic.

Technology and Global Communication

Different communication technologies, such as telephone and computer mediated communication, have become a powerful force in the ongoing globalization process, and have strong effects on the development of multinational companies by helping them to achieve efficiency, coordination, and communication. One important benefit of using communication-related technologies is that they can enable organizational members to effectively communicate and collaborate across organizational and geographical boundaries. Specifically, research has proven that the use of technology can facilitate communication among managers across functional and geographical boundaries in multinational companies, and thusly enhance coordination of multinational activities in the development of strategic opportunities (Anderson & Foss, 2005). Anderson and Foss pointed out that multinationality in itself does not guarantee multinational companies can develop a satisfactory level of strategic opportunity. Rather, the internal use of
information and communication technology enhances computer-mediated communication among managers in different organizational units, which facilitates the development of new business opportunities across a multinational company and compensates for the complexities of the multinational structure of the organization.

Furthermore, scholars agree that the ability to exploit local opportunities through effective integration of multinational activities is a key factor influencing the performance of multinational companies (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998; Prahalad & Doz, 1987). Information technology can be used as a tool to serve the dual objectives of exploring local opportunities across different national markets and integrating those local opportunities effectively across multinational branches in the company, thus maximizing the economic benefits and improving the functional performance of multinational companies. Advances in communication related technologies have helped multinational companies to “increase their economic efficiencies by learning about and then obtaining inputs of managerial, human power, and capital from more cost-effective sources around the globe” (Doktor et al., 1991, p. 259). Therefore, how to effectively use communication technologies becomes an important research topic that can provide multinational companies new insights to improve their management.

The use of technology is essential for organizational communication in multinational companies. Technology adoption influences how certain technology is used
by employees and its effects. In adopting and implementing certain technologies, decision
makers have to consider three elements in producing an integrated communication
package: atmosphere, process, and methods (Foreman, 1997). Organizations need to
consider both potential benefits as well as the problems associated with any technology
under consideration, and create an appropriate atmosphere and process to adopt that
technology so as to maximize the positive benefits of the technology. Other factors can
also influence technology adoption (Flanagin, 2000). First, organizational features, such
as age, size, and culture, influence new technology adoption. Usually, younger, larger
firms with higher levels of technology are the early adopters. Second, perceived
organizational advantages, such as increased communication and increased information
flow, influence technology adoption at both organizational and interpersonal levels. Third,
social pressures, such as the self-image an organization presents in society, can push an
organization to adopt technologies that have been adopted by many other organizations.
O’Kane, Hargie and Tourish (2004) summarized factors that influence employee adoption
of technology as follows: “staff [members] are more likely to embrace new technology if
it is user friendly, readily accessible (for example, on their desk), employed by colleagues,
seems to be effective, and has fringe benefits (for example, can be used for personal
matters)” (p. 76). Bansler and Havn (2004) emphasized the importance of adapting new
technology to the organizational context and establishing appropriate conventions for use, or the technology is likely to be underutilized, misused or rejected.

Research has been conducted to examine the relationship between technology and organizing of multinational firms. Jarvenpaa and Ives (1993) gathered mail survey data from information technology managers in 109 multinationals and discovered that multinational firms used different ways of organizing their global information technology activities. In nearly half of those organizations, the way information technology activities were organized was inconsistent with the way the organization was reportedly structured. Group performance was not guaranteed by the usage of new technology as a way of communication. Groups using new technology as their means for communicating shared less information and reached poorer decisions compared with groups interacting face-to-face (Hollingshead, 1996).

Goodbody (2005) argued that team communication, along with team formation, trust, and collaboration, are the factors that determine the success or failure of global virtual teams. Furthermore, selecting appropriate technology can ensure team communication. Usually, multiple technologies can be chosen by employees in multinational companies for work-related communication. Due to complexity level, accessibility, communication habits and other factors, employees might have different preferences for technology use. However, research shows there is no strong relationship
between the level of information technology sophistication and the tightness of coordination of dispersed and specialized corporate units (Reddy, 1994). Therefore, technological sophistication is not the focus of the present study. Rather, this research focuses on the frequency of using certain technologies for work-related communication in relation to some other communication phenomena such as conflict management styles, intercultural communication sensitivity, and organizational communication satisfaction.

In the existing literature, communication technology has been examined not only at the organizational and small group level, but also at interpersonal level. Cohen (2000) clearly stated the important role that technology plays in employee communication: “electronic media has come to the forefront of human resources to solve critical challenges in employee communication” (p. 12). Technology has had an effect on traditional organizational hierarchy. Employees can have instant and direct contact with senior managers via e-mail. Customers and stakeholders can easily reach anyone in the organization as well. The free information flow can evoke a sense of staff empowerment as Phaneuf (2000) explained that employees feel more in control of their communication and individual working environment, and more valued in the organization.

Today, traditional approaches to communication, such as face-to-face communication and snail mail, are often replaced by new technologies, such as the Internet, e-mail and other technologies, including intranets and/or extranets. Those
changes have significantly influenced internal and external organizational communication. An intranet connects all the members of an organization and flattens organizational structure. An extranet extends the intranet to the external stakeholders of an organization. The connectivity and the collaborative opportunities provided by an intranet and/or an extranet can lead to improved decision making and innovation. E-mail, one of the most frequently used technologies, enables the “instant transfer of messages and documents world-wide between people on the same private network, or with access to the same public network” (Samuels, 1997, p. 35). The asynchronous nature of e-mail provides customers with the choice of responding to a message at their convenience which reduces the pressure of face-to-face communication and telephone communication. Not surprisingly, according to DMNews, two-thirds of U.S. companies reported that using e-mail marketing increased their sales in 2001 (as cited by O’Kane et al., 2004). Compared with snail mail, e-mail greatly reduces communication time and cost. Those advantages of e-mail have made it a widely used tool for employees to communicate with their customers and their co-workers.

Meanwhile, it is also important to recognize that the limited time individuals spend on writing an e-mail could create some misunderstandings and sometimes even conflicts among people due to spelling, grammatical errors, and the wrong communication tone in the e-mail. McCarthy (2000) pointed out that, for confidential and
important information, organizations still prefer delivering messages through traditional mail; e-mail is used more for routine administration because, compared with traditional mail, the privacy and security levels of e-mail is lower. Therefore, e-mail can be a very powerful and convenient communication tool in organizations only when it is used appropriately. Gattiker (2001) clearly stated the importance of using technology appropriately: “with every opportunity for positive outcomes, we also have a chance to have negative results instead. It is not so much the technology as the way we use the technology that will shape our information future” (p. 185).

Technology affects organizational communication at both the micro- and the macro-level. Employees spend a lot of working time using technology, and their use of technology is related to their job satisfaction in different ways (O’Kane et al., 2004). First, technology helps employees to complete their tasks more easily and increases their confidence in their abilities, thus enhancing self identity as an effective employee. Second, the wide collaboration and greater communication enabled by technology help employees to develop interpersonal relationships with their colleagues. Third, technology supports information and knowledge sharing among organizational members which can lead to increases in organizational innovation.

However, managers might perceive technology negatively. Research shows that new technology can become a threat to management jobs as decisions are increasingly
becoming the collective product of employees (Langnau, 2000). Therefore, managers might perceive new technological innovations in the organization as associated with employee mistrust of the management team. The management fear of new technology could become an obstacle to the adoption and diffusion of certain new technologies in the organization (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999). Employees have higher expectations for sharing information and participating in decision making through technologically facilitated communication, while managers fear that new technologies could threaten their power. Therefore, O’Kane et al. (2004) suggested that organizations need to consider the different perceptions of and opinions toward new technology, and “must be sensitive to management fears when implementing new technology, and instigate procedures, such as retraining and open discussion, to overcome them” (p. 87).

Technology has brought many positive changes to the workplace, but organizations need to be aware of the negative side of technology. Technologies can sometimes create interpersonal distance. Employees might tend to rely on communicating through mediated channels, such as e-mail, text message, etc., instead of meeting each other face to face, even when it is easy and convenient to get together. Reliance on new technologies for workplace communication has the potential for eventually affecting interpersonal relationship building. Technology makes it possible for some employees to work away from the office, which could be a better balance between the demands of
work and life for those employees, but there might be an “isolation effect,” causing such employees to feel distant from the organization and decreasing their job satisfaction (Gainey, Kelley & Hill, 1999).

Based on the above discussion of the multiple roles that technologies play in the global working environment, it is hard to draw a clear conclusion as to whether certain technologies should be adopted by multinational companies or not. Organizations should conduct further research on the relationships among certain technologies and other organizational factors, and make careful decisions as to whether and how to adopt certain technologies in multinational companies. As O’Kane et al. (2004) argued, “the extra choices generated by technology have added a layer of complexity to the management decision making process” (p. 89).

My dissertation research compares the frequencies of the use of different technologies of Chinese employees without overseas experience and Chinese employees with overseas experience, and investigates whether the frequencies associated with using certain technologies are related to the level of employee organizational communication satisfaction, intercultural communication sensitivity, and conflict management styles. The research results can provide important information for multinational companies to encourage or discourage their employees to use certain technologies for communication by making those technologies more accessible and providing more technological support.
Organizational Communication Satisfaction

Employee organizational communication satisfaction is an important topic to investigate because extensive research shows different constructs of organizational communication satisfaction positively correlate with employee job satisfaction, which is crucial for employee productivity and company performance. Among all of the constructs of organizational communication satisfaction, supervisor communication, communication climate, and personal feedback are reported to be most strongly correlated with job satisfaction (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986) and job performance (Tsai, Chuang, & Hsieh, 2009). Mount and Back’s (1999) study based on a sample of hotel employees shows two constructs of organizational communication satisfaction, downward communication and communication climate, are most strongly related to job satisfaction. A significant positive correlation between communication satisfaction and overall job satisfaction has been found in different occupations and organizations, such as academic organizations (Nicholson, 1980), business education teachers (Duke, 1981), librarians (Green, 1982), and hospital nurses (Pincus, 1986). However, employee organizational communication satisfaction remains unexplored in multinational companies. This research will contribute to the literature on organizational communication satisfaction by examining Chinese employee organizational communication satisfaction in multinational
companies in relation to some other components of communication, such as use of technology, communication sensitivity, and conflict management style.

Communication satisfaction has been widely studied in organizational contexts, and has been shown to be related to many aspects of organizational functioning. Clampitt and Downs (1993) surveyed and interviewed employees in two representative organizations (one a service organization and the other a manufacturing organization), and found that communication satisfaction has an impact on productivity. Communication satisfaction has also been found to be positively correlated with organizational identification (Nakra, 2006) and organizational commitment (Varona, 1996). Varona surveyed 307 employees in three organizations in Guatemala concerning their levels of organizational communication satisfaction and found that supervisors are significantly more satisfied than subordinates with overall communication practices. Akkirman and Harris (2005) compared the organizational communication satisfaction level of virtual workers and traditional office workers, and found that virtual workers are more satisfied with their organizational communication, although virtual workers face more challenges when using technology to communicate with other co-workers effectively.

Sources to improve and inhibit communication satisfaction have also been researched. When communicating with supervisors and top managers, the major sources
of communication satisfaction were the supervisor’s willingness to listen, to trust, and to accept new ideas (Varona, 2002). In addition, the quality of leader-member exchange, which refers to the dyadic relationship that supervisors develop among employees characterized by “increased levels of information exchange, mutual support, informal influence, trust, and greater negotiating latitude and input in decisions” (Mueller & Lee, 2002, p. 221), also contributes to employee organizational communication satisfaction at interpersonal, group, and organizational levels (Mueller & Lee, 2002).

Employee communication satisfaction level and factors influencing satisfaction appear to vary by age. Through surveying 374 employees working at 6 hotels managed by the same company, Fu and Mount (2002) concluded that older workers have higher levels of organizational communication satisfaction and job satisfaction than younger workers. Downward communication and corporate information are the two most important factors that contribute to younger employees’ job satisfaction, while vertical communication is the most important factor that influences older employees’ job satisfaction. Furthermore, younger employees need more information regarding their job and their company to be more satisfied with organizational communication, while openness of communication is more important for older employees to achieve higher levels of organizational communication satisfaction. In my dissertation research, some demographic information was collected on the survey distributed to Chinese employees
in multinational companies, including age, years of tenure in the company, position, and educational level. Further analysis of how employees’ levels of organizational communication satisfaction differ by those demographic factors holds the potential for providing important information on whether and how multinational companies can increase organizational communication satisfaction level of employees belonging to different demographic groups.

Communication satisfaction has been studied in a number of countries outside of the United States, such as Nigeria, Mexico, China, Guatemala, and Australia (Varona, 1996). Organizational communication satisfaction has also proven to be an important topic to explore in Chinese contexts. Tsai, Chuang, and Hsieh (2009) reported that employee communication satisfaction is positively correlated with job performance while negatively correlated with turnover intention in Taiwan. Lee (1989) studied the relationship between communication and job satisfaction among faculty at junior colleges in China. Based on the survey data of 178 randomly selected faculty members from 32 junior colleges of technology in China, Lee (1989) concluded that faculty members in China showed indifference toward communication satisfaction. Faculty members were slightly satisfied with their job but were dissatisfied with promotions. There was a positive correlation between faculty communication and job satisfaction, but gender, age,
and faculty rank were not critical factors in the communication satisfaction-job satisfaction relationship.

In a later study, Lee (1994) compared Chinese employees’ communication satisfaction with that of employees in the U.S. The results of this study can stimulate new ways of thinking about organizational issues in cross-cultural and cross-national settings. Lee reported faculty members in the U.S. have a higher level of communication satisfaction than faculty members in China. Because of a more homogeneous social and cultural environment, the two Chinese faculty member samples had a smaller range of scores than the two American samples. Some dimensions of organizational communication satisfaction were ranked high among both faculty member groups in the U.S. and faculty members in China. For instance, communication with superiors, communication with peers, meetings with colleagues, and the climate of communication within the organization were all ranked high both by U.S. faculty members and by Chinese faculty members. In this regard, faculty members in China and faculty members in the U.S. had similar experiences in those dimensions of organizational communication. Lee (1994) also reported two evident divergences between faculty members in the U.S. and those in China. The first divergence was that faculty members in China ranked the personal feedback dimension as third while faculty members in the U.S. ranked it as low as seventh. The personal feedback dimension referred to the everyday evaluation and
feedback provided to employees concerning their job performance. Another divergence occurred with respect to the organizational integration dimension which referred to employees’ sense of membership in a work unit. Faculty members in the U.S. ranked it higher than faculty members in China. Lee argued that those differences might be due to the different social and cultural contexts of the U.S. in comparison to China.

Lee’s (1994) study provided important information on Chinese faculty members’ communication satisfaction; however, job satisfaction among employees in multinational companies in China remains unexplored. Lee also suggested future research should examine employees in business organizations in different cultures to compare cultural similarities and differences. In that regard, cultural diversity has been found to be related to employee satisfaction level. Milliken and Martins (1996) reported that members of highly diverse groups have less organizational commitment, higher levels of dissatisfaction, and a higher rate of turnover. My dissertation research fills this literature gap by examining how organizational communication satisfaction is related to intercultural sensitivity, conflict management style, and technology use in multinational companies in China. Suggestions for improving multinational companies’ employee communication satisfaction are also examined.
Chapter Summary and Research Questions

Research on Chinese communication is an important component of Asian communication studies. Chen and Starosta (1997-8) explained the significance of understanding the communication of people from the Chinese diaspora as follows: First, the large Chinese population and the rapid developing economy in China strongly influence many aspects of world affairs and business; Second, having mutual understanding of different cultures among different populations is important “for global citizens to live together peacefully and productively” (p. 1).

Although China is a large country with a long history and is taking an increasingly important role in the world, the ferment of Chinese communication studies only started in the last ten years. This is partly due to the fact that the roots of communication studies started in the West, and only in recent years, have more and more Chinese scholars received solid training in the communication discipline from the West. Although there are some well established Western scholars who have made significant contributions to research on Chinese communication behaviors, the lack of understanding of the Chinese contexts and culture has been a long existing barrier for those researchers. As a Chinese scholar trained in the U.S., I applied my Chinese perspective to this study to investigate some communication variables derived from the Western literature, but also relevant to Chinese organizational contexts.
Stohl (2001) clearly stated the relationship between culture and organizations: “culture is grounded materially in day-to-day communication activity that cannot be separated from the organization” (p. 351). In the second chapter of my dissertation, I have reviewed the literature on how culture interacts with, is imbedded within, and/or influences other important organizational variables, including employee conflict management styles, use of technology, and organizational communication satisfaction.

Because my dissertation research was conducted in the Chinese context with Chinese employees, I also contextualized my study in the scholarship of Chinese communication. The literature shows that, although the key variables being examined in my dissertation have been investigated in mainly Western contexts respectively, the relationships among those variables remain unexplored. Furthermore, those organizational communication variables have not been thoroughly studied in multinational companies in China. Therefore, my dissertation results can contribute to the existing literature on the relationships among intercultural communication sensitivity, conflict management style, technology use, and organizational communication satisfaction of Chinese employees in multinational companies in China.

Based on the extensive literature review, the following research questions are posed for my dissertation research:
RQ 1: Does the average level of intercultural sensitivity of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 2: Do the dominant conflict management styles of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from those of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 3: Does the average level of organizational communication satisfaction of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 4: Does the use of organizational communication technologies among mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 5: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 6: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?
RQ 7: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 8: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different conflict management styles of multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 9: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different technologies in organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 10: Is there a correlation between the frequency of using certain technologies in organizational communication and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Online surveys were administered to Chinese employees in several multinational companies whose headquarters were in a country other than China. The online surveys included instruments that measure the following variables: intercultural sensitivity, organizational communication conflict management style, employees’ use of communication-related technology at work, and organizational communication satisfaction. In addition, selected demographic information was collected from each respondent.

Method and Procedures

All procedures were approved by Ohio University’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) and the University of Alberta’s Research Ethics Board (see Appendix B) prior to data collection. Before responding to the survey, participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality and their rights. Those volunteering to participate were then instructed to sign an online informed consent form before completing the survey questionnaire. Both the English version and the Chinese version of the consent forms are in Appendix D.

I used my own social networks to approach Chinese employees of multinational companies in China. The data collection period spanned from November 2008 to June 2009. Two stages were involved in recruiting participants. During the first stage, I
contacted the gatekeepers of the China branches of several multinational companies through my social network. I asked the companies to send an official letter to their Chinese employees inviting them to participate in the online survey. Although, before the data collection stage, the gatekeepers of the China branches of several multinational companies, such as Nokia China, Intel China, TNT China, and UBS China, indicated interest in this project, when I started the data collection, for a variety of reasons none of them were able to conduct the survey with all of the Chinese employees in their China branch. Some of them explained that this survey had time conflicts with some other surveys that their human resources department planned to conduct; two gatekeepers in my social network had left the companies they worked for during the data collection stage. In addition, the time that I collected data for this study was during the global financial crisis, starting at the end of 2008, and many multinational companies were struggling with financial challenges threatening the survival of the company and their human resources. During this period of time, several gatekeepers indicated that conducting surveys on organizational communication could be sensitive in nature; thus, they were reluctant to do so.

Without seeing any signs of the economy getting better soon, I decided to change the approach to data collection to use a snowball technique. At the second stage, I contacted all of my Chinese acquaintances who worked for the China branch of a
multinational company with the headquarters in a country other than China. I sent invitation e-mails with the online survey link. I invited my acquaintances to fill out the survey and also asked them to invite their Chinese colleagues to fill out the online survey. Both the English version and Chinese version of the invitation e-mails are in Appendix C.

The snowball technique did not work well for some acquaintances. Some of the acquaintances shared with me that many Chinese employees were not willing to spend time filling out the survey because they did not see any “direct” and “immediate” benefits of doing so. The researcher’s acquaintances also commented that participating in social scientific research is not something that Chinese people are used to doing because “participation” is not a Chinese cultural tradition. Chinese employees tend to shy away from things that do not affect them directly and immediately as many of them are strongly influenced by the old Chinese saying: “if it has nothing to do with you, leave it there” (Shi Bu Guan Ji, Gao Gao Gua Qi). In addition, some potential participants were concerned about the confidentiality of the survey. Most Chinese employees were not familiar with the “informed consent” procedure that is so much a part of human subject related research in North America. This was especially true of Chinese employees without any overseas experience. Therefore, it was difficult to build the needed “trust” between researcher and participants. Although I was able to get enough respondents to fill out the survey in the end, the process was much more difficult and longer than expected.
for the above reasons. The difficulties that I experienced in data collection with this study are very likely to be common obstacles to conducting similar research in multinational companies in China, which could be an important reason for why the research literature on Chinese employees in multinational companies remains scant.

The online survey was administered through the Remark Web Survey® system on a server hosted at the University of Alberta for which the researcher worked. In the invitation e-mail, the potential respondent was provided with the online links for both the English version and the Chinese version of the survey. As anyone could visit the survey link webpage, to ensure only the individuals who were invited could fill out the survey, I provided a password for the respondents to access the survey. If the participant was interested in filling out the survey, he/she could choose to click the English or Chinese survey link included in the invitation e-mail, which would direct the participant to the Chinese version or the English version of the password page. After the participant entered the password, he/she was directed to the consent form page. After knowing more about details of the research, such as the purpose, benefits and risks of participation, the respondents could then decide to click “consent” to continue to fill out the survey or “quit” to stop.

The online survey contained five parts. The first part included demographic questions; the second part was the Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Scale (ISS);
the third part was a revised version of the Technology Usage Scale (TUS); the fourth part was the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI); and the fifth part was the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ). Both the Chinese version and the English version of the survey are in Appendix E. Details about each instrument will be discussed in measurements section of this chapter.

Participants

Demographic Information Questions

At the beginning of the survey, there were eight questions constructed by the researcher to gather some important background information concerning the respondents. The first question asked about the company for which the respondent worked. This information was used to confirm that the respondent was working for a multinational company in China and to identify the headquarters’ location. Because this dissertation research intended to compare communication behaviors of Chinese employees with overseas experience with those without overseas experience, the second and third questions asked about whether the respondent had any overseas experience and details of his/her overseas experience, including the countries visited, the length of stay, and the respondent’s major activities during any visits to a foreign country. The fourth question asked about the respondent’s level of desire to go to other countries, which could be an indicator of their willingness to know more about other cultures and improve their
intercultural communication capability. The fifth question asked about the respondent’s sex, and the sixth question asked about the respondent’s age. The seventh question asked about how long the respondent worked for his/her current company. The eighth question asked about the respondent’s position in the company: first-entry staff, experienced staff, manager/supervisor, executive, or other. The ninth question asked about the respondent’s education level: high school diploma, associate’s/vocational degree, bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree or higher, or others. The demographic information gathering section of the survey is in Appendix F.

Participants’ Demographics

A total of 154 Chinese employees of multinational organizations in China responded to the survey. Most of the respondents (n=138, 89.61%) filled out the survey in Chinese. Slightly more male employees (n=87, 56.49%) responded to the survey than female employees (n=66, 43.86%); 1 respondent did not respond to the item concerning sex. The respondents’ age ranged from 22 to 45, with an average age of 30.58; 2 respondents did not provide their ages.

More respondents without overseas experience (n=100, 64.94%) responded to the survey than those with overseas experience (n=53, 34.42%); 1 respondent did not provide this information. Although the number of respondents with overseas experience and those without was not balanced, this situation reflects the reality of human resources in China.
branches of multinational corporations in that the majority of the employees are domestic and do not have any overseas experience (Fan, 2006). The China branches of multinational companies have difficulties in finding competent Chinese employees with overseas experience and/or degrees in implementing their employee localization strategies (Wang, Wang, & Su, 2007). Overall, the respondents showed a moderate level of desire to go to other countries, with a mean of 3.07 on a 1-5 point Likert scale (SD=0.97). Among the respondents, 10 (6.49%) indicated a very low level of desire to go to other countries, 23 indicated a low level (14.94%), 78 (50.65%) indicated a medium level, 27 (17.53%) indicated a high level, 13 (8.44%) indicated a very high level, and 3 (1.95%) did not respond to this question.

The 53 respondents who had overseas experience had visited a wide variety of countries, including the U.S., Canada, Singapore, Great Britain, Norway, and Thailand, among others, for study, work, or travel purposes. Two respondents did not provide specific information on countries they visited. Among the 51 respondents with specific information on their overseas experience, 10 of them visited one or more foreign country but stayed in each country for less than a month; 41 respondents reported that they had stayed in a foreign country (or multiple foreign countries) for an average of 18.42 months, ranging from 1 month to 116 months; 33 respondents reported they had visited countries
classified as having individualistic cultures; 18 respondents reported they visited countries with collectivist cultures.

Almost all of the respondents had achieved a higher education: 23 respondents (14.94%) had associate’s/vocational degrees; 89 respondents (57.79) held a Bachelor’s degree; 38 respondents (24.68%) held a Master’s degree or above. Only 1 respondent (.65%) was limited to a high school diploma. Three respondents did not provide information concerning their educational level. The respondents had worked for their multinational companies for periods of time that ranged from 1 month to 15 years, with the average length of stay being 42.68 months (SD=34.79); 2 respondents did not provide this information. The respondents were at different positions in their companies including 22 (14.29%) first-entry staff, 78 (50.65%) experienced staff, 41 (26.62%) managers/supervisors, and 10 (6.49%) executives; 3 respondents did not provide this information. A Chi-square test was performed to determine whether there were significant differences between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience in their positions in multinational companies. With the significance level set at the conventional .05 level, the effective size was set to be large at .5, and the desired power was set at .9, 57 cases were needed in total for this Chi-Square test (Cohen, 1988). The 154 cases in this study met the sample size requirement based on the above parameters, and the Chi-square test showed no significant findings.
The respondents worked for 57 different multinational companies with headquarters across the world, including the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Japan among other countries. Five companies had more than 10 respondents each, fifteen companies had 2-9 respondents each, and the other thirty-seven companies had only one respondent each. The majority of the respondents (n=123, 79.87%) worked for a multinational company with its headquarters in a Western country, while some (n=31, 20.13%) worked for a multinational company whose headquarters was in Japan, the only Eastern country included in this study. Nearly half of the respondents (n=78, 50.65%) worked for a multinational company with its headquarters in an English speaking country, and others (n=76, 49.35%) worked for a multinational company with its headquarters in a non-English speaking country.

Instruments

Besides the demographic questions at the beginning, the survey included the Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000) (Appendix G), a revised version of the Technology Usage Scale (TUS) (Scott & Timmerman, 2005) (Appendix H), the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) (Putnam & Wilson, 1982) (Appendix I), and the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) (Downs & Hazen, 1977) (Appendix J). Because the four existing scales, ISS, TUS, OCCI, and CSQ, were developed in English, the researcher applied the translation and back
translation technique to translate the above instruments into Chinese. Both the English and the translated Chinese versions of the whole survey were sent to a Chinese professor in communication who is fluent in both Chinese and English for revision suggestions to improve the accuracy and clarity of the survey. Both the English and Chinese surveys were available to the participants through the online link, so the participants could choose to fill out the survey in either English or Chinese. Information concerning each scale is provided as below.

*Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS)*

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000) is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The ISS scale initially contained 73 items. A sample of 168 freshmen in basic communication studies courses responded to the survey, and the survey was reduced to 44 items with > .50 loading (Chen & Starosta, 2000). In order to determine the factor structure of the 44 items and potentially reduce the number of items further, Chen and Starosta (2000) had 414 college students complete the survey. The factor analysis indicated a five factor structure for the ISS: Interaction Engagement (7 items, accounting for 22.8% of the common variance and with an Eigen value of 10.3), Respect for Cultural Differences (6 items, accounting for 5.2% of the common variance and with an Eigen value of 2.3), Interaction Confidence (5 items, accounting for 3.9% of the common variance and with
an Eigen value of 1.73), Interaction Enjoyment (3 items, accounting for 3.0% of the common variance and with an Eigen value of 1.33), and Interaction Attentiveness (3 items, accounting for 2.3% of the common variance and with an Eigen value of 1.0). The final version of the ISS contains 24 items and is in Appendix G.

Chen and Starosta (2000) defined the five factors as follows. Interaction Engagement is about an interactant’s feelings with respect to participating in intercultural communication; Respect for Cultural Differences measures how participants orient to or tolerate their counterpart’s culture and opinions; Interaction Confidence measures how confident participants are in intercultural settings; Interaction Enjoyment measures a participant’s positive or negative reactions towards communicating with people from different cultures; Interaction Attentiveness measures a participant’s effort to understand what is going on in intercultural interaction.

Chen and Starosta (2000) reported Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the ISS as .86. Concurrent validity was supported by moderate correlations with other measures: a 7-item Interaction Attentiveness Scale (Cegala, 1981), a 10-item Impression Rewarding Scale (Wheless & Duran, 1982), a 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), a 13-item Self-monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984), and a 14-item Perspective Taking Scale (Davis, 1996). The correlations between the ISS and the above five scales are listed in Table 3-1. In addition, the ISS has predictive validity in that it is predictive of
intercultural effectiveness and attitude toward intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Table 3-1

*Correlations of ISS with Other Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>r</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Attentiveness Scale</td>
<td>.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impression Rewarding Scale</td>
<td>.41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem Scale</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring Scale</td>
<td>.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Taking Scale</td>
<td>.52*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p* < .05

Although the ISS was developed in a Western context, it has been successfully applied in Asian contexts with both Chinese and Thai nationals. Peng (2006) applied the ISS to investigate the intercultural sensitivity of English major students, non-English major students, and multinational employees in China, reporting an overall Cronbach’s alpha on all 24 items of the ISS as .80. Cronbach’s alpha for Interaction Engagement
was .55, for Respect for Cultural Differences was .54, for Interaction Confidence was .75, for Interaction Enjoyment was .60, and for Interaction Attentiveness was .48. Peng, Rangsipaht, and Thaipakdee (2005) applied ISS to compare the intercultural communication sensitivity levels of Chinese, Thais, English major students, non-English major students, and multinational employees, but the reliability of ISS scale was not reported in their study.

Due to the reverse polarity of item wording, some items were reverse coded before conducting data screening and calculating scale reliability estimates. Specifically, in ISS, items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 were reverse-coded (see Appendix G).

**Technology Usage Scale (TUS)**

Scott and Timmerman (2005) developed the Technology Usage Scale (TUS) to measure the frequency of employee use of certain technologies to communicate at work. The original TUS had 17 items with 6 options ranging from “never” to “very regularly” (resulting in a possible range of 0 to 5). Information concerning the reliability and validity of the TUS was not provided by Scott and Timmerman. I revised the TUS by eliminating some items relevant to technologies that are rarely used by multinational companies in China and adding some other items to make the list more comprehensive. The revision was based on my consultation with several friends who work for or have worked for China branches of multinational companies. The revised version of the TUS
was validated by them as well. The revised TUS contains 13 items, and the whole scale is in Appendix H.

*Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI)*

Putnam and Wilson (1982) developed the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) to measure how individuals apply different verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to manage conflicts across organizational contexts. There are 30 items in the OCCI, and respondents indicate how often they use a particular conflict management strategy on a 7-point Likert scale (1 stands for “always,” and 7 stands for “never”). The OCCI measures three conflict management styles: nonconfrontation strategies (avoid disagreements, downplay controversies, or approach conflict indirectly, thus to move away from the opposition), solution-oriented strategies (use compromise and innovation to move toward the opposition), and control strategies (use verbal and nonverbal communication to insist on positions and emphasize demands, move against the opposition) (Downs, 1994a). Among the 30 items, 12 items measure nonconfrontation strategies, 11 items measure solution-oriented strategies involving collaboration (6 items) and compromise (5 items), and 7 items measure control strategies. Because the lower numbers (i.e., 1, 2) in the OCCI scale represent higher frequencies of using certain conflict management styles, the negative correlations between the frequencies of using various conflict management styles measured by the OCCI and the factors assessed using
other scales in this study actually represent positive relationships between the pairs of variables, and positive correlations actually represent negative relationships.

Putnam and Wilson (1982) clearly explained the procedure of developing the OCCI, which shows the rigor of this scale. Firstly, the OCCI initially consisted of 35 items drawn from a pool of 65 items designed to tap communicative dimensions of Blake and Mouton’s (1964) five styles: forcing, confronting, smoothing, avoiding, and compromising. The 35 items were tested by 175 undergraduate students in a large introductory communication course, and the results revealed that the items did not meet the standards of discriminatory power, item consistency, or internal reliability. Another set of 35 items were then developed from the first set of 35 items, and were tested by 360 subjects, including 168 members of three organizations, 49 teaching assistants at a large university, and 143 juniors and seniors in supervision and management classes. Factor analysis indicated a 3 factor solution of nonconfrontation, solution-orientation, and control. The use of PIAS (Purdue Instrument Analysis System; Porter, 1975) showed the OCCI was reliable and had high discriminatory power, but had a possible response bias with respect to the nonconfrontation subscale.

As a third step, the researchers revised the OCCI again. This time, the test of social desirability showed that response bias had been minimized. In addition, the researchers surveyed 93 graduate management students at a large university to test the
construct validity of the OCCI, and conducted other two survey studies to test the predictive validity of the OCCI. One study was with 283 employees of a large insurance firm, and the other study was with 49 teaching assistants in different departments at a large university. Overall, the OCCI was developed and tested with 820 subjects with different backgrounds, and the multiple studies showed that the OCCI has high discriminatory power, moderate construct validity, and strong predictive validity. The OCCI is listed in Appendix I.

According to Womack (1988), using Cronbach’s alpha statistic, the OCCI is the more reliable measurement when compared with other frequently used conflict management instruments, including the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Survey (1974), Hall’s Conflict Management Survey (1969), the Ross-DeWine Conflict Management Message Style (1982), and Rahim’s Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (1982). Wilson and Waltman (1988) summarized the alpha coefficients of the OCCI from three different studies (see Table 3-2). Wilson and Waltman also reported test-retest coefficients for the OCCI strategies across four situations (resident assistant, office manager, group project, and teaching evaluation): Solution-Orientatio, .54; Control, .70; and Nonconfrontation, .75.
Table 3-2

*Alpha Coefficients for OCCI Strategies in Prior Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies</th>
<th>Solution-orientation</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Nonconfrontation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chua &amp; Gudykunst</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1987) N=355</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putman &amp; Wilson</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1982) N=360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1987) N=203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilson and Waltman (1988) evaluated the construct validity of the OCCI by examining convergence between the OCCI and other conflict measures, and correlations with related constructs. They concluded: “The OCCI generally shows the expected pattern of correlations with other conflict instruments, but degree of convergence is moderate, reflecting different conceptions of the same style across instruments” (p. 373). Wilson and Waltman suggested separating collaboration and compromise from the consolidated category of solution orientation in the scale. In my dissertation research, I
analyzed the data with collaboration and compromise as separated constructs at first, and then analyzed the data again with the construct of solution orientation containing both collaboration and compromise. Both approaches to analyzing the data are reported and discussed.

There are several important reasons for applying the OCCI in my dissertation research. First, the OCCI has an explicit communication focus compared with other scales (Womack, 1988), which can fit well into this communication research. Second, there has been an important body of literature using the OCCI to contrast the use of strategies (a) in vertical communication versus horizontal communication in organizations, (b) about different conflict topics, (c) in different levels of conflict, (d) in relation to customer satisfaction, (e) in relation to rhetorical sensitivity, (f) in relation to gender, and (g) in different cultural contexts (Downs, 1994a). Third, Womack (1988) reported that half of the testing population of the OCCI consisted of organizational members. My dissertation research deals with cross-cultural communication issues in organizational contexts, therefore, the existing literature of the OCCI supports the argument that this is the most appropriate scale to apply in my research. Fourth, the OCCI has been successfully applied to study the differences between/among various cultural groups’ tendency to select specific conflict management strategies. For instance, Chua and Gudykunst (1987) administered the OCCI to 355 undergraduates from 37
different nations classified as high- or low-context cultures, and found that members of high-context cultures use more solution-oriented strategies than members of low-context cultures; while members of low-context cultures use more nonconfrontation strategies than members of high-context cultures. My dissertation research was conducted with Chinese employees in multinational companies who were influenced by both low-context and high-context cultures. The previous use of OCCI in different cultures suggests that this instrument is applicable in different cultural contexts.

Nonetheless, the social desirability of the OCCI must be considered. Wilson and Waltman (1988) reported that the social desirability of the OCCI results in a minimum of 20% to 40% of the variance in frequency ratings of OCCI strategies.

*Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)*

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) was developed by Downs and Hazen (1977) to assess how employees evaluate an organization’s communication system. The CSQ has 40 items and is a Likert-type scale ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (7). The CSQ is composed of eight factors: Communication Climate, Relationship to Supervisors, Organizational Integration, Media Quality, Horizontal and Informal Communication, Organizational Perspective, Relationship with Subordinates, and Personal Feedback (Downs & Hazen, 1977). There are three additional items at the beginning of the CSQ. The first one is a 7-point Likert scale asking about employee level
of job satisfaction. The second item asks about the change of respondent satisfaction level in the past 6 months: gone up, stayed the same, or gone down. The third question is an open-ended question and asks the respondent to indicate what could be changed to make him/her more satisfied. The whole CSQ is included in Appendix J.

Communication Climate is one of the strongest dimensions of communication satisfaction. Questions in this section measure whether or not communication at both the organizational level and the individual level stimulates employee identification, the perceived communication competence of employees, and the extent to which information flow assists the working process (Downs, 1994b). The Relationship to Supervisor factor includes questions that measure perceived openness, trust, and listening ability in upward and downward communication. The Organizational Integration factor consists of questions about the information employees receive about their job, such as policies and benefits, which makes employees feel they have been integrated. The Media Quality factor is assessed by questions about helpfulness of information, clarity of message, and quantity of information communicated through different channels, such as publications, memos, and meetings. The Horizontal and Informal Communication factor contains questions concerning information networks and the accuracy of the information contained in those networks. The Organizational Perspective factor includes questions concerning the information given out about the corporation’s goals and performance. Questions on
the Relationship with Subordinates factor are only completed by supervisors and managers, and measure receptivity of employees to downward communication and their willingness and capability to send good information upward. The Personal Feedback factor measures superiors’ understanding of work-related problems and the clarity of the criteria used to evaluate employee performance (Downs, 1994b).

There were two stages involved in the development of the CSQ (Downs & Hazen, 1977). The first version of the CSQ contained 88 items, and was completed by 181 employees at the managerial and professional staff levels. The second version of CSQ was constructed to measure the 8 factors that emerged in the first stage. The second version of CSQ was administered to four different organizational settings: 1) 96 managers participating in a training program in California, 2) 81 employees in a division headquarters of an international firm located in Chicago, 3) 151 employees of an equipment plant in Florida, and 4) 182 employees of a can manufacturing plant in Minnesota. A principle-components factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was performed. The results supported the 8 factors found in the first stage. There were 5 items in each factor.

Research has shown different construct structures of the CSQ through factor analysis. Crino and White (1981) found the eight factors that Downs and Hazen (1977) developed, while Clampitt and Girard’s (1988) research yielded a five-factor solution.
Gray and Laidlaw (2004) examined the hierarchical structure of the CSQ using confirmatory factor analysis, and concluded: 1) items in the CSQ support the 7 dimensions (Relationship with Subordinates not tested) hypothesized by Downs and Hazen (1977); 2) the second-order factor of Informational Communication is defined by Communication Climate, Organizational Perspective; and 3) Organizational Integration and the higher order factor, or Relational Communication, are defined by Media Quality, Personal Feedback, Horizontal Communication, and Supervisory Communication. Downs (1994b) suggested that other researchers should perform factor analyses to confirm the 8 factors in the CSQ. DeConinck, Johnson, Busbin, and Lockwood (2008) reviewed the literature involving the application of the CSQ in different studies and argued that more research should be conducted to validate the factor structure of the CSQ. Based on 204 surveys completed by retail store buyers, DeConinck et al. (2008) tested the 7 factors in the CSQ (excluding the Relationship with Subordinates factor that is completed only by supervisors). The results show a five factor structure: four items in the Organizational Integration scale, four items in the Supervisory Communication scale, four items in the Corporate Information Scale, and 11 items in the scale combining Communication Climate, Media Quality, and Coworker Communication. Due to the different findings of the factor structure of the CSQ, in my dissertation research a factor analysis was performed to identify the constructs of the CSQ.
Downs and Hazen (1977) reported that the reliability of the CSQ as .94. Coefficient alpha reliabilities for the eight factors range from .72 to .96 in studies in the U.S. (Potvin, 1991/1992) and Australia (Downs, 1991).

Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007) surveyed and interviewed 165 respondents in three large secondary schools to evaluate the CSQ by comparing the results yielded from the CSQ and the critical incident technique (CIT), and concluded the CSQ and the CIT have convergence validity. Furthermore, Zwijze-Koning and de Jong found evidence of criterion-related validity, and suggested the CSQ can be used 1) to examine aspects of the organization’s internal communication system that influence the overall level of employee communication satisfaction, 2) to measure whether employee level of communication satisfaction has changed over the years or in response to efforts to improve communication within the organization, and 3) to compare the employee satisfaction scores of one organization with those of related organizations.

The CSQ has been applied in different cultural contexts, for instance, the U.S., Nigeria, Mexico, Guatemala, and Australia among other cultures (Downs, 1994b). Importantly, the CSQ has also been applied in studies in Chinese cultural contexts. For instance, Lee (1989) used the CSQ to study the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction among faculty members at junior colleges in China. Later on, Lee (1994) applied the CSQ to compare faculty members’ communication satisfaction
levels in higher educational institutions in China and in the U.S. In more recent literature, Tsai, Chuang, and Hsieh (2009) applied the CSQ to examine the relationships among employee organizational communication satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention in Taiwan. Therefore, although the CSQ was initially developed in the North American context, it has proven to be applicable in Chinese cultural contexts as well. Therefore, the CSQ is suitable for my dissertation research on Chinese employees in multinational companies in China.

Missing Value

The data were screened for missing values. Except for the demographic questions, there were 105 items in total across the four scales (ISS, TUS, OCCI, and CSQ), with supervisors needing to respond to the 5 extra questions on the CSQ regarding their satisfaction level with their subordinates’ communication. Among the 154 respondents, 6 respondents had more than 10 missing values. Those respondents were excluded from further data analysis as they were deemed to have too many missing values. Most of these 6 respondents did not fill out the CSQ. This might be due to their concerns about indicating their satisfaction level with organizational communication during a financial crisis. Given that many multinational companies were facing the potential need to lay off employees or make other changes in human resources, it is plausible to think that the issues addressed by the CSQ were considered sensitive. Among the 6 deleted cases, 2
respondents had overseas experience in individualistic countries, and 4 respondents did not have any overseas experience.

Among the remaining 148 respondents, 88 did not have any missing values, 32 had one missing value, 16 had two missing values, 5 had three missing values, and 7 had four missing values. There was not an obvious pattern of missing values with respect to any one particular survey item nor were there more missing values from any one particular scale; therefore, most likely the respondents missed those items due to isolated and esoteric reasons.

As a result of deleting the 6 respondents with more than 10 missing values, a total of 148 cases were available for further data analysis. A pairwise deletion approach was applied to handle the missing values. The pairwise deletion approach “computes summary statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, correlations) from all available cases that have valid values (it is the SPSS default method of handling missing values for these computations in most of the procedures designed to produce descriptive statistics)” (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006, p.60). The pairwise deletion approach was adopted because the missing values in the 148 cases appeared to be missed completely at random, and pairwise deletion is the most reliable way to deal with randomly missed data as well as preserve the sample size (Meyers et al., 2006).
Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Reliability

Previous studies yielded consistent factor structures for the ISS and OCCI with the factor structures that were first developed. Therefore, this study followed the factor structures suggested by the scholars who developed the ISS and the OCCI. The TUS was used to measure employees’ frequency of using each technology, so factor analysis was not needed, and each item was analyzed independently. However, in previous research, the CSQ had different factor structures in different studies. Following Downs’ (1994b) suggestion to researchers using the CSQ, a Principal Component Factor Analysis procedure with Varimax rotation was performed on the 148 cases to determine the underlying factor structure. For a factor analysis, the sample size of 148 is relatively small. Meyers et al. (2006) suggested a sample size that is larger than 200 is needed for a factor analysis. However, the CSQ is an existing scale that has been tested and applied in various studies. The purpose of the factor analysis in this research was not to develop a new scale but to understand the underlying dimensions of the scale for this group of respondents. The relatively small sample size should serve the needs of confirming (or questioning) the existing factors identified by Downs and Hazen (1977).

In the factor analysis, the thirty-five 7-point Likert scale items in the CSQ filled out by all 148 respondents were analyzed. The 5 items filled out only by supervisors (as these items dealt with subordinate communication) were not included in the factor
analysis. Meyers et al. (2006) suggested that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) should be higher than .80 to indicate the data are suitable for principal components analysis.

Furthermore, Bartlett’s test of sphericity should be significant to indicate sufficient correlation between the variables to proceed with factor analysis. In the factor analysis of the CSQ, the KMO value was .92, and the Bartlet test was significant, $\chi^2 = 4023.09$ (595), $p < .001$. Therefore, the data met assumptions necessary for factor analysis.

Based on the Scree Plot (a visual test of identifying factors) and the Kaiser-Guttman retention criterion of Eigen values greater than 1.0, a five-factor solution provided the clearest extraction. A liberal 60/40 criteria was applied for factor loadings, which means the primary loading for an item should be at least .60 with no secondary loading of .40 or higher. Based on the rotated factor matrix, 17 items were retained. Table 3-3 presents the 35 items that were analyzed, their factor loadings, and the factors to which they belong.

The first factor is Corporate Information (Eigen value= 18.57), accounting for 53.07% of the variance. There are 7 items in the Corporate Information factor including information that can influence employee work, such as policies and benefits, and the corporation’s goals and performance. The second factor is Relationship to Supervisor (Eigen value=3.18), accounting for 7.09% of the variance. The Relationship to Supervisor factor has 5 items that measure subordinates’ perceptions of a supervisor’s
ability to listen to employees, trust and helpfulness for subordinates, ability to understand an employee’s situation, and openness to ideas. The third factor is Coworker Communication (Eigen value=1.35), accounting for 3.85% of the variance. The Coworker Communication factor has 3 items measuring relationship with co-workers, the quality of information flow among coworkers, and how organized the meetings are. The fourth factor is Evaluation Criteria (Eigen value=1.22), accounting for 3.49% of the variance. The Evaluation Criteria factor has only one item measuring how clear the evaluation criteria are to employees. The fifth factor is Work Progress Feedback (Eigen value=1.06), accounting for 3.02% of the variance. The Work Progress Feedback contains only one item measuring feedback concerning employee work progresses. These five factors accounted for 72.52% of the total variance. The present five-factor structure of the CSQ is the optimal solution for this study because of its conceptual clarity and ease of interpretability.

Five other items were filled out only by supervisors as these items addressed their satisfaction level with subordinate communication. Therefore, for this research, the CSQ presented a total of 6 factors. However, because the Subordinate Communication factor was only responded to by supervisors, this factor was analyzed separately from the five other CSQ factors.
Table 3-3

*Factor Loadings for Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey items</th>
<th>Corporate information</th>
<th>Relationship to supervisor</th>
<th>Coworker communication</th>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Work progress feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Information about our organization’s financial standing</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Information about accomplishments and/or failures of the organization</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Information about organizational policies and goals</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Information about benefits and pay</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Information about changes in our organization</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Information about government action affecting my organization</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Extent to which the organization’s communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey items</td>
<td>Component loading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Extent to which the organization’s communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals</td>
<td>.61  .53  .28  .29  -.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Information about departmental policies and goals</td>
<td>.60  .39  .07  .38  .27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Extent to which the amount of communication in the organization is about right</td>
<td>.54  .37  .51  .05  .25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Personal news</td>
<td>.45  .29  .39  .36  .35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Extent to which my supervisor listens and pays attention to me</td>
<td>.24  .81  .22  .25  .03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Extent to which my supervisor trusts me</td>
<td>.09  .74  .30  -.01  .21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Extent to which my supervisor offers guidance for solving job related problems</td>
<td>.12  .72  .29  .21  .23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Extent to which my superiors know and understand the problems faced by subordinates</td>
<td>.21  .68  .29  .34  .04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-3: continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey items</th>
<th>Corporate information</th>
<th>Relationship to supervisor</th>
<th>Coworker communication</th>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Work progress feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Extent to which the people in my organization have great ability as communicators</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Recognition of my efforts</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Extent to which my supervisor is open to ideas</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Extent to which the organization’s communications are interesting and helpful</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Extent to which I receive in time the information needed to do my job</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Extent to which the amount of supervision given me is about right</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Extent to which conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Extent to which my work group is compatible</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Extent to which our meetings are well organized</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3-3: continued

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<tr>
<th>Survey items</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Relationship to supervisor</td>
<td>Coworker communication</td>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>Work progress feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Extent to which horizontal communication with other organizational members is accurate and free flowing</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Extent to which the attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Extent to which informal communication is active and accurate</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Extent to which written directives and reports are clear and concise</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Extent to which the grapevine is active in our organization</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Extent to which communication practices are adaptable to emergencies</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Information about how I am being judged</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Information about how my job compares with others</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.17</td>
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97
Table 3-3: continued

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<td>Corporate info</td>
<td>Relation</td>
<td>Coworker</td>
<td>Evalua</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<td>to supervisor</td>
<td>communi-</td>
<td>cation</td>
<td>criteria</td>
<td>progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Reports on how problems in my job are being handled</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Information about the requirements of my job</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information about my progress in my job</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>18.57</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>53.07</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Underlined factor coefficients show which factor the item loaded on. Items 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 did not load on any item.

After identifying the six-factor structure of the CSQ, reliability estimates were calculated for the items comprising each factor. Based on the analysis of the 148 cases, using Cronbach’s alpha, an index for internal consistency, reliability estimates were .93 for the Corporate Information factor, .91 for the Relationship to Supervisor factor, and .75 for the Coworker Communication factor. Cronbach’s alpha was not calculated for the Evaluation Criteria factor or the Work Progress Feedback factor because those are
single-item factors. Every question for each of the above five retained factors was analyzed to determine an overall reliability estimate for the scale; that procedure resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of .93. Analysis of individual items suggested that no item needed to be deleted from the individual factors or the overall scale to improve reliability further. In addition, based on the 48 surveys filled out by supervisors, the Cronbach’s alpha for Subordinate Communication was .91. As a general rule of thumb, a scale with a Cronbach’s alpha greater than .70 is considered a reliable scale. Pearson’s correlations were calculated for each pairwise combination of factors of the CSQ except for the Subordinate Communication factor designed specifically for supervisors. Results are reported in Table 3-4. Among the five factors, Corporate Information, Relationship to Supervisor, Coworker Communication, Evaluation Criteria, and Work Progress Feedback, each factor was significantly correlated with each of the other factors. The correlations among the five factors ranged from .36 to .65, and Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .75 to .93, indicating good subscale reliability.
Table 3-4

*Correlations Between Factors on the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate information</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship to supervisor</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coworker communication</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work progress feedback</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* **Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).*
Using Cronbach’s alpha, the internal consistency of the other three scales applied in this study (the ISS, the TUS, and the OCCI) was also analyzed. The ISS is a 24 item instrument using 5-point Likert responses ranging from 1 to 5, assessing agreement with the statements made on the instrument. Based on the participants’ responses to the scale, Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimate showed strong internal consistency for the scale (α = .82). The reliability of the scale could not be improved by eliminating one or more questions. Cronbach’s alpha values for the five subscales measuring the five factors of the ISS were as follows: Interaction Engagement was .62, Respect for Cultural Differences was .48, Interaction Confidence was .83, Interaction Enjoyment was .56, and Interaction Attentiveness was .59. Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the ISS in this study was not very high on most of the subscales except for the subscale for Interaction Confidence, but the reliability level was acceptable and similar to the reliability level reported in a previous study conducted in China. Peng (2006) applied the ISS to investigate the intercultural sensitivity of English majors, non-English majors, and multinational employees in China, reporting an overall Cronbach’s alpha on all 24 items of the ISS as .80. In Peng’s study, Cronbach’s alpha for Interaction Engagement was .55; Respect for Cultural Differences was .54; Interaction Confidence was .75; Interaction Enjoyment was .60, and Interaction Attentiveness was .48.
The TUS is a 13 item instrument using 6-point Likert responses ranging from 0 to 5 (never to very regularly), assessing a participant’s frequency of use of certain technologies. Because the frequency of using each technology will be analyzed respectively, a factor analysis was not conducted with this instrument, nor was Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimate considered appropriate given the nature of this instrument.

The OCCI is a 30 item instrument using 7-point Likert responses ranging from 1 to 7, indicating participant frequency of using certain strategies to deal with disagreements with a supervisor. Based on the participants’ responses, Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimate showed strong internal consistency for the scale (α = .79). The reliability of the scale could not be improved by eliminating one or more questions. Cronbach’s alpha values for the three subscales measuring the three factors of the OCCI were as follows: Nonconfrontation strategies was .83, Solution-oriented strategies containing both Collaboration and Compromise was .76, and Control strategies was .83.

As previously noted, Wilson and Waltman (1988) suggested separating Collaboration and Compromise from the consolidation of Solution orientation in the instrument. Cronbach’s alpha was therefore analyzed for the Collaboration and Compromise subscales respectively: Collaboration was .75, and Compromise was .57. Cronbach’s alpha value for the Compromise factor was below .70, and this subscale is not considered very
reliable, which should be taken into consideration in understanding the results of this study.

Normality Test and Identifying Outliers

Normality is an important statistical assumption of independent-samples t-tests, Pearson product moment correlations, and some other statistical analyses run by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Therefore, a normality test was run to make sure this study did not violate this important statistical assumption. Stevens (2002) suggested that the Shapiro-Wilk test appears to be “the most powerful in detecting departures from normality” (p. 264); therefore the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied as the normality check of the data. A significance level lower than .001 on the Shapiro-Wilk test indicates a possible univariate normality violation (Meyers et al., 2006). The Shapiro-Wilk tests for each of the four scales--ISS, TUS, OCCI, and CSQ--was higher than .001. Therefore, the data in this research meet the normality assumption and are appropriate for further statistical analyses.

Cases with extreme or unusual values are called outliers. Outliers can distort statistical analyses (Meyers et al., 2006). Univariate outliers were identified in this study. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) recommended that cases with z scores exceeding ±2.5 should be considered outliers. According to Hair et al.’s (1998) standard, 2 outliers were identified in ISS, 1 outlier in TUS, 3 outliers in OCCI, and 3 in CSQ. The
number of outliers in each scale applied in this study was small. Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003) suggested that “if outliers are few (less than 1% or 2% of n) and not very extreme, they are probably best left alone” (p. 128). The researcher examined the outliers and found no particular reasons to exclude the outliers from the analyses as none of the outliers seemed to be too extreme; therefore, the outliers were left in the data pool. The final data set contained 148 cases.

Power Analysis

Cohen (1988) defined statistical power as follows: “the power of a statistical test of a null hypothesis is the probability that it will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis, i.e., the probability that it will result in the conclusion that the phenomenon exists” (p. 4). Three basic factors contribute to the level of statistical power: alpha level, effect size, and sample size (Meyers et al., 2006). The alpha level is “the risk we are willing to run when we reject the null hypothesis” (Meyers et al., 2006, p.39). The effect size is “the extent to which the groups differ in the population on the dependent variable(s)” (Stevens, 2002, p. 6), or “the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population” (Cohen, 1988, p. 9).

In my dissertation, I performed a power analyses to decide the sample size that I needed for independent-samples t-test and Pearson product moment correlations.

According to Cohen’s (1988) sample size table (p. 54-55) for independent-samples t-test,
three criteria need to be set in order to decide sample size: significance criterion, effect size, and desired power. In independent-samples t-tests, an effect size of .2 is considered to be small; .5 is considered to be medium; and, .8 is considered to be large (Cohen, 1988). For this research, the significance level of two-tailed independent-samples t-tests was set at the conventional .05 level; the effective size was set to be large at .8; and, the desired power was set at .90. With the above parameters, Cohen’s (1988) sample size table (p. 55) indicated that 34 participants in each group would be needed. There are 148 participants in total included in my analysis. Fifty-one of those participants had overseas experience; 96 did not have overseas experience; and, 1 participant did not provide that information. Therefore, the sample size was sufficient to conduct independent-samples t-tests comparing the communication behavior of Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience.

In order to determine the minimum sample size needed for Pearson product moment correlations, significance criterion, effect size, and desired power need to be specified (Cohen, 1988). In Pearson product moment correlations analysis, an effect size of .1 is considered to be small; .3 is medium; and, .5 is large (Cohen, 1988). For this research, the significance level for the Pearson product moment correlations was set to the conventional .05 level; the effective size was set to be large at .5; and, the desired power was set at .90. Based on these parameters, Cohen’s (1988) sample size table (p.
106) indicates 37 cases are needed. In this research, the total of 148 cases far exceeded the required sample size, justifying the calculation of correlations among the different variables included in the study.

Data Analysis Procedure

Version 17 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was applied to analyze the data in this study. This research aims to explore two sets of research questions. One set of questions compared the communication behavior between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience. To answer this set of questions, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the means for intercultural communication sensitivity, use of technology, preference level for using different conflict management styles, and organizational communication satisfaction. T-tests for independent samples assess two independent group means and were applied to answer research questions 1 through 4:

RQ 1: Does the average level of intercultural sensitivity of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 2: Do the dominant conflict management styles of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from those of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?
RQ 3: Does the average level of organizational communication satisfaction of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 4: Does the use of organizational communication technologies among mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

Another set of questions in this study examined the correlations among intercultural sensitivity, conflict management style, organizational communication satisfaction, and technology use. Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to answer the following questions:

RQ 5: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 6: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 7: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?
RQ 8: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different conflict management styles of multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 9: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different technologies in organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 10: Is there a correlation between the frequency of using certain technologies in organizational communication and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explained the data collection process and reflected on some challenges and difficulties that I experienced. In total, 154 Chinese employees in China branches of multinational companies responded to the survey. Demographic information gathered from the participants in this study was provided. I reviewed the instruments employed in the research and explained the reasons for choosing each of the instruments. The four existing scales--ISS, TUS, OCCI, and CSQ—are all valid and reliable scales. The ISS, OCCI and CSQ have been applied in different cultural contexts, especially in
Chinese cultural context. I revised TUS to make it more suitable for this study’s context, China branches of multinational companies. A factor analysis was conducted to uncover the factor structure of the CSQ in this research as previous studies had yielded different factor structures of this instrument. Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities for each of the instruments were reported. After excluding the 6 cases with more than 10 missing values, 148 cases remained for further data analyses. There were small numbers of univariate outliers for each scale in this study. As they were not too extreme, despite being outliers, they were included in the data analyses. The data set meets the normality statistical assumption of independent-samples t-tests and Pearson product moment correlations. The sample size is sufficient to achieve satisfactory statistical power. Data analysis procedures to answer different research questions were also explained.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH RESULTS

Overview

This study is designed to compare the intercultural communication sensitivity level, technology usage, organizational communication conflict management style, and communication satisfaction levels of the two groups of participants in China branches of multinational companies: Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience. The first four research questions of the study focus attention on comparisons of those two groups:

RQ 1: Does the average level of intercultural sensitivity of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 2: Do the dominant conflict management styles of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from those of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

RQ 3: Does the average level of organizational communication satisfaction of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?
RQ 4: Does the use of organizational communication technologies among mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

Furthermore, this study provides an opportunity to examine the relationships (i.e., correlations) among four variables and their constructs: intercultural sensitivity level, technology usage, organizational communication conflict management style, and communication satisfaction level. The following six research questions focus on the correlations among those four variables:

RQ 5: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 6: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 7: Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?
RQ 8: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different conflict management styles of multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 9: Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different technologies in organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

RQ 10: Is there a correlation between the frequency of using certain technologies in organizational communication and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

This chapter reports the major research findings of the data collected using the methodology described in Chapter 3. The results are organized by findings addressing each research question.

Research Question One

*Does the average level of intercultural sensitivity of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?*

The ISS was applied to measure level of overall intercultural sensitivity with intercultural sensitivity defined as including interaction engagement, respect for cultural
differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.

An independent-samples t-test was used to determine whether Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience differ significantly in their level of intercultural sensitivity. Levene’s test for equality of variance provided a significance level of .22 for the ISS; therefore, equal variances were assumed. Levene’s test for equality of variance indicated that equal variances could be assumed for respect for cultural differences ($p = .59$), interaction confidence ($p = .63$), interaction enjoyment ($p = .98$), and interaction attentiveness ($p = .66$). However, equal variances could not be assumed for interaction engagement ($p < .05$).

The independent-samples t-test indicated no significant differences exist between Chinese employees without overseas experience and Chinese employees with overseas experience in terms of their overall intercultural communication sensitivity level: $t = -1.28$, $df = 125$, $p > .05$. However, there were significant differences between Chinese employees without overseas experience and those with overseas experience in interactional confidence, one factor composing the ISS: $t = -2.20$, $df = 141$, $p < .05$. Chinese employees with overseas experience ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .57$) scored as having a higher level of interactional confidence than Chinese employees without overseas experience ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .59$). There were no significant differences between Chinese employees without overseas experience and those with overseas experience on the other
four factors composing the ISS: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.

For Chinese employees with overseas experience, Pearson product moment correlations were performed to analyze whether the length of stay in other countries correlated with intercultural sensitivity and its factors. In this study, Chinese employees with overseas experience reported only the number of months they stayed in each foreign country. For Chinese employees who stayed in one or multiple foreign countries but for less than a month in each foreign country, the specific number of days they stayed in each country was not reported, so there was no way to calculate how many months they stayed in foreign countries accumulatively. Therefore, only the 39 Chinese employees who stayed in a foreign country for at least one month were included in the Pearson product moment correlations analysis. Based on the power analysis of this study as discussed on page 106, 37 participants were needed to achieve the statistical power set up for this study. Therefore, the 39 participants with more than one month’s overseas experience were sufficient for the analysis. Using this standard, no significant correlations were found between the length of stay in a foreign country and the variables assessed by the ISS.

After data screening, 51 respondents who reported having overseas experience were included in the final analysis, among which 18 respondents reported having experience in countries with collectivist cultures, 31 respondents reported having
experience in countries with individualistic cultures, and 2 respondents did not provide specific country information concerning their overseas experience. As discussed on page 105 of the Power Analysis section of this dissertation, 34 respondents were required to achieve statistical power criterion for this study, both the sample size of participants with overseas experience in countries of collectivist cultures and the sample size of participants with overseas experience in countries of individualistic cultures were too small. Therefore, two-tailed independent-samples t-tests were not performed to further compare whether the overseas experience in individualistic cultures and the overseas experience in collectivist cultures result in different organizational communication behavior of Chinese employees in the China branches of multinational companies.

English language ability might be a significant factor contributing to differences in interaction confidence between Chinese employees without overseas experience and those with overseas experience. Based on that expectation, a Chi-square test was performed to analyze whether significantly more Chinese employees with overseas experience filled out the survey in English than Chinese employees without overseas experience. When the significance level was set at the conventional .05 level, the effective size was set to be large at .5, and the desired power was set at .9, 42 cases were needed in total for the above Chi-Square test (Cohen, 1988) in this study. The 148 cases in this study met the sample size requirement based on the above parameters, and the
Chi-square test showed no significant findings. The majority of the participants filled out the survey in Chinese (n=132), and only a few filled out the survey in English (n=16). In addition, an independent-samples t-test showed Chinese employees with overseas experience (M=3.06, SD=.75) have a similar level of desire to go to other countries as indicated by Chinese employees without overseas experience (M=3.01, SD=1.06).

Research Question Two

*Do the dominant conflict management styles of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from those of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?*

The OCCI measures the frequency of using three major conflict management styles: nonconfrontation strategies, solution-oriented strategies containing collaboration and compromise, and control strategies. Wilson and Waltman (1988) suggested separating collaboration and compromise from the consolidated solution orientation component of the scale. For the purposes of this research, the consolidated solution orientation component was examined and, following Wilson and Waltman’s recommendation, the collaboration and compromise strategies were examined independently.

An independent-samples t-test was used to determine whether Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience differ
significantly in their frequency of using the conflict management styles identified by the OCCI. Levene’s test for equality of variance indicated a significant level of .54 for nonconfrontation strategies, .83 for collaboration strategies, .89 for compromise strategies, .10 for control strategies, and .76 for solution-oriented strategies; therefore, equal variances were assumed. The independent-samples t-test results showed no significant differences for the frequency of applying different organizational communication conflict management styles when Chinese employees with overseas experience were compared with those without overseas experience. The results indicated that Chinese employees in the China branches of multinational companies used solution-oriented strategies (including both compromise strategies and collaboration strategies) most frequently. Nonconfrontation strategies and control strategies were less favored by Chinese employees. The descriptive statistics for how those two groups of participants use different conflict management strategies are displayed in Table 4-1.
Table 4-1

Descriptive Statistics of Frequency of Using Different Organizational Communication Conflict Management Strategies by Chinese Employees with Overseas Experience and those without Overseas Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict management strategies</th>
<th>Chinese employees with overseas experience</th>
<th>Chinese employees without overseas experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconfrontation</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution orientation (including both compromise and collaboration)</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, for Chinese employees with overseas experience, Pearson product moment correlations were performed to decide whether the length of stay in other countries correlated with the frequency of using certain conflict management styles in organizational settings. No significant correlations were found in this analysis.
Research Question Three

*Does the average level of organizational communication satisfaction of mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?*

The CSQ assesses the level of employee organizational communication satisfaction. The factor analysis reported in Chapter 3 identified five factors in the CSQ: corporate information, relationship to supervisor, coworker communication, evaluation criteria, and work progress feedback. In addition, survey items on subordinate communication were only responded to by individuals in supervisory positions. In total, there were six factors in the CSQ.

An independent-samples t-test was used to determine whether Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience differ significantly in their levels of organizational communication satisfaction. Levene’s test for equality of variance indicated a significant level of .09 for the overall CSQ, .36 for corporate information, .14 for relationship to supervisor, .88 for coworker communication, .14 for evaluation criteria, .07 for work progress feedback, and .25 for subordinate communication; therefore, equal variances were assumed for the CSQ and its factors. Independent-samples t-tests revealed no significant differences in organizational communication satisfaction levels between Chinese employees with overseas experience
and those without overseas experience. Although the difference was not significant, the overall pattern was that Chinese employees with overseas experience had higher satisfaction levels than Chinese employees without overseas experience. Among the factors, both Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience were most satisfied with coworker communication, but differed in the ranking of their satisfaction levels of other factors. For Chinese employees with overseas experience, the ranking with descending mean values was: work progress feedback, subordinate communication, relationship to supervisor, corporate information, and evaluation criteria. However, for Chinese employees without overseas experience, the ranking with descending mean values was: relationship to supervisor, subordinate communication, work progress feedback, evaluation criteria, and corporate information. The descriptive statistics of the organizational communication satisfaction levels of the two groups of participants are displayed in Table 4-2.
Table 4-2

Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Communication Satisfaction Levels of Chinese Employees with Overseas Experience and those without Overseas Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict management strategies</th>
<th>Chinese employees with overseas experience</th>
<th>Chinese employees without overseas experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall organizational</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker communication</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work progress feedback</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate communication</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to supervisor</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate information</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Chinese employees with overseas experience, Pearson product moment correlations were performed to analyze whether the length of stay in other countries correlated with the level of organizational communication satisfaction. No significant correlations were found in this analysis.
In addition, there were three general questions related to organizational communication satisfaction at the beginning of the CSQ. The first question asked about how satisfied the respondent was with his/her job. An independent-samples t-test was employed to determine whether Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience differed significantly in their responses to this question. Levene’s test for equality of variance indicated a significant level of .80 for this survey item; therefore, equal variances were assumed. Although Chinese employees with overseas experience (M=3.51, SD=1.24) were more satisfied with their jobs than Chinese employees without overseas experience (M=3.15, SD=1.20), the result of the independent-samples t-test revealed that the difference was not significant (p > .05).

The second question asked whether, in the past 6 months, the respondent’s level of satisfaction had gone up, stayed the same, or gone down. A Chi-square test was performed to decide whether there were significant differences between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience in any change in their satisfaction level within the past 6 months. When the significance level was set at the conventional .05 level, the effective size was set to be large at .5, and the desired power was set at .9, 51 cases were needed in total for this Chi-Square test (Cohen, 1988). The 148 cases in this study met the sample size requirement based on the above
parameters, and the Chi-square test showed no significant findings. Among the 144 participants who responded to this item, 62 (43.06%) indicated their job satisfaction level had gone up, 44 (30.56%) indicated their job satisfaction level had stayed the same, and 38 (26.39%) indicated their job satisfaction level had gone down.

The third question was an open ended question asking respondents to provide suggestions for improving the communication associated with their jobs that would result in an increase of their satisfaction level. Fifty-two respondents provided their insights either in English or in Chinese. Corrections of typos were made for the English responses, and Chinese responses were translated into English. All the responses are included in Appendix K.

Looking across the comments, five common themes addressing different organizational communication aspects emerged. A summary of the common themes with exemplary quotations from respondents is provided in the next several paragraphs. The order of the themes is random as opposed to implying any kind of ranking or prioritization.

First, respondents suggested increasing the amount of communication. A few respondents made comments such as “have more communication on problems,” “communicate often,” “more communication with the boss,” “have more discussion
together,” “communicate more with colleagues,” and “more communication, more understanding.”

Second, respondents expressed their preference for informal communication. For instance, one respondent suggested his/her organization needed to “have more small meetings, or more reunions after work, or more vacations with all the employees together,” and another respondent suggested that more “informal events and activities” involving supervisors and colleagues would improve communication.

Third, some respondents emphasized the importance of career development opportunities, recognition of the value of their job, and use of the reward (pay) system as all relevant to organizational satisfaction. Respondents made comments such as “Supervisors should pay attention to the amount of work and the difficult level of the work of their employees. It is important to make sure that employees feel their payment reflects their contribution,” and “more challenging job and make progress; promotion.”

Fourth, respondents suggested structural and macro-level changes that multinational companies needed to make to improve the level of employee organizational communication satisfaction. For instance, one respondent suggested his/her company needed to “reduce unnecessary procedures, or simplify some procedures, thus avoiding the lack of or the ineffective communication on organizational information due to too
many procedures,”, and another respondent pointed out that “the inter-department coordination within the company should be improved.”

Fifth, respondents also expressed the wish that their supervisors would make a greater effort to improve their (the supervisors’) communication skills. For example, one respondent stated “my boss can do more research and think more on the problem before drawing any conclusion. Listen more to the subordinates' opinions, and do not always take his/her own opinion as dominant one without strong reasons.” Another respondent stated, “I believe if supervisors of a multinational are truly open-minded and understand to respect the difference of culture and practice in different countries, the working environment will become amicable.”

Research Question Four

Does the use of organizational communication technologies among mainland Chinese employees without overseas experience differ from that of mainland Chinese employees with overseas experience?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether Chinese employees with overseas experience and Chinese employees without overseas experience differ significantly in their use of organizational communication technologies. The results revealed no significant differences. The descriptive statistics concerning the frequency of
using organizational communication technologies by the two groups of participants are displayed in Table 4-3.

The ranking based on the frequency of using different organizational communication technologies by both Chinese employees with and without overseas experience was the same with the descending order as follows: E-mail, face-to-face, cell phone, landline telephone, online chat tool, text message, instant message, audio conference, room video conference, fax, postal mail, and voice mail. One interesting finding is that cell phones were used frequently by Chinese employees with overseas experience for organizational communication because cell phones are perceived more as a tool for communication within personal social networks such as friends and family members in Western cultures. Furthermore, it is also interesting that Chinese employees with overseas experience used voice mail the least often among the listed technologies because this is a common organizational communication tool in companies in Western countries. For Chinese employees with overseas experience, Pearson product moment correlations were used to decide whether the length of stay in other countries correlated with the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication. The only significant finding was that the longer a Chinese employee had stayed in a foreign country, the more frequently he/she used voice mail for organizational communication ($r=.38$, $p<.05$) in his/her current employment.
Table 4-3

*Frequency of the Use of Different Organizational Communication Technologies by Chinese Employees with Overseas Experience and those without Overseas Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational communication technologies</th>
<th>Chinese employees with overseas experience</th>
<th>Chinese employees without overseas experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline telephone</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chat tool</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant message</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio conference</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room video conference</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fax</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal mail</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice mail</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Five

*Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?*

Pearson product moment correlations were calculated to determine relationships between pairwise combinations of variables. Chinese employees’ level of intercultural sensitivity and level of organizational communication satisfaction were significantly and positively correlated ($r=.35, p<.01$). The correlations among different factors in the ISS and CSQ were further analyzed. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table 4-4. The degrees of freedom ranged from 49 to 144 for the correlations reported in this table.

Chinese employees who were more satisfied with the corporate information exchange and the feedback on work progress tended to be more respectful of cultural differences, more confident in interactions, and enjoy interactions with people from different cultures more. Chinese employees who were more satisfied with their relationship with their supervisors were more engaged in interactions, more respectful of cultural differences, more confident in interactions, and indicated greater enjoyment of interactions with people from different cultures. Chinese employees who were more satisfied with coworker communication tended to be more respectful of cultural differences. Chinese employees who were more satisfied with communication concerning evaluation criteria tended to express greater confidence in their interactions with people from different...
cultures. Chinese supervisors who were more satisfied with their subordinates’ communication also reported being more engaged in interactions, more respectful of cultural differences, and enjoying their actions with people from different cultures more. Interaction attentiveness was not correlated with any of the factors defining organizational communication satisfaction in the instrument that was used.
Table 4-4

Correlation Coefficients for Intercultural Sensitivity Variables and Communication Satisfaction Variables of Chinese Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interaction engagement</th>
<th>Respect for cultural differences</th>
<th>Interaction confidence</th>
<th>Interaction Enjoyment</th>
<th>Interaction attentiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate information</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to supervisor</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker communication</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work progress feedback</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate communication</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed).
Research Question Six

Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?

Pearson product moment correlations were calculated in order to analyze the relationship between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ Chinese employees. In general, Chinese employees with a higher level of intercultural sensitivity tended to use collaboration ($r = -0.40, p<.01$) or solution-oriented strategies (containing both collaboration and compromise) ($r = -0.34, p<.01$) to solve organizational conflicts. Further analysis of the relationships among different factors assessed by the ISS instrument and the frequency of using different conflict management styles were also examined through the use of Pearson product moment correlations. The key results are provided in Table 4-5. The degrees of freedom ranged from 129 to 139 for the correlations reported in this table. Nonconfrontation, the least frequently used conflict management style, was not correlated with any factors assessed by the intercultural sensitivity instrument. Chinese employees who used collaboration strategies more frequently tended to score as more engaged in interactions, more respectful of cultural differences, more confident in interactions, and as enjoying their interactions with people from different cultures more.
Chinese employees who liked to use compromise strategies tended to score as more engaged in interactions with people from different cultures. Chinese employees who liked to use control strategies scored as more attentive in their interactions with others from different cultures. Chinese employees who used more solution-oriented strategies scored more engaged in interactions, more respectful of cultural differences, and as having more confidence in interactions with people from other cultures.
Table 4-5

*Correlation Coefficients for Intercultural Sensitivity Variables and Conflict Management Styles of Chinese Employees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interaction engagement</th>
<th>Respect for cultural differences</th>
<th>Interaction confidence</th>
<th>Interaction enjoyment</th>
<th>Interaction attentiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconfrontation</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td>-0.41**</td>
<td>-0.19*</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution-oriented</td>
<td>-0.42**</td>
<td>-0.23**</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed).
Research Question Seven

*Is there a correlation between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?*

Pearson product moment correlations were calculated to analyze the relationship between the level of intercultural sensitivity and the frequency of using certain technologies for organizational communication. Overall, Chinese employees with a higher level of intercultural sensitivity preferred the following means of organizational communication: face-to-face ($r = .32, p < .01$), landline telephone ($r = .32, p < .01$), cell phone ($r = .29, p < .01$), voice mail ($r = .20, p < .05$), E-mail ($r = .21, p < .05$), instant message ($r = .21, p < .05$), and audio conference ($r = .18, p < .05$).

Further analysis of the relationships among different factors composing the ISS and the frequency reported for using different technologies for organizational communication were also conducted using Pearson product moment correlations. The key results are provided in Table 4-6. The degrees of freedom ranged from 117 to 142 for the correlations reported in this table. Chinese employees who scored as being more engaged in their interactions with people from other cultures tended to report communicating more frequently with others face-to-face, through landline telephones, cell phones, and E-mails when at the workplace. Chinese employees who scored as more respectful for cultural
differences reported preferring communicating with colleagues face-to-face. Chinese employees who scored as more confident in their interactions with individuals from different cultures tended to report using landline telephones, cell phones, voice mail, E-mail, instant message, and audio conference technology more frequently for organizational communication purposes. Chinese employees reported enjoying their interactions with individuals from different cultures more in face-to-face communication situations. Chinese employees who scored as more attentive in their interactions with individuals from different cultures reported using landline telephones and cell phones more frequently for organizational communication. In addition, the frequencies of using the following five technologies were not correlated with any of the intercultural sensitivity factors assessed by the ISS: fax, text message, room video conference, online chat tools, and postal mail.
Table 4-6

Correlation Coefficients for Intercultural Sensitivity Variables and Frequency of Using Technologies for Organizational Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interaction engagement</th>
<th>Respect for cultural differences</th>
<th>Interaction confidence</th>
<th>Interaction Enjoyment</th>
<th>Interaction attentiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline telephone</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice mail</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant message</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio conference</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-6: continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction engagement</th>
<th>Respect for cultural differences</th>
<th>Interaction confidence</th>
<th>Interaction Enjoyment</th>
<th>Interaction attentiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room video conference</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chat tool</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal mail</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question Eight

*Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different conflict management styles of multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?*

Pearson product moment correlations results revealed that Chinese employees with a higher level of organizational communication satisfaction tended to use collaboration strategies (r=-.23, p<.01) or solution-oriented strategies containing both
collaboration and compromise ($r=-.24$, $p<.01$) more frequently as approaches for addressing organizational conflicts. Further analysis of the relationships among different factors of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different organizational communication conflict management styles was achieved through Pearson product moment correlations. The key results are provided in Table 4-7. The degrees of freedom ranged from 48 to 142 for the correlations reported in this table. Chinese employees who expressed greater satisfaction with their relationships to their supervisors reported using collaboration, compromise, and solution-oriented strategies more often. Chinese employees who expressed greater satisfaction with their organizational communication in the areas of evaluation criteria and work progress feedback reported using collaboration and solution-oriented strategies more often. Chinese employees’ organizational communication satisfaction levels on corporate information, coworker communication, and subordinate communication were not correlated with the frequency of using any one particular conflict management style.
Table 4-7

Correlation Coefficients for Organizational Communication Satisfaction and Frequency of Using Different Organizational Conflict Management Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nonconfrontation</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Solution-oriented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate information</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to supervisor</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker communication</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work progress feedback</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate communication</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed).
Research Question Nine

*Is there a correlation between the level of organizational communication satisfaction and the frequency of using different technologies in organizational communication for multinational companies’ mainland Chinese employees?*

Pearson product moment correlations were used to examine whether Chinese employees with higher levels of organizational communication satisfaction tended to or tended not to use certain technologies for organizational communication. The results showed that Chinese employees who expressed more satisfaction with their organizational communication reported using the following forms of workplace communication more frequently: face-to-face ($r = .27, p < .01$), landline telephone ($r = .22, p < .05$), E-mail ($r = .29, p < .01$), instant message ($r = .23, p < .01$), audio conference ($r = .22, p < .05$), and room videoconference ($r = .24, p < .01$).

Pearson product moment correlations were also conducted to further analyze the relationships among different factors of organizational communication satisfaction and reported frequency of using different technologies for organizational communication. The key results are provided in Table 4-8. The degrees of freedom ranged from 46 to 146 for the correlations reported in this table. Chinese employees who scored as more satisfied with the communication they received concerning corporate information reported using voice mail, E-mail, instant message, audio conference, and room video conference more
frequently to communicate with their colleagues. Chinese employees who scored as more satisfied with their relationships to their supervisors reported communicating more face-to-face and using the following technologies more frequently in organizational communication: landline telephone, E-mail, instant message, and room video conference. Chinese employees who scored as more satisfied with their organizational communication concerning evaluation criteria and with coworker communication reported using more face-to-face communication and e-mail communication. Chinese employees scored as being more satisfied with communication feedback concerning work progress reported using the following forms of organizational communication more frequently: face-to-face, landline telephone, E-mail, and audio conference. Supervisors who reported being more satisfied with their subordinates’ communication also reported using more face-to-face and landline telephone-based approaches to communicate with others in the workplace. In addition, the frequencies of using the following technologies were not correlated with any factors of organizational communication satisfaction: cell phone, fax, text message, online chat tool, and postal mail.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Corporate information</th>
<th>Relationship to supervisor</th>
<th>Coworker communication</th>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Work progress feedback</th>
<th>Subordinate communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline telephone</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice mail</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to supervisor</td>
<td>Corporate information</td>
<td>Coworker communication</td>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>Work progress feedback</td>
<td>Subordinate communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant message</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio conference</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room video conference</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chat tool</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal mail</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed).
Research Question Ten

*Is there a correlation between the frequency of using certain technologies in organizational communication and the frequency of using different conflict management styles for multinational companies’ Chinese employees?*

Pearson product moment correlations were conducted to examine the relationships between Chinese employees’ frequency of using certain conflict management styles and their reported frequency of using different technologies for organizational communication. The key results are demonstrated in Table 4-9. The degrees of freedom ranged from 126 to 143 for the correlations reported in this table. Chinese employees who preferred nonconfrontation strategies reported communicating with colleagues face-to-face less frequently as their mode of communication. Chinese employees who preferred collaboration strategies reported using the following modes of communication more often for organizational communication: face-to-face, landline telephone, voice mail, e-mail, instant message, audio conference, and room video conference. Chinese employees who reported preferring compromise strategies indicated that they communicated with their colleagues more often through landline telephone, E-mail, and audio conference. Chinese employees who scored as using control strategies for conflict management more frequently reported using instant message, audio conference, room video conference, and online chat tool more often in organizational
communication. Chinese employees who scored as preferring solution-oriented strategies reported communicating with colleagues more often face-to-face, through landline telephone, E-mail, instant message, and audio conference modes.
Table 4-9

*Correlation Coefficients for Conflict Management Styles and Frequency of Using Technologies for Organizational Communication*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nonconfrontation</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Solution-oriented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline telephone</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice mail</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant message</td>
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<td>-.33**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio conference</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonconfrontation</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Solution-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room video conference</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chat tool</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
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<td>-.08</td>
<td>.03</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed).
Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have provided results for the ten research questions guiding this study. For the first set of research questions concerning the differences between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience, overall no significant differences were found in the following key variables: intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, organizational communication satisfaction level, and use of technology in organizational communication. Although minor differences existed between those two groups of participants, in general, the two groups revealed similar organizational communication behavior, at least as assessed by the instruments employed in this research. Therefore, in analyzing the correlations among different variables related to organizational communication, Chinese employees with and without overseas experience were analyzed together.

Correlations for the following pairs of variables were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlations: intercultural sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction, intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles, intercultural sensitivity and use of technologies, organizational communication satisfaction and conflict management styles, organizational communication satisfaction and use of technologies, conflict management styles and use of technologies. Significant correlations were found in the above six pairs of variables and their factors.
In the following chapter, I will discuss the key findings and draw major conclusions of this study. Furthermore, I will reflect on the theoretical and methodological approaches of the present study. The contributions and limitations of this study will also be discussed.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary of Key Findings and Discussion

Discussion of Research Question One

Surprisingly and interestingly, the analysis of the data relevant to the first research question revealed no significant differences for intercultural sensitivity between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience except for the factor of interactional confidence. Furthermore, the results revealed that the length of stay in another country did not influence Chinese employees’ level of intercultural sensitivity. This might indicate that, although some Chinese employees had overseas experience, including education, work, and/or travel, at the bottom of their heart, they hold their Chinese beliefs and identity tightly, and the overseas experience has very limited influence on their emotions and behaviors in terms of communication within the workplace. This confirms the Asiacentric approach of this study, and reflects Mahbubani’s (2002) comment that it is the time for the West to learn about humanity and communication from “What the rest can teach the West” (p. 92), and non-Westerners “can see both how powerful the impact of the West has been upon the rest of the world and [at] the same time how limited its impact has been on the souls of other peoples” (p. 112). Therefore, we need to understand Chinese employees’ communication from a Chinese perspective.

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With globalization, the world becomes a village. Following China’s reform and opening up policies of the 1980s, China’s citizens have more and more opportunities to know the West and interact with Western people. More multinational companies have established branches in China. Wang et al. (2007) observed that many multinational corporations practice localization strategies in their China branches, which means they try to adapt their production, marketing, management, and human resource practices to the Chinese cultural, social, and economic context. In other words, for their China branches, these multinational companies have sought to immerse themselves into Chinese society. This research supports multinational companies’ localization of human resources practices in China. The research results indicate that international experience does not result in Chinese employees who are internationalized in their organizational communication within the Chinese context. Chinese employees with overseas experience might adapt their communication behaviors to the Western context, but their intercultural sensitivity level is the same as that of Chinese employees without overseas experience. The similarities in the level of intercultural sensitivity that Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience had might also be due to Chinese employees without overseas experience adjusting themselves and improving their intercultural sensitivity in the multicultural working environment. However, because the majority of employees in the China branches of multinational companies in China are
Chinese employees without overseas experience, within the Chinese social and cultural context of the branch, it is more likely that Chinese employees with overseas experience adopted Chinese local communication practices.

It is also worth noting that Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience made similar decisions on filling out the survey in Chinese versus completing it in English, and had similar levels of desire to go to other countries. This might indicate that the use of English or Chinese as the official language for corporate communication might not make a huge difference between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience. With various language training programs in China, Chinese employees without overseas experience can improve their English language ability without spending a lot of money or time staying in an English speaking country. Given a choice between Chinese and English, both groups appear to be more comfortable with their native language. Furthermore, Chinese employees’ similar level of desire to go to other countries might indicate that Chinese employees might choose to go to other countries when there are good opportunities, but the desire to go abroad might not be the most powerful drive for pursuing an overseas experience.
Discussion of Research Question Two

No significant differences were found between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience in their reported frequency of using the conflict management styles identified through the OCCI. This study showed that Chinese employees reported using solution-oriented strategies more frequently than nonconfrontation strategies and control strategies. Individuals who use solution-oriented conflict management strategies tend to move toward the opposition through compromise and innovative solutions. Chinese employees’ reported preference for solution-oriented strategies might be influenced by the traditional Chinese philosophies of Buddhism and Confucianism that favor collaborative problem solving and Chinese culture’s emphasis on harmony. This result also confirms Chuang and Chen’s (2003) argument that Asian communication behaviors are dictated by empathic emotional control and avoidance of aggression. Literature on conflict management styles indicates that “members of collectivist cultures tend to prefer obliging and conflict-avoidance styles” (Trubisky et al., 1991, p. 70). Chinese employees in China branches of multinational companies in this study showed different behavioral patterns of conflict management by reporting using solution-oriented strategies more frequently than nonconfrontation strategies.

Interestingly, this study showed Chinese employees applied control strategies more frequently than nonconfrontation strategies. People who use control strategies tend
to use verbal and nonverbal communication to insist on their position, emphasize their demands, and move against the opposition. This is a surprising finding because previous literature on conflict management shows that Americans are more likely to use a competing style (Morris et al., 1998) and control strategies (Lee & Rogan, 1991) to manage conflicts. Chinese employees’ frequent use of control strategies might be explained by the Western cultural influence of the organizations for which they worked. The participants in this research—both those with overseas experience and those without overseas experience—had more or less adopted what are considered to be Western values and practices in their multicultural work environment. In addition, Chinese employees might also choose to use control strategies to protect their “face” and maintain their “power” in some situations. Chen and Starosta (1997-8) identified Mientze (face), and power (control of resources valued by the other party) as two important factors that influence the process of Chinese conflict management. Control strategies reflect the Western value of individual achievement and the Chinese value of maintaining one’s “face” and “power;” thus, they emerged as a preferred choice in comparison with nonconfrontation strategies as these strategies are influenced by both Western and Eastern cultures.
Discussion of Research Question Three

The research results showed no significant differences with respect to level of organizational communication satisfaction reported by Chinese employees with overseas experience versus those without overseas experience. Furthermore, both groups of respondents expressed great satisfaction with coworker communication. In the past 6 months, there were no significant differences between the two groups of respondents in terms of changes in their level of organizational communication satisfaction. The majority of Chinese employees reported that their organizational communication satisfaction level had stayed the same or gone up; 26.39% (slightly more than one-fourth) of the participants indicated that their satisfaction level had gone down. The above results suggest that the multinational companies the survey respondents were working for did an acceptable job of creating an effective and comfortable communication environment for both Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience.

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions for how China branches of multinational companies could increase their levels of employee organizational communication satisfaction. Those suggestions include: increase the amount of communication, especially informal communication; provide more career development opportunities and provide better rewards for employees’ contributions; make the organizational structure more efficient for communication; and improve supervisors’
communication skills. The suggestions that Chinese employees made primarily require efforts from the management team and the human resources department to make changes. In China, multinational companies are normally perceived as having a very busy working environment, a formal and efficient management system, and high work pressure associated with high levels of compensation. In this study, Chinese employees indicated their desire for more informal communication that was not focused only on work issues. This could be a good way to reduce work-related pressure, and improve “Guanxi”, the interpersonal relationship in Chinese culture. “Guanxi” and informal socialization play an important role in Chinese society. Chinese employees’ emphasis on informal communication reflects “Guanxi,” the cultural characteristic of Chinese society.

**Discussion of Research Question Four**

The research results showed that Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience used different technologies in similar ways for organizational communication. This is understandable since, within one company, employees need to communicate with colleagues who have and colleagues who do not have overseas experience. It is more likely that the use of any technology depends more on the availability of that technology and the organizational culture, not really the subtle and minor cultural differences existing between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience. Katz and Aakhus’s (2002) theory of
Apparatgeist also helps to understand the similar ways that Chinese employees with and without overseas experience use technologies in similar ways for organizational communication. In the Apparatgeist theory, Katz and Aakhus emphasized that technologies have universal features that cross cultural divisions; those features are independent of time and place. Furthermore, many technologies operate in a networked environment. Chinese employees with and without overseas experience use technologies to connect with other organizational members who are part of the same technical network, and the universal features of those technologies lead to similar ways of using them for organizational communication.

In this study, the ranking (descending order) based on the frequency of use of different forms of organizational communication was as follows: E-mail, face-to-face, cell phone, landline telephone, online chat tool, text message, instant message, audio conference, room video conference, fax, postal mail, and voice mail. It is an important finding that Chinese employees reported using E-mail more often than face-to-face communication. E-mail can better meet the communication needs of employees in different geographic locations with low cost and instant information exchange. The asynchronous nature of e-mail also leaves employees living in different time zones the flexibility to respond to work-related issues during their work time. The rich feature of attaching a scanned document file to an e-mail also allows for exchange of documents in
a convenient and inexpensive way. Additionally, exchange of E-mails provides a record of work progress and opinion exchange that can be easily traced if employees need to go back to previous discussions of a particular issue. The above advantages of E-mail largely meet a multinational company’s unique communication needs caused by dispersed geographic work locations in different time zones across the world. Therefore, E-mail becomes the most frequently used communication channel by Chinese employees in multinational companies, replacing the traditional face-to-face communication that can be expensive and difficult to arrange when employees are working far away from each other.

It is interesting that Chinese employees in multinational companies reported using cell phones for organizational communication more frequently than landline telephones. In China, cell phones are used for both work and social purposes. It is quite normal that employees share their cell phone numbers with their coworkers and supervisors in most companies. The China branches of multinational companies seem to have been localized by the Chinese way of using cell phones for work-related communication.

Fax, postal mail, and voice mail, three of the less high-tech communication forms listed on the questionnaire, were reported by the participants in this research as being least frequently used. The less frequent use of fax and postal mail might be explained by the popularity of transferring information and documents through E-mail. Email enables
“instant transfer of messages and documents world-wide between people on the same private network, or with access to the same public network” (Samuels, 1997, p. 35).

Furthermore, there is nearly no cost when using E-mail to transfer information and documents, while usually there is a cost associated with faxes and postal mail. Voice mail is a common form of communication used in local companies in Western countries, but Chinese employees in China branches of multinational companies reported rarely using it, which coincides with Chinese people’s communication habit of preferring to call again rather than leaving a message and waiting for a return phone call. Although the research results showed the longer the Chinese employees stayed overseas, the more frequently they used voice mail for organizational communication, overall, voice mail was not reported by Chinese employees as a popular organizational communication tool. This study showed that Chinese employees with overseas experience chose the more “Chinese” style of using technologies in multinational companies’ China branches, so they tended not to leave a voice mail while they might choose to do so when they were in overseas.

Discussion of Research Question Five

This study found that Chinese employees reporting a higher level of intercultural sensitivity also reported being more satisfied with their organizational communication. In particular, Chinese employees’ interaction engagement level was significantly and positively correlated with their satisfaction levels with regard to their relationship to their
supervisor and subordinate communication; Chinese employees’ level of respect for cultural differences was significantly and positively correlated with their levels of communication satisfaction with corporate information, relationship to supervisor, coworker communication, work progress feedback, and subordinate communication; Chinese employees’ interaction confidence level was significantly and positively correlated with their levels of communication satisfaction with corporate information, relationship to supervisor, evaluation criteria, and work progress feedback; Chinese employees’ level of interaction enjoyment was significantly and positively correlated with their levels of communication satisfaction with corporate information, relationship to supervisor, work progress feedback, and subordinate communication. However, Chinese employees’ level of interaction attentiveness was not significantly correlated with any factor assessed by the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Cultural differences have created different challenges for organizational communication within a multinational company. It is not surprising to find that Chinese employees’ level of intercultural sensitivity positively correlated with their level of organizational communication satisfaction. It is interesting to find that interaction attentiveness (i.e., participants’ efforts to understand what is going on in intercultural interaction) was not significantly correlated with any organizational communication satisfaction factors. This appears to suggest that participants’ general efforts are not
enough to improve organizational communication effectiveness and level of satisfaction.

In order to improve subordinate-supervisor communication, Chinese employees need to participate more actively, positively, and confidently in interactions with individuals from different cultures. Respect for cultural differences is extremely important for Chinese employees’ overall organizational communication satisfaction level, as illustrated by the positive correlation found between respect for cultural differences and all the factors of employee organizational communication satisfaction except evaluation criteria. Chinese employees’ confidence in intercultural communication might come from their ability of effectively communicating in intercultural settings and previous successful intercultural communication experience, and those intercultural communication skills could lead to better experiences with getting different types of work-related information, including corporate information, evaluation criteria, and work progress feedback.

Discussion of Research Question Six

This study showed that Chinese employees scoring as having higher levels of intercultural sensitivity tended to use collaboration or solution-oriented strategies (containing both collaboration and compromise) to manage organizational conflicts. Overall, no significant positive correlations were found between any conflict management styles and factors associated with intercultural sensitivity, but a few significant negative correlations did emerge between some conflict management styles.
and some factors of intercultural sensitivity. Because the smaller numbers in the OCCI scale represent higher frequencies of using certain conflict management styles, the negative correlations between the frequencies of using various conflict management styles measured by the OCCI and the factors of intercultural sensitivity as shown by the data should be interpreted as positive correlations between the pairs of variables. Nonconfrontation was reported by Chinese employees as the least frequently used conflict management style, and it was not significantly correlated with any factors of intercultural sensitivity. Extensive literature shows that culture affects individuals’ ways of managing conflicts. Therefore, it is not surprising to find correlations between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles. However, it is hard to interpret the results of this research question without some qualitative data addressing why and in what kind of context Chinese employees choose to use certain conflict management styles. This could be a future research project.

**Discussion of Research Question Seven**

The research results revealed that Chinese employees scoring as having a higher level of intercultural sensitivity tended to communicate with colleagues face-to-face, through landline telephones, or through cell phones most frequently, and also tended to use voice mail, E-mail, instant message, and audio conferencing more frequently than other technologies. Similarly, Chinese employees scoring as having higher levels of
interaction engagement reported communicating more via face-to-face, through landline telephones, or cell phones in the workplace. Face-to-face, landline telephones, and cell phones all support synchronous communication. This could help interactants participate more actively in the communication process.

Chinese employees with more respect for cultural differences and who had more positive reactions to intercultural communication tended to communicate with colleagues face-to-face. Compared with technology-mediated communication channels, face-to-face communication can provide the richest communication environment in terms of contextual cues, and nonverbal and verbal cues, all of which is important information, helping interactants to adjust their communication styles according to the observed cultural differences in order to enjoy the interaction. The correlation between respect for cultural differences and face-to-face communication might indicate that face-to-face communication is a good way for one communicator to show respect for the cultural differences of his/her fellow interactants. In a workplace with employees from different cultures, the organization might try to facilitate more face-to-face communication opportunities among employees to build respectful and pleasant relationships.

Faxing, text messages, participating in video conferences, using online chat tools, and using postal mail were not found to be correlated with any factors of intercultural sensitivity. This implies that the use of those technologies does not have a significant
effect on Chinese employees’ intercultural sensitivity. For multinational companies that want to increase their Chinese employees’ intercultural sensitivity levels, the companies might encourage their employees to use technologies that are positively correlated with intercultural sensitivity instead of the above technologies which, at least in this research, did not correlate with any factor of intercultural sensitivity. The following ways of communicating were found to be positively correlated with one or more factors of intercultural sensitivity and could be helpful for improving employee intercultural sensitivity: face-to-face, landline telephone, cell phone, voice mail, E-mail, instant message, and audio conference.

*Discussion of Research Question Eight*

This research found that Chinese employees who were more satisfied with their organizational communication tended to use collaboration strategies and solution-oriented strategies (containing both collaboration and compromise) to manage conflicts. This finding indicates that the use of collaboration strategies and solution-oriented strategies could potentially increase the organizational communication satisfaction level of Chinese employees in multinational companies. Specifically, the use of solution-oriented strategies could improve Chinese employees’ relationship with their supervisors, their satisfaction levels of getting evaluation criteria information and work progress feedbacks. Nonconfrontation and control, as the two least frequently used
conflict management styles reported by Chinese employees, were not significantly correlated with any factors of organizational communication satisfaction. Therefore, nonconfrontation strategies and control strategies cannot improve Chinese employees’ organizational communication experiences.

Discussion of Research Question Nine

The research results revealed that Chinese employees scoring as having higher levels of organizational communication satisfaction used the following forms of communication more frequently in workplace: face-to-face, landline telephone, E-mail, instant message, audio conference, and video conference. Among those technologies, E-mail was significantly and positively correlated with the following five factors of organizational communication satisfaction: corporate information, relationship to supervisor, coworker communication, evaluation criteria, and work progress feedback, but not correlated with subordinate communication. Face-to-face communication was significantly and positively correlated with all the factors of organizational communication satisfaction except corporate information. This indicates that, in general, face-to-face and E-mail are likely to be the most effective ways of communication to improve Chinese employees’ organizational communication experiences. As such, multinational companies might want to encourage their Chinese employees to use those two forms of communication for day-to-day work-related communication.
Chinese employees’ level of satisfaction with corporate information was significantly and positively correlated with their reported frequency of using voice mail, E-mail, instant message, audio conferencing, and video conferencing. This suggests that China branches of multinational companies can consider using the above technologies to disseminate corporate information effectively to their Chinese employees.

Chinese employees who reported being more satisfied with their relationship with their supervisor also reported that they used face-to-face communication, landline telephones, E-mail, instant messages, and video conferencing more frequently in the workplace than did those employees reporting less satisfaction. However, supervisors who were more satisfied with their subordinates’ communication reported they used face-to-face communication and landline telephones more frequently. Furthermore, Chinese employees who were more satisfied with coworker communication used face-to-face communication and E-mail more frequently. These findings suggest that communicating face-to-face or through landline telephones work best for communication between supervisors and subordinates. Face-to-face communication is the most effective way of communicating for improving both horizontal and hierarchical coworker relationships.
Discussion of Research Question Ten

Solution-oriented strategies were most frequently used to manage organizational conflicts as reported by Chinese employees in this study. The more frequently Chinese employees used solution-oriented strategies, the more frequently they used the following modes to communicate with their colleagues: face-to-face, landline telephone, E-mail, instant message, and audio conference. Among the above ways of communication, all of them are synchronous in nature except E-mail. Solution-oriented strategies might be more likely to be applied successfully in synchronous communication as the two parties of the conflicts can exchange their opinions and discuss their solutions simultaneously, which might be more possible to lead to compromise and innovative ways that can satisfy both parties.

Nonconfrontation strategies were least frequently used by Chinese employees to manage organizational conflicts, and the frequency of using nonconfrontation strategies only correlates with face-to-face communication. Chinese employees in this study reported that the more frequently they used nonconfrontation strategies to manage conflicts, the less frequently they communicated with their colleagues through face-to-face communication. In face-to-face communication, interactants can exchange information through both verbal and nonverbal channels. The richness of communicating
face-to-face might make interatants work together to solve a conflict instead of shying away from it.

This study also showed that the more frequently Chinese employees used control strategies to manage conflicts, the more frequently they used the following modes to communicate with their colleagues: instant message, audio conferencing, video conferencing, and online chat tools. This indicates that Chinese employees tend to insist on their own opinions and fight against the opposite party using the above synchronous and technology-mediated ways of communication.

Scholarly Contributions of this Study

This study enriches the literature on Asian organizational communication and contributes to the development of the Asiacentric approach. This study is one of very few extant studies that focus on organizational communication in the Chinese context. Although scholars have conducted research on Asian communication for years, most of the existing research concerns interpersonal communication, cultural comparisons, and/or theoretical analyses. Organizational communication remains largely unexplored in Asian communication, especially in Chinese communication. In the updated bibliography of research on Asian cultures and communication compiled by Miike and Chen (2006), among the selected 232 published research articles, very few of the cited works focus on
organizational communication. Therefore, this study enriches the Asiacentric approach of communication studies with a focus on organizational communication.

Zimpfer and Underwood (1988) called for research identifying the communication skills needed and common communication concerns of multinational company’s employees. Through examining the correlations among some important communication variables in the international business environment: intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, use of technology, and organizational satisfaction, this study takes the initiative to identify potential ways to improve Chinese employees’ organizational communication satisfaction and strategies to increase their level of intercultural sensitivity. The correlations among the variables identified by this study build the empirical foundation for future research to further develop communication models that include those variables and which will have significant theoretical and practical implications.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I addressed literature on the relationship between culture and an individual’s conflict management style, as well as some research comparing different cultural groups’ styles for managing conflicts. Some scholars have conducted research on how Chinese manage conflicts in organizational contexts, but mainly in state-owned enterprises in China (Liu & Chen, 2002; Yu, 2002). To my knowledge, this study is the first to compare organizational conflict management styles of
the following two subcultural groups: Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience in China branches of multinational companies. Furthermore, this study examines Chinese employees’ conflict management styles in relation to selected, other communication behaviors, including intercultural sensitivity, use of technology, and communication satisfaction. The quantitative results of this study have some generalizable and practical implications, and also build foundations for future qualitative research to further explore why those relationships exist and how those variables interact with each other.

With the emergence of new technologies, contemporary multinational companies have more choices for promoting internal communication. A lot of research has been conducted to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using certain technologies and the different roles that selected technologies can play in organizational communication. This study contributes to this thread of research on new technology and organizational communication by examining Chinese employees’ frequencies of using both traditional and new technologies in China branches of multinational companies.

Organizational communication satisfaction is an important topic in organizational communication research. Organizational communication satisfaction has been studied in different cultural contexts including the U.S., Nigeria, Mexico, China, Guatemala, and Australia (Varona, 1996). Research on organizational communication satisfaction in
Chinese culture has been conducted with employees in Taiwan and faculty members at junior colleges (Lee, 1989; Tsai, Chuang, & Hsieh, 2009). This research extends the literature on organizational communication satisfaction by examining Chinese employees’ organizational communication satisfaction in multinational companies. In addition, Lee (1994) suggested future research should examine employees in business organizations in different cultures to compare cultural similarities and differences. This study compares two groups of employees belonging to two different subcultures, Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience. This study showed both similarities and differences of the organizational communication satisfaction level and other communication preferences of the above two groups of employees, thusly answered Lee’s (1994) research call.

In a discussion of a framework for engaged communication scholarship, Simpson and Seibold (2008) argued that engaged organizational communication should be motivated by practical questions and concerns. This research was stimulated by practical questions that China branches of multinational companies have in their everyday organizational lives, and the research results provide some practical implications for practitioners. Therefore, this dissertation also contributes to engaged “Chinese” organizational communication scholarship. Simpson and Seibold further argued that “what makes engaged scholarship more than either research or practice alone are the
recursive and reflexive practices that build a bridge between the pursuits of the academy and those of practitioner communities” (p. 270). Therefore, I will proceed to discuss the practical implications of some of the key findings of this research.

Practical Implications

Several practical suggestions can be drawn from the results of this study. Employees and administrators in China branches of multinational companies could consider those suggestions within their specific organizational contexts and adopt some of them to improve the communication experiences of Chinese employees in the company. Overall, there was no significant difference between Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience in the communication behaviors examined in this study. Chinese employees with/without overseas experience mainly used communication practices influenced by the Chinese culture in their work as members of a China branch of a multinational company. This emphasizes the importance of localizing organizational communication of multinational companies in China. The majority of the employees in the China branches of multinational companies are Chinese, and the core businesses of China branches are usually conducted in China as well. This study showed very limited, if any, Western cultural influence on the organizational communication of the Chinese employees. A good organizational communication environment is essential for recruiting and retaining excellent Chinese employees in
China branches. In order to do so, the administrators and human resources department need to respect communication practices as influenced by the Chinese culture and learn to understand and adopt those practices.

E-mail was reported as the most frequently used organizational communication technology in this study. Furthermore, E-mail was found to be significantly and positively correlated with most of the factors of organizational communication satisfaction except for subordinate communication. Chinese employees reporting higher levels of intercultural sensitivity also tended to use E-mail more frequently for organizational communication. No doubt, E-mail has its advantages and has been proven to be a popular communication technology. In the discussion of research question 4, I discussed the advantages of using E-mail. Based on the research results, China branches of multinational companies should encourage their Chinese employees to take advantage of E-mail as a convenient and low-cost form of organizational communication.

However, China branches of multinational companies should also provide enough training and support for employees to use E-mail effectively and avoid the possible negative effects of this technology. For instance, spelling and grammar mistakes and the wrong communication tone in an E-mail could create misunderstandings and even conflicts. Relying on E-mail communication could lead to feelings of isolation and lack of face-to-face communication among employees. The confidentiality of E-mail and the
security of the Internet system are also important things to consider. Therefore, China
branches of multinational companies need to provide enough communication training and
technical support to make sure that Chinese employees can use E-mail appropriately and
effectively for organizational communication. This study revealed the frequency of using
E-mail correlated positively with Chinese employees’ level of intercultural sensitivity,
which suggests communication training on the use of E-mail could potentially increase
employee intercultural sensitivity. However, subordinates might consider using other
vehicles instead of E-mail to communicate with their supervisor as subordinate
communication was the only factor of organizational communication that was found to
not be positively correlated with the use of E-mail.

This study also reported that cell phones were the third most frequently used form
of organizational communication, following E-mail and face-to-face communication.
Although using a cell phone for work-related communication is very common in China,
China branches of multinational companies might need to exercise some caution. That
call for caution is due to the fact that, in this study, cell phone use was reported as more
frequently used than landline telephones for organizational communication, although this
study did not include the information on whether employees use cell phones to
communicate work-related issues during work time or private time. China branches of
multinational companies might consider limiting the use of cell phones for work-related
issues after work. Frequently using cell phones to contact employees for work-related issues during their private time could break the boundary between private time and work time. Employees might struggle to balance work and life due to long working hours and the intrusion of their professional lives into their private space. Over the long term, the long working hours could lead to a high rate of employee burnout; therefore, the frequent use of cell phones for organizational communication after work might not be good either for employees or for the company. In their answers to the open ended questions on the survey, Chinese employees indicated that they preferred more informal communication and socialization in the company, which could be a good way to relieve some work pressure. Administrators and human resources departments might want to consider ways to reduce extra working hours and work pressure for employees so as to maintain a healthy balance between work and life.

The quantitative data collected as part of this study also provides some insights for China branches of multinational companies to improve their employees’ overall organizational communication satisfaction levels. First, some training on intercultural sensitivity could be a way to improve Chinese employees’ levels of organizational communication satisfaction, as Chinese employees reporting higher levels of intercultural sensitivity also reported being more satisfied with their organizational communication. Chinese employees reporting higher levels of intercultural sensitivity reported using the
following forms of organizational communication more frequently: face-to-face, landline telephone, cell phone, voice mail, E-mail, instant message, and audio conference. Thus, multinational companies might want to consider incorporating training in the above communication channels in different cultural contexts as part of intercultural sensitivity training. Second, China branches of multinational companies can encourage Chinese employees to use certain ways to communicate with their colleagues more frequently so as to increase the level of employee communication satisfaction. This research showed that Chinese employees reporting higher levels of organizational communication satisfaction tended to use the following ways of organizational communication more frequently: face-to-face, landline telephone, E-mail, instant message, audio conference, and room video conference. Third, training in conflict management could potentially increase Chinese employees’ organizational communication satisfaction levels. Chinese employees who reported using solution-oriented conflict management styles more frequently than any other styles also reported higher levels of satisfaction with their company’s organizational communication. Therefore, China branches of multinational companies could consider providing training on how to successfully use solution-oriented conflict management styles as a way to increase their Chinese employees’ organizational communication satisfaction levels.
Limitations

The first limitation of the study is associated with the quantitative methodological approach. The survey method used in this study provided mainly quantitative data, which depicted a general picture of the relationships among the main variables examined in this study: intercultural sensitivity, conflict management style, use of technology, and organizational communication satisfaction. The quantitative data can only answer questions as to “what” are the relationships, but cannot provide explanations for “why” and “how” those relationships exist. Thus, this study did not provide an in-depth and rich understanding of Chinese employees’ organizational communication behavior in multinational companies in China.

Second, the participants in this research could be a biased group due to the specific time period when the data were collected. The data were collected from November 2008 to June 2009 when the whole world was in a severe financial crisis. The economy, especially in Western countries, was seriously hit. Unemployment rates in some Western countries, such as the U.S., were historically high, which strongly affected the operation of branches of those multinational companies with headquarters in those countries. Although the economy in China was in a comparatively strong position, Chinese employees in China branches of multinational companies could not avoid some fears about the potential for losing their jobs due to the worldwide economic recession. In
this sensitive period of time, many Chinese employees might hesitate to participate in studies focusing on their organizational communication behaviors in order to avoid any unpredictable and unintended outcomes. Therefore, it is likely that Chinese employees who participated in this study were those who felt more secure in their employment and held a better position relative to the financial crisis.

Third, this research relied on self-report data, so social desirability could also influence how the participants responded to the survey items. In particular, the social desirability of the OCCI should be taken into account when understanding the results of this study, as Wilson and Waltman (1988) reported that the social desirability of the OCCI results in a minimum of 20% to 40% of the variance in frequency ratings of OCCI strategies.

Fourth, this study lacks context specific information to further understand the survey results. The respondents worked for 57 different multinational companies in different industries with headquarters in different countries all over the world. Although the diverse backgrounds of those companies could increase the generalizability of the survey results, the limitation is that it is nearly impossible to trace back how specific organizational or industrial culture influences employee organizational communication behavior. With a small number of participants working for multinational companies from
each country, this study does not enable comparison of cultural differences among different countries either.

The fifth limitation of this research is associated with the measurements. Four different survey instruments developed in Western contexts were used to measure communication behaviors of Chinese employees in China branches of multinational companies. Although three of the scales—the ISS, the OCCI, and the CSQ—have been successfully applied in studies in different cultural contexts, especially in the Chinese cultural context, they might not be ideal instruments for measuring Chinese employees’ communication behaviors. I revised the TUS instrument based on the Chinese context, but the revision process of this instrument did not go through a rigorous survey instrument development procedure. Therefore, this research only partially addressed Miike’s (2003, 2006) call for using Asian methodological approaches to understand Asian communication phenomena. In addition, the four English instruments were translated into Chinese, so the participants could choose to complete the survey either in Chinese or in English. On one hand, the option of filling out the survey in Chinese reflected the Asiacentric approach taken by this study; on the other hand, the translation might influence the validity and reliability of the survey instruments. Information relevant to the validity and reliability of the Chinese version versus the English version of those survey instruments was not reported in previous studies. Because of sample size, this study could
not provide a comparison either. Therefore, the potential biases, ambiguity, and inaccuracy that were introduced in the translation process should be considered when applying the results of this research.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study compared the communication behavior of Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience in China branches of multinational companies, and also examined the correlations among the following variables: intercultural sensitivity, use of technology, conflict management styles, and organizational satisfaction. This research illustrates that organizational communication of Chinese employees in multinational companies is a rich and important area that needs further examination. This study contributes to the literature as well as poses some directions for future research.

First, future research could compare more diverse groups in multinational companies on their organizational behavior. China branches of multinational companies have many different types of Chinese employees, and this study only compared Chinese employees with overseas experience with those without overseas experience. Chinese who grew up in Hong Kong, Chinese who grew up in Taiwan, and mainland Chinese are all influenced by traditional culture as well as by the distinct social and cultural contexts of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China. A comparison of those three groups of
Chinese could contribute in a significant manner to the human resources practices of multinational companies’ China branches. Some foreign staff members also work in the China branches of multinational companies. Although the number of foreign staff members is usually small in a China branch, they sometimes have important positions in the company and have a significant influence on the decision making and culture of the company. Therefore, it is important to get foreign staff members’ perspectives on organizational communication of China branches of multinational companies.

Second, in this study, different conflict management styles were found to be correlated with intercultural sensitivity, use of technology, and organizational communication satisfaction. Future research might include more conflict management styles to test the relationship between conflict management styles and some other organizational communication variables. Furthermore, qualitative studies of Chinese employees’ conflict management styles in relation to their other organizational communication behavior could provide fruitful and in-depth understandings of why Chinese employees choose to manage conflicts in certain contexts and how particular conflict management strategies relate to their other organizational communication behaviors and organizational communication satisfaction level.

Third, this study showed there were correlations among the following variables: intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, use of technologies, and
organizational communication satisfaction. Future research might investigate whether there are causal relationships among those variables. This study showed that intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, use of technology were correlated with organizational communication satisfaction. Based on the results of present study, future research could try to build a regression model to examine whether and how intercultural sensitivity, conflict management styles, and use of technologies contribute to Chinese employees’ organizational satisfaction level in China branches of multinational companies.

Fourth, this study showed the rankings of the frequencies of using different technologies for organizational communication by Chinese employees with overseas experience and those without overseas experience were exactly the same. Future qualitative research might provide some explanation for why those two groups of participants choose to use those technologies with the same ranking of frequencies. Future research can also examine the ranking of frequencies of using technologies by employees in other cultural contexts, thusly providing some comparative data to the results of this study.

As discussed in the limitations section of this dissertation, all four instruments used in this study were developed in North American contexts. Although all of the instruments have been employed in research conducted in different cultural contexts, one
must still wonder about the possible cultural biases involved in each of the instruments. Future research might begin with the development of instruments in Chinese contexts, thus better capturing the characteristics of Chinese people’s organizational communication behavior and contributing to the Asicentric methodology.

The present study was conducted during the world financial crisis; thus, it was difficult to have access to a big multinational company to conduct research on organizational communication in the sensitive period of time. The participants of the present study were from different multinational companies across different industries, and there was no way to further analyze Chinese employees’ organizational communication behavior within its specific organizational context. Through case studies, future research can provide a more comprehensive and context-based understanding of Chinese employees’ organizational communication. Data collected through different sources in case studies can clearly depict how social, cultural, and organizational contexts influence individual, group, and organizational communication behaviors at both micro- and macro-levels in China branches of multinational companies.
References


http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cahrswp/407/


APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL FROM OHIO UNIVERSITY

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2: research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: Does Culture Matter? Relating Intercultural Communication Sensitivity to Conflict Management Styles, Technology Use, and Organizational Communication Satisfaction in Multinationals in China

Project Director: Yuping Mao

Department: School of Communication Studies

Advisor: Claudia Hale

Robin Stack, C.I.P., Human Subjects Research Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.

Date 07/31/08
### Notification of Approval - Delegated Review

| From: | Dr. Ingrid Johnston  
REB Chair, Education, Extension, Augustana Research Ethics Board (EEA REB) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To:</td>
<td>Yuping Mao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study ID:</td>
<td>Pro00000437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Title:</td>
<td>Does Culture Matter? Relating Intercultural Communication Sensitivity to Conflict Management Styles, Technology Use, and Organizational Communication Satisfaction in Multinationals in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Investigator:</td>
<td>Yuping Mao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Informed Consent:</td>
<td>Approval Date: 12/31/1969, Expiration Date: 7/15/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Document</td>
<td>Website Consent Form for Participants.doc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/Sponsor (free text):</td>
<td>There are no items to display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/Sponsor (validated):</td>
<td>There are no items to display</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for submitting the above ethics application to the Education, Extension, and Augustana Research Ethics Board. Dr. Stanley Varnhagen has reviewed your application and, on behalf of the Education, Extension, Augustana Research Ethics Board (EEA REB), approved it as of 7/15/2008. The approval will expire on 7/15/2009.

A renewal report must be submitted prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval at that time. If you do not renew before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.
Sincerely,

Ingrid Johnston, PhD  
REB Chair, Education, Extension, Augustana Research Ethics Board (EEA REB)

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).*
APPENDIX C: INVITATION LETTER

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You are invited to participate in a study examining intercultural communication sensitivity, organizational communication satisfaction, and organizational conflict management of employees in multinational companies in China. In addition, this study assesses employees’ frequencies of applying different technologies in their organizational communication, and explores how different technologies are adopted by employees and are related to their levels of intercultural communication sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction. I hope that you will be willing to contribute to my research by providing important information about your organizational communication experiences. I am currently a doctoral candidate of the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University, the U.S., and I am working as the academic developer at the Master Program of Communication and Technology at University of Alberta, Canada. This research is for my dissertation project to complete my doctoral degree.

As an employee in a multinational company in China, your input is very important for my research, and I am very curious about your feedback. With your help, I hope the research results can provide insight for the management teams of multinational companies in China to inform more effective training so as to improve employee communication effectiveness and achieve higher levels of communication satisfaction.

The survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is totally voluntary and your e-mail address will NOT be associated with this survey in any way, so you can be confident that your responses will remain anonymous.

If you decide to participate in this study and complete the survey, please simply click on the link http://webx1s.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_English_cp to fill out the survey in English, or click on the link http://webx1s.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_Chinese_cp to fill out the survey in Chinese. You can also paste the survey link to your browser. **The password to enter the survey is 26911.** This link will take you to the consent form which will explain your rights as a research participant. After you have read the Informed Consent Form, if you agree to the terms of consent and are willing to participate, you will then need to click the “CONSENT” button to indicate your consent to participate in the study and be directed to the actual survey. PLEASE only complete this survey once.
Thank you for your time and interest in my study. I am looking forward to your participation in this project! If you are interested in issues related to this research, you may request a copy of the final results by sending an e-mail to Yuping Mao at yuping.mao@ualberta.ca.

Respectfully,
Yuping Mao
Academic Developer
Communication and Technology Graduate Program
University of Alberta
yuping.mao@ualberta.ca
1-780-248-1110

Fill out the survey in English:
http://webxls.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_English_cp
Fill out the survey in Chinese:
http://webxls.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_Chinese_cp
Password: 26911

邀请信
尊敬的先生和女士:

谨诚邀您参加一个关于在中国的跨国公司员工跨文化交流敏感度、公司沟通满意度和员工处理冲突方式的问卷调查。同时，此问卷调查还包括员工使用各种高科技沟通方式的频繁度，及其与以上三方面的关系。非常希望您能提供相关信息来支持此研究。我现在是美国俄亥俄大学传播学院的博士候选人，我同时在加拿大阿尔伯塔大学的传播与技术硕士项目仍教职。此研究是我的博士毕业论文研究课题。

作为在中国的跨国公司的雇员，您的支持和参与对我的研究非常重要，我非常希望能得到您的反馈。在您的帮助下，我希望该研究能提供给跨国公司的管理团队相关信息以帮助他们提供更有效的员工培训来提高员工的企业沟通满意度。

此问卷调查需要15至20分钟来完成。您对此问卷调查的参与是完全自发的。您的电子邮件地址将不会和您填写的问卷联系起来，因此您对问卷问题的回答将保持匿名和保密。
如果您决定用英文填写该问卷，请点击以下网络链接：
http://webxls.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_English_cp
如果您决定用中文填写该问卷，请点击以下链接：
http://webxls.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_Chinese_cp。
您也可将此链接粘贴到您的网络浏览器的地址栏。进入链接后，请输入密码 26911。此链接将带您进入此研究的信息介绍和同意参与的协议。如果您阅读完该页面后愿意参与此问卷调查，请点击“同意”并进入问卷调查的页面。请勿重复填写该问卷。

非常感谢您时间对本项研究的热情。我热切期待着您的参与！如果您对该研究的相关问题感兴趣，您可发电子邮件给毛玉屏（yuping.mao@ualberta.ca）以获取该研究结果的报告。

此致

敬礼

毛玉屏
学术发展专员
传播与新技术研究生项目
阿尔伯塔大学
yuping.mao@ualberta.ca
1-780-248-1110

如果您决定用英文填写该问卷，请点击以下网络链接：
http://webxls.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_English_cp
如果您决定用中文填写该问卷，请点击以下链接：
http://webxls.extn.ualberta.ca/cgi-bin/rws4.pl?FORM=Yuping_Chinese_cp
进入链接后，请输入密码 26911。
APPENDIX D: ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Federal and university regulations require signed consent for participation in research involving human subjects. After reading the statements below, if you agree to the terms of consent and are willing to participate, please indicate your consent by clicking the “CONSENT” button.

Title of Research: Does Culture Matter? Relating Intercultural Communication Sensitivity to Conflict Management Styles, Technology Use, and Organizational Communication Satisfaction in Multinationals in China

Researcher: Yuping Mao
Department:
Academic Developer at Master program of Communication and Technology, University of Alberta, Canada
Ph. D. Candidate at School of Communication Studies, Ohio University, the U.S.

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, please indicate your consent by clicking the “continue” button. This will allow your participation in this study.

Explanation of Study

This study examines intercultural communication sensitivity, organizational communication satisfaction, and organizational conflict management of employees in multinational companies in China. In addition, this study assesses employees’ frequencies of applying different technologies in their organizational communication, and explores how different technologies are adopted by employees and are related to their levels of intercultural communication sensitivity and organizational communication satisfaction. It will take approximately 15 minutes to fill out the survey questionnaire. This research is for Yuping Mao’s doctoral dissertation research. Yuping Mao is currently working as an academic developer at the Master’s Program of Communication and Technology at University of Alberta. The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the IRB (Institutional Review Board) at Ohio
University, the U.S. and the Faculties of Education, Extension and Augustana Research Ethics Board (EEA REB) at the University of Alberta, Canada.

**Risks and Discomforts**

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with this project. You will only be asked to provide answers to survey questions; none of the questions involve sensitive information.

**Benefits**

You will receive no direct benefit from this study. The research results will provide important information for multinational companies concerning communication training for their employees in order to increase organizational communication satisfaction, thus increasing employee job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Consequently, this research may benefit you as an employee in a multinational company in China.

**Confidentiality and Records**

It is not possible to connect your e-mail address to your responses, so you can be confident that your responses remain completely confidential and anonymous. All survey responses collected for this study will be kept in a locked office on a secure password protected computer for five years. No summaries or other reports of the study’s findings will contain information about particular individuals; information will only be reported in a summary format.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Yuping Mao at 1-780-248-1110 or yuping.mao@ualberta.ca.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant and ethical conduct of research, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, the U.S., 1-740-593-0664, or Betty Jo Werthmann, the Chair of the EEA REB c/o, University of Alberta, 1-780- 492-2261.
By clicking the “CONSENT” button below, you are agreeing that:

- you read and understand this consent form and agree to participate as a subject in the research described
- known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University and University of Alberta has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is given voluntarily
- you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

CONSENT                                                     QUIT
参与的风险
参与该项目不会给您带来任何风险或不适。您将被要求回答一些问卷调查问题，该问卷不涉及任何敏感信息。

参与的益处
参与此问卷调查不会给您带来直接收益。此项研究的结果能提供给跨国公司的管理团队相关信息以帮助他们提供更有效的员工培训来提高员工的企业沟通满意度，从而提高员工的工作满意度并使企业能更有效地运转。最终，作为在中国的跨国公司的员工，您将间接受益。

保密性
您的电子邮件地址将不会和您填写的问卷联系起来，因此您对问卷问题的回答将保持匿名和保密。所有的问卷调查结果将被加密存在电脑中，并置于带锁的办公室中安全保存五年。该研究的报告将不会包含任何参与者的个人信息，研究结果只涉及宏观统计数据。

联系方式
如果您有关于此研究本身的问题，请联系毛玉屏，电话：1-780-248-1110，电子邮件地址：yuping.mao@ualberta.ca.

如果您有关于该研究参与者的权利的问题以及该研究项目道德准则的问题，请致电美国俄亥俄大学研究委员会主席Jo Ellen Sherow（1-740-593-0664），或致电加拿大阿尔伯塔大学研究委员会主席Betty Jo Werthmann（1-780-492-2261）。

通过点击“同意”按钮，您同意并接受以下条款：
- 您已阅读并理解以上关于该研究项目的信息并决定参与该研究；
- 您已充分了解参与该研究有可能带来的风险；
- 您了解美国俄亥俄大学和加拿大阿尔伯塔大学将不会对您因参与该研究项目造成的伤害做出任何赔偿；
- 您是已年满18岁的成年人；
- 您是完全自愿参与该研究项目的；
- 您可随时退出此研究，并且您不会因为退出此项研究受到任何处罚或影响到您的利益。

同意 退出

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APPENDIX E: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1 – Demographic Information: To begin, we would like to get some information about you. Your answers to these questions will help us better understand the opinions you express in other sections of this questionnaire. Please circle or write your responses.

1. Which company are you working for? ________________________________

2. Do you have any overseas experiences?
   Yes _____ No _____ (please go to Question 3)

3. Please provide the basic information of your overseas experiences
   Country 1: _____ Length of stay: ___months
     Main activity: work___ study___ travel___
   Country 2: _____ Length of stay: ___months
     Main activity: work___ study___ travel___
   Country 3: _____ Length of stay: ___months
     Main activity: work___ study___ travel___
   Country 4: _____ Length of stay: ___months
     Main activity: work___ study___ travel___
   Other overseas experiences (please specify) ____________________

4. Please indicate the level of your desire to go to other countries:
   Very low      Low       Medium    High      Very high

5. What is your sex? _____ Female _____ Male

6. What is your age? _____ years old

7. How long have you been working with your current employer? _____ years ___ months
8. What is your current position? [Please check one]

___ First-entry staff
___ Experienced staff
___ Manager/supervisor
___ Executive
___ Other (please, specify) __________________

9. What is your education level?

___ High school diploma
___ Associate’s/vocational degree
___ Bachelor’s degree
___ Master’s degree or higher
___ Other (please specify) __________________

Section 2 – Instructions: The following are statements about your intercultural communication sensitivity. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale based on your self-reflection on your attitudes and behaviors. The alternative responses (1-5) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.

2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.

3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.

4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.

5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
   1  2  3  4  5
7. I don’t like to be with people from different cultures.
   1  2  3  4  5
8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.
   1  2  3  4  5
9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
   1  2  3  4  5
10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
    1  2  3  4  5
12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.
    1  2  3  4  5
17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart’s subtle meanings during our interaction.
    1  2  3  4  5
20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.
    1  2  3  4  5
21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.
    1  2  3  4  5
22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
    1  2  3  4  5
23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

24. I have a feeling of enjoyment toward differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Section 3 – Instructions:** Please indicate how often you communicate with your colleagues using each of the media listed below. The alternative responses (0-5) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Very Rarely</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Very regularly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Face to face
2. Landline telephone
3. Cell phone
4. Fax
5. Voice mail
6. Text message
7. E-mail
8. Instant message
9. Audio conference
10. Room videoconference
11. Online chat tool
12. Postal mail
13. Others, please list

**Section 4 – Instructions:** Think of disagreements you have encountered in a particular task situation with your immediate supervisor. Then indicate below how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are most likely to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses (1-7) are:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Very seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I blend my ideas with others to create new alternatives for resolving a conflict.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I shy away from topics that are sources of disputes.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I make my opinion known in a disagreement with my supervisor.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I suggest solutions which combine a variety of viewpoints.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I give in a little on my ideas when my supervisor also gives in.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I avoid my supervisor when I suspect he or she wants to discuss a disagreement.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I integrate arguments into a new solution from issues raised in a dispute with my supervisor.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I will go 50-50 to reach a settlement with my supervisor.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I raise my voice when I’m trying to get my supervisor to accept my position.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I give in if my supervisor will meet me halfway.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. I downplay the importance of a disagreement.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I reduce disagreements by making them seem insignificant.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. I meet my supervisor at a midpoint in our differences.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I assert my opinion forcefully.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I dominate arguments until my supervisor understands my position.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. I try to use my supervisor’s ideas to generate solutions to problems.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. I offer trade-offs to reach solutions in a disagreement.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I argue insistently for my stance.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. I withdraw when my supervisor confronts me about a controversial issue.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. I side-step disagreements when they arise.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I try to smooth over disagreements by making them appear unimportant.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I insist my position be accepted during a disagreement with my supervisor.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. I make our differences seem less serious.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I hold my tongue rather than argue with my supervisor.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. I ease conflict by claiming our differences are trivial.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. I stand firm in expressing my viewpoints during a disagreement with my supervisor.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 5 – Instructions: Most of us assume that the quality and amount of communication in our jobs contribute to both our job satisfaction and our productivity. Through this study we hope to find out how satisfactory communication practices are and what suggestions you have for improving them. Your answers are completely confidential so be as frank as you wish. This is not a test—your opinion is the only right answer.
1. How satisfied are you with your job? (check 1)
   ___ 1. Very satisfied
   ___ 2. Satisfied
   ___ 3. Somewhat satisfied
   ___ 4. Indifferent
   ___ 5. Somewhat dissatisfied
   ___ 6. Dissatisfied
   ___ 7. Very dissatisfied

2. In the past 6 months, what has happened to your level of satisfaction? (check 1)
   ___ 1. Gone up
   ___ 2. Stayed the same
   ___ 3. Gone down

3. If the communication associated with your job could be changed in any way to make you more satisfied, please indicate how:

--------------------------------------------------------

A. Listed below are several kinds of information often associated with a person’s job. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the amount and/or quality of each kind of information by circling the appropriate number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Information about my progress in my job
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

5. Personal news
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

6. Information about organizational policies and goals
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

7. Information about how my job compares with others
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

8. Information about how I am being judged
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

9. Recognition of my efforts
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

10. Information about departmental policies and goals
    1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

11. Information about the requirements of my job
    1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

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12. Information about government action affecting my organization
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

13. Information about changes in our organization
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

14. Reports on how problems in my job are being handled
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

15. Information about benefits and pay
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

16. Information about our organization’s financial standing
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

17. Information about accomplishments and/or failures of the organization
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

B. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following (circle the appropriate number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Extent to which my superiors know and understand the problems faced by subordinates
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

19. Extent to which the organization’s communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

20. Extent to which my supervisor listens and pays attention to me.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

21. Extent to which the people in my organization have great ability as communicators
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

22. Extent to which my supervisor offers guidance for solving job related problems
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

23. Extent to which the organization’s communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

24. Extent to which the organization’s communications are interesting and helpful
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

25. Extent to which my supervisor trusts me
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

222
26. Extent to which I receive in time the information needed to do my job
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
27. Extent to which conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
28. Extent to which the grapevine is active in our organization
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
29. Extent to which my supervisor is open to ideas
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
30. Extent to which horizontal communication with other organizational members is accurate and free flowing
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
31. Extent to which communication practices are adaptable to emergencies
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
32. Extent to which my work group is compatible
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
33. Extent to which our meetings are well organized
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
34. Extent to which the amount of supervision given me is about right
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
35. Extent to which written directives and reports are clear and concise
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
36. Extent to which the attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
37. Extent to which informal communication is active and accurate
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
38. Extent to which the amount of communication in the organization is about right
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

C. Answer the following only if you are a manager or supervisor. Then indicate your satisfaction with the following.

   Very Dissatisfied
   Very Satisfied

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

39. Extent to which my subordinates are responsive to downward directive communication
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
40. Extent to which my subordinates anticipate my needs for information
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
41. Extent to which I do not have a communication overload
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
42. Extent to which my subordinates are receptive to evaluation, suggestions, and criticisms
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
43. Extent to which my subordinates feel responsible for initiating accurate upward communication
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Thank you for your assistance in this research project.
Your participation is greatly appreciated!

组织沟通调查问卷

第一部分—背景信息：下面我们将问您一些个人信息，这些信息会帮助我们更好地理解您对问卷中其他问题的答案。请选择合适的选项或填写您的答案。

1. 请问您供职的公司名称：

2. 请问您有任何海外经历吗？
   有_____  没有_____ (请跳至第三个问题)

3. 请提供您海外经历的相关基本信息
   国家1  _____  逗留时间：__月  主要活动：工作__  学习__  旅行__
   国家2  _____  逗留时间：__月  主要活动：工作__  学习__  旅行__
   国家3  _____  逗留时间：__月  主要活动：工作__  学习__  旅行__

   其它海外经历，请说明 ________________

4. 请选择您希望拥有海外经历愿望的强烈程度：
   非常弱  弱  中等  强烈  非常强烈

5. 请选择您的性别：    女   男
6. 请问您的年龄？ ____ 岁

7. 请问您在您现在的公司已经工作多长时间了？ ____ 年 ____ 月

8. 请问您在现任职公司的职位是什么？
   ____ 新员工
   ____ 老员工
   ____ 主管
   ____ 高级主管
   ____ 其它 (请注明) __________________

9. 请问您的最高学历是什么？
   ____ 高中毕业
   ____ 大专
   ____ 本科
   ____ 硕士以上学历
   ____ 其它 (请注明)

第二部分：下面是一些关于您跨文化交流敏感度的陈述。对这些问题的回答没有正确和错误的区别。请根据您个人的态度和行为选择合适的选项。
1. 我喜欢与来自不同文化的人们进行交往。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

2. 我觉得来自其他文化的人很狭隘。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

3. 我非常清楚要如何与来自不同文化的人进行交往。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

4. 要我在来自不同文化的人的面前说话，我会感到非常困难。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

5. 在与来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我总是知道说什么。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

6. 在与来自不同文化的人进行交往的时候，我同样具有很好的社交能力。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持
7. 我不喜欢和来自不同文化的人在一起。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

8. 我尊重来自不同文化的人的价值观。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

9. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我会容易感到不愉快。
   强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

10. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我感到很有信心。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

11. 对于来自不同文化的人，我不急于得出对他/她的印象。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

12. 在与来自不同文化的人在一起的时候，我经常感觉很气馁。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

13. 我对于来自不同文化的人，保持开放的态度。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

14. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交往的时候，我非常注意观察对方。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

15. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我经常觉得很没价值。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

16. 我尊重来自不同文化的人的行为方式。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

17. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我总是尝试去获得尽可能多的信息。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

18. 我不接受来自不同文化的人的观点。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持

19. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我对于对方细微的意思非常敏感。
    强烈反对 反对 不确定 支持 强烈支持
20. 我觉得我的文化比其他国家的文化好。
强烈反对  反对  不确定  支持  强烈支持

21. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我总是给对方积极的回应。
强烈反对  反对  不确定  支持  强烈支持

22. 我避免和来自不同文化的人进行交往。
强烈反对  反对  不确定  支持  强烈支持

23. 在和来自不同文化的人进行交流的时候，我经常通过手势或是其他办法让对方知道，我明白他在说什么。
强烈反对  反对  不确定  支持  强烈支持

24. 我很享受自己和来自不同文化的人的差别。
强烈反对  反对  不确定  支持  强烈支持

第三部分：请选择当您和同事交流时，使用以下方式的频繁程度。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>面对面</th>
<th>从来</th>
<th>少</th>
<th>有时</th>
<th>经常</th>
<th>非常频繁</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>面对面</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>固定电话</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>手机</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>传真</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>电话语音留言</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>手机短信</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>电子邮件</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>网上即时留言</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>音频会议</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>视频会议</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>网络聊天工具（如 OICQ, MSN 等）</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>邮寄信件</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>其它，请注明</td>
<td>从来不</td>
<td>少</td>
<td>有时</td>
<td>经常</td>
<td>非常频繁</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

第四部分：请回想您和您的直接上司在工作上发生意见分歧的状况，并选择您在这种情况下采取以下行为的频繁程度。对这些问题的回答没有正确和错误的区别，请根据实际情况选择最合适的选项。

227
1. 我会综合自己和他人的意见来制定新的方案以解决冲突。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

2. 我会回避有可能产生争议的话题。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

3. 当我和我的上司持不同意见的时候，我会让大家知道我的意见。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

4. 我会提出综合各方面意见的建议。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

5. 我避免意见不合的状况。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

6. 当我的上司让步的时候，我也会稍做让步。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

7. 当我猜想我的上司想和我讨论不同意见的时候，我会回避他/她。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

8. 当我和上司意见不合的时候，我会综合他/她的意见提出新的解决方案。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

9. 我和我的上司会各退一步来解决问题。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

10. 当我试图让我的上司接受我的意见的时候，我会提高音量。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

11. 当讨论不同意见的时候，我会提出创造性的建议。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

12. 为了避免不同意见，我对自己的观点保持沉默。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

13. 如果我的上司让步的话，我也会作出同等让步。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不
14. 我会淡化不同意见的重要性。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

15. 我会通过让不同意见显得不重要来减少争议。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

16. 当我和我的上司有不同意见的时候，我会找中间点。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

17. 我会强有力的表达我的观点。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

18. 我会在争论中占据强势，直到我的上司理解我的观点。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

19. 我会建议大家一起来另寻方法解决争议。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

20. 我会试图用我上司的想法来制造方案解决问题。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

21. 我会找平衡点来解决争议。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

22. 我会坚持自己的立场进行辩论。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

23. 当我的上司提出有争议性的话题，我会退出。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

24. 我回避不同意见。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

25. 我通过让不同意见显得不重要来掩饰问题。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不

26. 当我和上司有不同意见的时候，我会坚持立场直到上司接受。
总是  很频繁  经常  有时  很少  很难得  从来不
27. 我会让差异显得不严重。
总是       很频繁       经常       有时       很少       很难得       从来不

28. 我会保持沉默而不和我的上司争论。
总是       很频繁       经常       有时       很少       很难得       从来不

29. 我会声称差异是微不足道的来减轻矛盾。
总是       很频繁       经常       有时       很少       很难得       从来不

30. 当我和上司持不同意见的时候，我会坚定地表达我的观点。
总是       很频繁       经常       有时       很少       很难得       从来不

第五部分：很多人认为沟通的时间和质量对工作满意度和效率有一定影响。通过此项研究，我们希望了解怎样的沟通方式更令员工满意，以及员工对改善企业沟通的建议。您对以下问题的回答无对错之分，并且您的答案将完全保密，所以请尽量真实地回答以下问题。

1. 请选择你对现在工作的满意程度。
   ____ 1. 非常满意       ____ 5. 比较不满意
   ____ 2. 满意       ____ 6. 不满意
   ____ 3. 比较满意       ____ 7. 非常不满意
   ____ 4. 一般

2. 在过去的六年中，你的工作满意度有什么变化？
   ____ 1. 上升       ____ 2. 维持原状       ____ 3. 下降

3. 如果改变有关工作方面的沟通能够让你更满意自己的工作，请说明如何改变。

__________________________________________

A. 下面是和工作相关的各种信息。请选择合适的选项来表明你对以下各信息从流量和质量上的满意度。

非常不满意       非常满意
   1       2       3       4       5       6       7
4. 有关我工作进度的信息。
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

5. 个人的新消息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

6. 关于公司政策和目标方面的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

7. 有关我的工作和其他人工作相比较的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

8. 有关我如何被评价的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

9. 对我努力的认可
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

10. 有关部门政策和目标的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

11. 关于对我工作要求的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

12. 有关影响公司的政府行为的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

13. 有关公司变化的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

14. 关于我工作中的问题如何被处理的报告
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

15. 有关工资和福利的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

16. 有关公司金融状况的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

17. 有关公司成就或失败的信息
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

B. 请选择你对下列问题的满意度。
非常不满意

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

18. 我的上司对下属面临的问题的了解和理解程度
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

19. 公司通过沟通鼓励和刺激员工的工作积极性来实现其目标的程度
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

20. 我的上司聆听和关注我的程度
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>序号</th>
<th>项目</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>公司人员沟通能力</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>我的上司提供指导来解决工作相关问题的程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>公司的沟通让我有企业认同感并感觉自己是其中很重要的一分子的程度</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>企业沟通的有趣和有帮助的程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>我的上司对我的信任度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>我及时收到工作必需信息的程度</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>通过合适的沟通渠道解决矛盾冲突的程度</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>闲言碎语在公司的活跃程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>我的上司对各种观点的开放程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>公司内员工平级沟通的准确和流畅的程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>沟通方式在紧急状态下的随机变动程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>我工作组成员的融洽程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>我们会议组织完善的程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>对我督导量的合适程度</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>书面指导和报告的清楚、简明程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>对公司沟通方面所持态度的健康程度</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>非正式交流的活跃和准确程度</td>
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<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>公司沟通适量的程度</td>
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</table>
C. 如果您在公司任职主管以上的职务，请回答以下问题。请选择您对以下方面的满意度。

非常不满意  2  3  4  5  6  7  非常满意

39. 我的下属对由上而下的有指导性的沟通的回应
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

40. 我的下属对我需要信息的估计
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

41. 我与部属的沟通没有过量的程度
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

42. 我的下属对评价、建议和批评的接受度
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

43. 我的下属感到有责任去倡导正确的上行沟通的程度
1  2  3  4  5  6  7

非常感谢您参与此问卷调查！
APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

To begin, we would like to get some information about you. Your answers to these questions will help us better understand the opinions you express in other sections of this questionnaire. Please circle or write your responses.

1. Which company are you working for? ____________________________________________
2. Do you have any overseas experiences?
   Yes _____ No _____ (please go to Question 3)
3. Please provide the basic information of your overseas experiences
   Country 1: _____ Length of stay: ___months  Main activity: work___ study___
   travel___
   Country 2: _____ Length of stay: ___months  Main activity: work___ study___
   travel___
   Country 3: _____ Length of stay: ___months  Main activity: work___ study___
   travel___
   Country 4: _____ Length of stay: ___months  Main activity: work___ study___
   travel___
   Other overseas experiences (please specify) __________________
4. Please indicate the level of your desire to go to other countries:
   Very low   Low   Medium   High   Very high
5. What is your sex? ___ Female ___ Male
6. What is your age? _____ years old
7. How long have you been working with your current employer? _____ years ___ months
8. What is your current position? [Please check one]
   ___ First-entry staff
   ___ Experienced staff
   ___ Manager/supervisor
   ___ Executive
   ___ Other (please, specify) __________________

9. What is your education level?
   ___ High school diploma
   ___ Associate’s/vocational degree
   ___ Bachelor’s degree
   ___ Master’s degree or higher
   ___ Other (please specify) __________________
APPENDIX G: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SENSITIVITY SCALE

Instructions: There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale based on your self-reflection on your attitudes and behaviors. The alternative responses (1-5) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.
   1     2     3     4     5

3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

7. I don’t like to be with people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
   1     2     3     4     5

10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1     2     3     4     5

11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
    1     2     3     4     5

12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
    1     2     3     4     5

13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.
    1     2     3     4     5

14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1     2     3     4     5

15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1     2     3     4     5
16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.  
   1 2 3 4 5

17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.  
   1 2 3 4 5

18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.  
   1 2 3 4 5

19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart’s subtle meanings during our interaction.  
   1 2 3 4 5

20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.  
   1 2 3 4 5

21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.  
   1 2 3 4 5

22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.  
   1 2 3 4 5

23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.  
   1 2 3 4 5

24. I have a feeling of enjoyment toward differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.  
   1 2 3 4 5

Note. Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 are reverse-coded before summing the 24 items. Interaction Engagement items are 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24, Respect for Cultural Differences items are 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20, Interaction Confidence items are 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10, Interaction Enjoyment items are 9, 12, and 15, and Interaction Attentiveness items are 14, 17, and 19.
APPENDIX H: TECHNOLOGY USAGE SCALE

Please indicate how often you communicate with your colleagues using each of the media listed below. The alternative responses (0-5) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Very Rarely</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Very regularly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Face to face
2. Landline telephone
3. Cell phone
4. Fax
5. Voice mail
6. Text message
7. E-mail
8. Instant message
9. Audio conference
10. Room videoconference
11. Online chat tool
12. Postal mail
13. Others, please list

---

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APPENDIX I: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION CONFLICT INSTRUMENT

Instructions: Think of disagreements you have encountered in a particular task situation with your immediate supervisor. Then indicate below how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. For each item select the number than represents the behavior you are most likely to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses (1-7) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Very seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I blend my ideas with others to create new alternatives for resolving a conflict.
2. I shy away from topics that are sources of disputes.
3. I make my opinion known in a disagreement with my supervisor.
4. I suggest solutions which combine a variety of viewpoints.
5. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.
6. I give in a little on my ideas when my supervisor also gives in.
7. I avoid my supervisor when I suspect he or she wants to discuss a disagreement.
8. I integrate arguments into a new solution from issues raised in a dispute with my supervisor.
9. I will go 50-50 to reach a settlement with my supervisor.
10. I raise my voice when I’m trying to get my supervisor to accept my position.
11. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.
12. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements.
13. I give in if my supervisor will meet me halfway.
14. I downplay the importance of a disagreement.
15. I reduce disagreements by making them seem insignificant.
16. I meet my supervisor at a midpoint in our differences.
17. I assert my opinion forcefully.
18. I dominate arguments until my supervisor understands my position.
19. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements.
20. I try to use my supervisor’s ideas to generate solutions to problems.
21. I offer trade-offs to reach solutions in a disagreement.
22. I argue insistently for my stance.
23. I withdraw when my supervisor confronts me about a controversial issue.
24. I side-step disagreements when they arise.
25. I try to smooth over disagreements by making them appear unimportant.
26. I insist my position be accepted during a disagreement with my supervisor.
27. I make our differences seem less serious.
28. I hold my tongue rather than argue with my supervisor.
29. I ease conflict by claiming our differences are trivial.
30. I stand firm in expressing my viewpoints during a disagreement with my supervisor.

Note. Items 2, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, and 29 are nonconfrontation strategies. Solution-oriented strategies contain Collaboration (Items 1, 4, 8, 11, 19, and 20) and compromise (Items 6, 9, 13, 16, and 21) items. Items 3, 10, 17, 18, 22, 26, and 30 are control strategies.
APPENDIX J: COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction: Most of us assume that the quality and amount of communication in our jobs contribute to both our job satisfaction and our productivity. Through this study we hope to find out how satisfactory communication practices are and what suggestions you have for improving them. We appreciate your taking time to complete the questionnaire. It should take 20 to 30 minutes.

Your answers are completely confidential so be as frank as you wish. This is not a test—your opinion is the only right answer. Do not sign your name; we do not wish to know who you are. The answer will be combined into groups for reporting purpose.

1. How satisfied are you with your job? (check 1)
   ____ 1. Very satisfied              ____ 5. Somewhat dissatisfied
   ____ 2. Satisfied                   ____ 6. Dissatisfied
   ____ 3. Somewhat satisfied          ____ 7. Very dissatisfied
   ____ 4. Indifferent

2. In the past 6 months, what has happened to your level of satisfaction? (check 1)
   ____ 1. Gone up              ____ 2. Stayed the same
   ____ 3. Gone down

3. If the communication associated with your job could be changed in any way to make you more satisfied, please indicate how:

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

A. Listed below are several kinds of information often associated with a person’s job. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the amount and/or quality of each kind of information by circling the appropriate number at the right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Information about my progress in my job
5. Personal news
6. Information about organizational policies and goals
7. Information about how my job compares with others
8. Information about how I am being judged
9. Recognition of my efforts
10. Information about departmental policies and goals
11. Information about the requirements of my job
12. Information about government action affecting my organization
13. Information about changes in our organization
14. Reports on how problems in my job are being handled
15. Information about benefits and pay
16. Information about our organization’s financial standing
17. Information about accomplishments and/or failures of the organization

B. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following (circle the appropriate number at right)
18. Extent to which my superiors know and understand the problems faced by subordinates
19. Extent to which the organization’s communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals
20. Extent to which my supervisor listens and pays attention to me.
21. Extent to which the people in my organization have great ability as communicators
22. Extent to which my supervisor offers guidance for solving job related problems
23. Extent to which the organization’s communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it
24. Extent to which the organization’s communications are interesting and helpful
25. Extent to which my supervisor trusts me
26. Extent to which I receive in time the information needed to do my job
27. Extent to which conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels
28. Extent to which the grapevine is active in our organization
29. Extent to which my supervisor is open to ideas
30. Extent to which horizontal communication with other organizational members is accurate and free flowing
31. Extent to which communication practices are adaptable to emergencies
32. Extent to which my work group is compatible
33. Extent to which our meetings are well organized
34. Extent to which the amount of supervision given me is about right
35. Extent to which written directives and reports are clear and concise
36. Extent to which the attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy
37. Extent to which informal communication is active and accurate
38. Extent to which the amount of communication in the organization is about right

C. Answer the following only if you are a manager or supervisor. Then indicate your satisfaction with the following.
39. Extent to which my subordinates are responsive to downward directive communication
40. Extent to which my subordinates anticipate my needs for information
41. Extent to which I do not have a communication overload
42. Extent to which my subordinates are receptive to evaluation, suggestions, and criticisms
43. Extent to which my subordinates feel responsible for initiating accurate upward communication

Note. Downs (1994b) recommends that researchers factor-analyze the scale to confirm the existence of the eight dimensions: Communication Climate, Relationship to Superiors, Organizational Integration, Media Quality, Horizontal and Informal Communication, Organizational Perspective, Relationship with Subordinates, and Personal Feedback.
APPENDIX K: RESPONDENTS’ SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION

1. Think more before express opinions, avoid debate.

2. This is not related to communication fully. Normally this is related with individual's character.

3. The improvement of engineers' ability did not get enough development space, the bigger environment outside more decides the space.

4. Have more trust, think from other people's perspectives.

5. More challenging job and make progress; promotion.

6. Improve communication with supervisors and colleagues in informal events and activities.

7. Reduce unnecessary procedures, or simplify some procedures, thus avoiding the lack of or the ineffective communication on organizational information due to too many procedures.

8. Problems reported in the feedback should really be taken care of, not only superficial communication.

9. Supervisors should pay attention to the amount of work and the difficult level of the work of their employees. It is important to make sure that employees feel their payment reflects their contribution.
10. Make our partner have a clearer understanding of our goals and the fastest and most efficient way to achieve it. Have a right attitude toward work.

11. Have more communication on problems, find a solution that all of us can accept.

12. Equal communication opportunities, good communication atmosphere

13. Communicate often, give encouragement

14. 1. More face to face communication; 2. More communication on topics not related to work; 3. The company should provide a better communication platform with a good atmosphere and a better stimulus and rewarding system

15. Supervisors should inform their subordinates on policy changes that the management team makes on work and projects.

16. Be more active.

17. More senior managers can communicate with staff at lower status, thus to understand each other's standpoint and thoughts.

18. Nothing to change.

19. Receive supervisor's recognition of and high regard for my work.

20. Change the way of communication, more communication.

21. Change the way of communication, better communication with supervisors, be more prepared for the job.

22. Change the leadership style.
23. Have more small meetings, or more reunion after work, or more vacations with all the employees together.

24. The inter-department coordination within the company should be improved.

25. Get rid of bureaucracy, reduce unnecessary extra working hours.

26. Have a better understanding of different working styles that colleagues have and how to better accomplish each task. Communicate more with colleagues. Try your best to understand other colleagues' ways of having the work done and their opinions to make the working procedure better, improve work achievement and efficiency.

27. Improve my ability of communication and socialization. Improve my own ability in order to find a stronger way to persuade others.

28. Supervisors and subordinates can take each other's perspective to think about issues. The payment and the benefits can be improved.

29. Nothing can be changed at this point of time.

30. I do not think there is a way to change, because the whole working atmosphere in the company is depressed. I cannot really change this. The only change that I can do is that I resign when I am ready.

31. More communication with the boss.
32. Improve communication between employees at different administrative levels in the company.

33. I think our boss should organize more activities for supervisors to understand each other better and promote friendship.

34. Improve my English.

35. Can better persuade supervisor to take my suggestions and opinions.

36. Improve communication, have more discussion together.

37. Through more case studies and course trainings in management to adjust themselves to better fit into the team.

38. If supervisors can tell the subordinates what they think clearly, work can be much easier. But there is a problem that French companies are very hierarchical. Especially when the direct supervisor is one of the stake holders of the company, things usually won't be so simple. Because the special status, they usually do not tell what they think directly, and the subordinates have to guess.

39. My boss can do more research and think more on the problem before drawing any conclusion. Listen more to the subordinates' opinions, and do not always take his/her own opinion as dominant one without strong reasons.

40. To be adaptable to different positions and work.

41. To do my work without any disturbance.
42. Need more patience.

43. To make myself do more valuable jobs.

44. I like face-to-face communication to clearly discuss the problem. Although individuals may not accept each other's opinions, it is important to understand each other's thoughts.

45. The working schedule of the company should be more humanized. Supervisors should incorporate team members' opinions.

46. Learn how to make others take my suggestions.

47. More communication, more understanding

48. Have more group discussions. Incorporate different opinions before making decisions.

49. Existing cultural differences result in different ways of thinking. For myself, it is important to adjust my own way of thinking and attitude.

50. I believe if supervisors of a multinational are truly open-minded and understand to respect the difference of culture and practice in different countries, the working environment will become amicable.

51. Improve communication efficiency, take the initiative to communicate.

52. More communication.

53. Communicate more with colleagues and supervisors to exchange ideas.