Organizational Information-Seeking in the Digital Era: A Model of New Media Use,
Uncertainty Reduction, Identification and Culture

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ABSTRACT

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Organizational Information-Seeking in the Digital Era: A Model of New Media Use, Uncertainty Reduction, Identification and Culture

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This dissertation examines the role of new media in individuals’ organizational socialization process across cultures. First, this study has explored individuals’ use of new media in their organizational socialization process in two countries, China and the United States, to gain a general understanding of the usage patterns. Second, this study proposes that identification should be thought of as a more communicative-related outcome of the socialization process and tests the relationship between information-seeking behaviors through social media, as a socialization effort, and individuals’ identification levels. Third, this study proposes that in the relationship between information-seeking behaviors, uncertainty level serves as a mediator, and tests the mediating model of information-seeking, uncertainty level and identification levels. In particular, this dissertation highlights the role of social contexts in individuals’ daily interactions. It compares the different new media use patterns and levels of different identifications (local and global) across two cultures to emphasize the influence of social context. This dissertation reveals the use of new media in the work setting, informs the relationship among information-seeking through new media, identification and uncertainty across two cultures.
Chapter One presents a conceptual foundation of the problem of this dissertation. Using pragmatism as the meta-theory, this chapter argues that new media provide opportunities for scholars to update current knowledge and suggests that culture, as a social context, should be taken into consideration into inquires.

Chapter Two provides a systematic review of both empirical and theoretical literature. The literature covers topics of uncertainty reduction theory, socialization, and social information processing theory, suggesting that organizational members in divergent cultures may rely on very different modes of uncertainty reducing communication strategies. From a pragmatic point of view, the practical implications of these divergent behaviors must be accounted for; therefore organizational identification is proposed as an outcome measure to explore the repercussions of the different meanings and behaviors surfacing across cultures. Research questions and hypothesis are presented in this chapter, resulting in a conceptual model presenting the predicted relationships among the above-mentioned topics.

Chapter Three offers an in-depth description of the research methods used to collect and analyze data. The sampling method, participants, procedures, and methods of assessing organizational members’ new media usage, levels of uncertainty and organizational identification are described.

Chapter Four explains the statistical procedures used to analyze the data and reveals the results of research questions and hypotheses suggested in Chapter Two. At last, the result of the conceptual model is presented.
The final chapter (Chapter Five) outlines the findings of this study and discusses them within the context of prior theories and research. Theoretical and practical implications are offered. The limitations of the study and areas of future research are also outlined.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .............................................................................................................................. iii  
Acknowledgments............................................................................................................. vii  
List of Tables ..................................................................................................................... xi  
List of Figures .................................................................................................................. xiii

Chapter 1: Plurality of Innovations in Practice ................................................................. 1  
  Pragmatism ...................................................................................................................... 4  
  Shared Perspectives: Pragmatism and Culture ................................................................. 5  
  Pragmatism and Communication ...................................................................................... 6  
  Changes as Pragmatic Opportunities .............................................................................. 8  
  Industrial Revolution ...................................................................................................... 9  
  World War I and World War II ....................................................................................... 10

Chapter 2: Uncertainty Reduction, Information ............................................................... 18  
  Culture .............................................................................................................................. 22  
  Uncertainty Reduction .................................................................................................... 25  
  Socialization ................................................................................................................... 29  
  Traditional Socialization Research .................................................................................. 29  
  Social Information Processing Theory and Socialization ............................................... 32  
  Socialization and New Media: Reducing Uncertainty in the Modern Era ...................... 34

Chapter 3: Methodology .................................................................................................. 50  
  Procedure ......................................................................................................................... 50  
  Sampling and Participants ............................................................................................... 50  
  Data Collection ............................................................................................................... 51  
  Measurement .................................................................................................................... 51
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Factor Loading for Uncertainty Scale.................................................................65
Table 2: Zero-Order Correlations for Identification Scales.............................................67
Table 3: Frequencies of New Media Daily Use...............................................................69
Table 4: Rank Order of New Media Use for Different Types of Information.................72
Table 5: Rank Order of New Media Use for Different Strategies ..................................74
Table 6: Zero-Order Correlations for New Media Use and Uncertainty.......................76
Table 7: Rank Order of New Media Preferences for Different Sources Cross Cultures.79
Table 8: Rank Order of New Media Preferences for Different Information Types Cross Cultures...................................................................................................................81
Table 9: General New Media Use as Predictor of Local and Global Identification……..84
Table 10: Zero-Order Correlations for Specific New Media Use, Local Identification and Global Identification........................................................................................................87
Table 11: Zero-Order Correlations for New Media Use, Uncertainty, Local Identification and Global Identification..............................................................91
Table 12: Chinese Sample Zero-Order Correlations of Specific New Media Use, Interactional Uncertainty, Local Identification and Global Identification.............93
Table 13: U.S. Sample Zero-Order Correlations of Specific New Media Use, Interactional Uncertainty, Local Identification and Global Identification.........................95
Table 14: Regression Model of Organization Social Media Use, Local Identification and Interactional Uncertainty in Chinese Sample.................................................97
Table 15: Regression Model of Intranet Use, Global Identification and Interactional Uncertainty in Chinese Sample…………………………………………………………99

Table 16: Regression Model of Organization Social Media, Global Identification and Interactional Uncertainty in Chinese Sample…………………………………….101
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Proposed Model</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Visual Scale of Identification</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Using New Media in Socialization Process in China</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: PLURALITY OF INNOVATIONS IN PRACTICE

“The new technology applied in production and commerce resulted in a social revolution. The local communities without intent or forecast founded their affairs conditioned by remote and invisible organizations. The scope of the latter’s activities was so vast and their impact upon face-to-face associations so pervasive and unremitting that it is no exaggeration to speak of a ‘new age of human relations.’” ----Dewey (1927, p. 98)

Technology has largely been associated with social change. The development of technology does not only bring changes to industry and commerce, it also brings changes to societies and human beings in what Dewey (1927) described as a ‘new age of human relations’ (p.98). Historically, the advent of steam and electricity has changed the way people associated with each other dramatically (Dewey, 1927). With these technologies, individuals were brought together to create “The Great Society” (Dewey, 1927, p. 98), characterized by mechanical models of combined human behaviors. Some manifestations of this great society include that individuals flocked together to massively produce goods and live in large cities. Later on, inventions in transportation (i.e., trains, cars) and communication (i.e., telephones, fax machines) have made long distance travelling possible, facilitated the flow of goods and connected people in ways never previously imaginable.

Technological innovation is a continuous process; we need not reflect on inventions from the last century but merely look around at our current state of innovation. Today, although the inventions of steam machines and electricity are no longer novel to societies, developments in information technology keep bringing opportunities for social change. Such changes, from a pragmatic point of view, trigger inquiry and therefore merit scholars’ attention.
These social changes, however, are not as deterministically linked to technology as Dewey (1927) insinuated above. Dewey acknowledged that every technological innovation results in social change, but he neglects to explicitly recognize human beings’ agency (Giddens, 1986) in socially constructing the uses of technology and making sense of these technologies. In other words, the argument above fails to recognize the mutual influence between technology and human beings. Technological innovation provides opportunities for social change by arming humans with new tools that they may use in their daily work, interactions with others, physical navigation, and so on, and yet the changes to society come not with the tools themselves but with the meanings that users ascribe to them in dictating their functions and meanings. We, as a society, negotiate the changes facilitated by our every changing technological toolbox.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that all reality is derived from and maintained by social interactions. Social actors create a shared perspective, which later becomes common sense (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). When individuals interact with others, they follow their respective understanding of reality and through this interaction in specific social groups they reinforce, negotiate or reconstruct their understanding. As a result, social groups create a shared perspective, which becomes common sense of reality. This means then that reality, grounded in social interaction and meaning making, takes different shapes and forms from group to group.

This philosophy of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) suggests that different social groups may have different collective understandings of the same social phenomena. Therefore, culture – the set of norms, rules and values shared by
members of a certain community, organization, and/or social group (Hall, 1976) – plays an important role in this sense-making process. The norms, rules or values of the group may be reflected in the unique meanings constructed.

Take technology as an example. Different cultures have different understandings of the uses of certain technological innovations. In the United States, the national train system is considered as a means mainly for transporting goods and products. However, in China, the national train system is considered as a mode of public transportation for people to travel (Zhao, 2010). In these two cultures the same technology is perceived and made sense of very differently. From a social construction perspective, then, we must acknowledge Dewey’s (1927) social revolution not merely as the product of technology but also as the impetus for technological innovation.

When examining changes associated with technological innovation, on one hand, the impact of the changes on society surely need to be recognized. However, on the other hand, the ability that people have to make sense of the change should also be acknowledged. Both pragmatism and social constructionism recognize that technological innovations can lead to changes and human beings have the ultimate control over that change. Social constructionism holds the idea that reality is socially constructed and this reality is created in response to the social environment rather than a byproduct of any inherent quality that it possesses in itself (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This notion is similar to the philosophy of pragmatism, which is against absolutism and emphasizes the importance of time, space, and perspective (or social environment) (Dewey, 1927; James, 1991). Therefore, when exploring social change, and technological innovation, social
context is of the utmost importance. This study explores the intersection of culture, communication and social change by investigating, from a pragmatic perspective, the reliance on new media in eastern and western organizations. More specifically, social changes are explored by way of updating current understandings of organizational socialization as an ongoing sense-making process that occurs to reduce environmental uncertainties via socially constructed technological innovations. This chapter first uses pragmatism as a meta-theoretical framework to argue why such exploration is necessary. Then, it presents the plurality nature of new media, which is the essence of pragmatism, to further make the argument. At last, this chapter ends with narrowing down the exploration to the context of the organizational setting.

**Pragmatism**

Social construction occurs through communication, situating reality in social context. Therefore, social construction and pragmatism are complementary philosophies that address how and why social groups collectively create their respective realities. Pragmatism is a philosophy that claims that an ideology or a proposition is true if it works satisfactorily and that meaning is embedded in practical consequences (Dewey, 1927; James, 1991). Pragmatism therefore rejects any idea that is not practical. Pragmatism concerns the problems of pluralism and incommensurability, which suggest that inherent differences exist across different entities and this difference cannot be unified. But acknowledging difference is not the end of pragmatism. On the contrary, pragmatism strives to find a way for this pluralistic world to work together. Culture, defined as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of
one category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1991, p.5), contributes to the diversity of the world. Members of different social groups think and act in different ways and thus make the world plural. The notion of pluralism highlights the critical influence of culture in the sense-making process grounding any social change.

Shared Perspectives: Pragmatism and Culture

Pragmatists believe that there is no absolute truth in this world (Carey, 2005). One thing that works in one culture may not work at all in another culture. Therefore pragmatic inquiry should be situated in context. That is to say social context, explored here as culture, should be treated as a vital component in the inquiry process. Time and space, which are the two manifestations of social context, are two essential parts of the inquiry (Dewey, 1927; 2004; James, 1991). Time means the differences in social environment due to temporal changes of eras, and space indicate the differences in social environment due to physical differences in location.

Recent innovations in information and communication technology have led to trends in globalization (Christians, 2011). Technologies (such as the Internet) break the boundary of time and space to connect people all around the world together, making cross-national or multi-national organizations possible with the low cost of communication (Simons & De Ridder, 2004). These changes contribute to the phenomenon of globalization, which emphasizes unified norms governing human beings’ interactions at the expense of more local norms. This emphasis is against the essence of pragmatism. Pragmatism believes that there is no guarantee that everything works the same for everyone (James, 1991). In this specific context, the use of technologies is not
the same in every culture. Pragmatism acknowledges that there is an increasingly shared reality across the world but it also acknowledges inherent difference that cannot be unified. As James (1991) states, “the world is one just so far as its parts hang together by any definite connection. It is many just so far as any definite connect fail to obtain” (p.70). Globalization is the one world and local cultures make the different small worlds. Therefore, from a pragmatic point of view, it is important to situate sense-making processes (Berger & Luckmann, 1976) at the local culture level.

Human beings’ behaviors are governed by norms (Giddens, 1986) and these norms are different across different cultures (Hall, 1976). Although common sense knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1976) may provide general norms for understanding individuals' use of technology, there are still differences as to how individuals use technologies across different cultures. The aforementioned example of the train has illustrated this notion well. In divergent cultures, meanings attributed to the innovation have surfaced through communication, resulting in a shared understanding of the benefits, uses, and meanings of the train in American versus Chinese cultures. Communication is the vehicle through which technology is constructed differently in different social contexts.

**Pragmatism and Communication**

Communication can be defined as a symbolic process within which reality is constituted, maintained, reinforced, and altered (Carey, 1989). Geertz (1983) suggested that through communication, the inner world and the outer world are reciprocally constituted. In other words, communication helps to link individuals to the outer world
and simultaneously internalizes that world into the individual. Since the outer world is the collection of members within that world (i.e., the social environment), communication connects social actors in their creation of their situated reality that becomes their internal perspective of that reality. In this way, two minds meet. And from a pragmatic point of view, this meeting has practical implications for these social actors.

Pragmatism may be thought of as a perspective for communication theorists seeking to resolve its core problem of plurality (Craig, 2006). It concerns the problem of incommensurability (the problem of understanding inherent differences among individuals exist), pluralism (how to reconcile the inherent differences), and nonparticipation (how to make people realize these inherent differences) (Craig, 2006). The vocabulary for pragmatism is community, diversity, negotiation, and pluralism (Craig, 2006). This perspective brings the notion that there are certain truths/realities or common in the world that will not change, but there are certain differences among people that cannot be unified.

In conclusion, pragmatism grounds inquiry in social context. It believes that sense-making is a communal process, which is historically embedded (time and space) in a constantly changing world (Dewey, 1927). Thus, culture is a critical consideration in pragmatic inquiry since norms influence any communal process. Moreover, pragmatism perfectly aligns with communication studies since they both seek to uncover ways to make different minds work together.

An antithesis from rationalism, which insists that knowledge is determinate and static, pragmatism denies absolute truth (James, 1991). Therefore, inquiry should never
stop. As Dewey (1927) suggested, “inquiry must be as nearly as contemporaneous as possible, otherwise, it is only of antiquarian interest” (p. 179) and James (1991) proposed, “our knowledge is incomplete at present and subject to addition” (p. 74). While the pursuit of truth should never stop for pragmatists, an important ontological question arises: when should pragmatists update their understanding of truth?

**Changes as Pragmatic Opportunities**

James (1991) suggested that any change becomes an opportunity to update human beings’ existing understanding of the world. While Dewey (2004) agreed, he also argues that defining change is problematic. Borrowing from Darwinian Theory, organisms and their environment can mutually influence each other; and yet human beings are in the unique position to not only be able to adapt to the environment but also have the ability to change it. When the environment changes and human beings need to make changes to adapt to and influence the new environment, it is time to ask questions and thus update understandings of reality.

Dewey (2004) further believes that the undetermined situation is a vital context for inquiry. When people step into a new environment, they are not sure what kind of actions they need to enact and they are not sure what is considered appropriate. Therefore, this situation is undetermined, and the actor is wrought with uncertainty. The first step of pragmatic inquiry is to suspect a problem, which is an undetermined situation. Then, based on this situation, ask the question to find answers to deal with this problem and know how to act in such a situation.
While change creates opportunities for pragmatic inquiry, not every change deserves inquiry (Dewey, 2004). James (1991) insisted that only changes that can make a difference deserve consideration: “In what respects would the world be different if this alternative or that were true? If I can find nothing that would become different, then, the alternative has no sense” (p. 24). Considering this criteria, the following part provides examples of three waves of social change centering on technology and argues that new media deserves pragmatists’ attention and inquiry as the most recent “new age of human relations” (Dewey, 1927, p. 98).

**Industrial revolution.** The industrial revolution (1750-1850) saw the emergence of machine and steam power, which revolutionized the way people manufacture goods (Behringer, 2006). Individuals no longer worked alone at home, but flocked into manufacturing centers and factories as industrial workers (Lucas, 2002). As a result, the numbers of cities increased rapidly with a dramatic decrease in the number of farmers. A new social environment emerged at this time, which introduced new problems for its citizens, including conflict between capital and labor, tension between a rapidly growing population and limited resources, and tension between efficiency and labor conditions (Perelman, 2010). These growing concerns triggered inquiries to gain new knowledge to resolve new social, economic and cultural repercussions of change so that human beings could better adjust to their new environment. Some examples of manifestations of new knowledge during that time are scientific management (Taylor, 1903) and modern capitalist economy perspectives (Heilbroner, 1985) that were born at that time to bring meanings to an otherwise “undetermined situation.”
However, not every culture responded to changes happening during this time period in a similar way. The emergence of new knowledge about scientific management, for example, mainly happened in western cultures. In the east, because of the seclusion policy, very few new technologies were introduced and little new knowledge was produced (Holcombe, 2011). Even when new technology was introduced, eastern cultures made sense and used it differently. For instance, the ability to photograph, in the United States, has typically been treated as an innovation that records the moment and keeps good memories. In China, however, it was perceived as evil and was thought to be a machine capable of eating people’s souls (Zheng, 2009). Therefore, although technological innovation brings change opportunities to societies, not every culture responds to change similarly. First of all, not every culture accepts the innovation. And secondly, if the innovation is accepted, not every culture makes sense and uses it in the same way.

**World War I and World War II.** A second wave of technological change was brought by wars, including World War I and World War II. Naval warfare, aviation, communication and information technology, and atom technology (Mercatante, 2012; Ross, 2003; Winkler, 2008) that emerged during these times of war are still largely used in society during times of peace. Once again, society changed along with the advent of these new technologies. For instance, long distance traveling became possible, shortening the distance between people, and inventions such as the fax machine and telephone made international commerce easier across time and space. With such revolutionary changes
came the need, once again, to develop new knowledge to help individuals adapt to a new social environment.

As the result of the war, the United States has become a super power, and took leadership in creating the United Nations (Kim, 2005). At this time, in order to extend its democratic and humanistic ideas to the world, U.S. government challenged its citizens to serve the country by living and working in other countries (Kim, 2005). These events led to the emergence of intercultural communication as a discipline, which serves to help people who work and live in other cultures to better situate in the local culture (Hall, 1976). Some other examples of new knowledge emerging at that time are, but not limited to, business management (Carlton, 1943), development communication (Kim, 2005) and financing (Wallace, 1951).

Although new knowledge was created, again, not every culture treats changes in the same way and produces the same knowledge based on these changes. One example is the technology of mass media. In order to satisfy the desire to bring democracy and humanism to other developing worlds, this technology seemed to be a “bridge to a wider world” to help people in third world nations to gain freedom and acquire “a desire for better life than they have and to be willing to work for it” (Scharmm, 1964, p. 130). However, with different intentions, the third world nations treated mass media more as a new form of entertainment without realizing the diffusion power this technology has (Lerner, 1958; Scharmm, 1964). Once again, this example shows although people have agency to make sense and use new technology, different cultures have different perceptions of the same technology.
The Plurality of New Media

The third example of technological change is what we are experiencing now, with a revolution in Internet and computing (or “new media”). One early definition of new media is the electronic media that are “interactive, computer-mediated technologies that facilitate two-way interpersonal communication among several individuals” through “written text, recorded or synthesized voice message, graphical representation of communicators and/or data, or moving images of the communicators and/or message content” (Culnan & Markus, 1987, p. 745). However, it is hard for scholars to agree on one single definition of new media. A more recent discussion on the definition of new media suggests new media can mean anything that departs from old media like television or radios (electronic), newspaper or books (print) (Baym et al., 2012). Although it is hard to define new media, scholars agree that the characteristics of new media include “their capacity to create opportunities for interactivity and virtuality, their on-demand and real-time access, and the possibility for (almost) everyone to create, distribute and consume content” (Baym, et al., 2012). Combining the above definitions, new media here refers to the computer and mobile technologies that facilitate communication and social interaction, open communication such that everyone can be involved, and increase flexibility of communication across the boundaries of time and space. New media bring opportunities for interactivity, plurality, and flexibility, which are inherently shaped by the cultural meanings ascribed to such technologies. Examples of new media include but are not limited to email, World Wide Web, social media networks, intranet, wiki, and group collaboration software.
Although undergoing the changes that new media bring to society limits our understanding of it from a historical point of view, in general, scholars agree that the Internet is an agent of social transformation, which establishes a new economy, a new political sphere, a new world order, and a new species of men and women (Carey, 2005; Huws, 2003). However, this argument has the problem of technological determinism, which solely focuses on the change that new media bring to society (Baldwin-Philippi, 2011; Berger & Luckmann, 1976; Giddens, 1976). Based on the previous argument of pragmatism and social constructionism, it is more appropriate to state that new media have brought opportunities for change and that individuals, situated in their local social environment, have reified the trajectory of change compatible to their needs and goals.

Internet and computing technology (new media) provide an opportunity for the growth of an online economy of online businesses and virtual organizations. This technology also establishes a cyber world, which makes another public sphere possible, where everyone can enact citizenship. These forms of new media provide opportunities for communication and organization. Individuals have increasingly woven this computing technology into their daily lives, facilitating transcendence across the borders of time and space (Carey, 2005; Rainie & Wellman, 2012). In sum, new media have paved the way for the biggest social impact since the invention of printing (Carey, 2005).

It is no doubt that new media bring change opportunities to society and these changes can be seen across nearly all social contexts (Baldwin-Philippi, 2011). Such changes trigger the inquiry for new knowledge across different academic disciplines from the social sciences to humanities. The field of Communication in particular has a long-
standing concern with media and communication technology, and therefore should integrate new media into its current empirical inquiry (Herring, 2004) to pragmatically update existing knowledge and examine the different social reactions to new media across different cultural contexts.

In response to this newest wave of social change, updating our existing knowledge base is an ambitious goal that is likely to take decades to accomplish. In contribution towards this end goal, the current study explores the divergent as well as the similar uses of technology in work contexts, predicting that local culture (United States versus China) will influence organizational members in unique but consistent ways. These predictions, from a pragmatic perspective, address the commonality of the human experience as well as the pluralistic and locally grounded realities and perspectives situated in context.

**New Media and Organizational Sense-Making: A Dissertation on Culturally-situated Information-seeking Efforts**

Organizations provide a unique context of collective sense-making, facilitated by an ever-growing toolbox of diverse technologies. New media “tools” offer computer-mediated communication as a new form of communication in the work place, including email or instant messaging (Rainie & Wellman, 2012). Computer-mediated communication has become an integral component of organizational communication (Abdul-Gader, 1996; Straus & McGrath, 1994). Individuals’ use of new media facilitates organizational effectiveness (Arvanitis & Loukis, 2009; Daft & Lewin, 1993; Santra & Giri, 2009) and connects employees working in different sites together (Marwick, 2001,
Rainie & Wellman, 2012). In addition to its face-to-face counterparts, new media provides another channel used to secure employees’ organizational identification (Jian, 2008; Larson & Pepper, 2011) and to shapes outsiders’ perceptions of an organization’s image (Coman & Paun, 2010). Use of new media contributes to problem-solving processes within organizations (Gibbs, 2009; Gibbs, Nekrassova, Grushina, & Wahab, 2008; Mangrum, Fairley, & Wieder, 2001; Rainie & Wellman, 2012) and have allowed organizations to modify their structures by breaking the traditional centralized and hierarchical form (Rice & Gattiker, 2001; Rainie & Wellman, 2012). New media contribute to the growth of non-profit organizations like NGO and Grassroots organizations (Gable, 2001; Shafrir & Yuan, 2012; Zorn, Flanagin, & Shoham, 2011) by offering more network opportunities and providing cheaper communication. However, uses of new media also bring into question issues of organizational ethics (Drake, Yuthas, & Dillard, 2000).

These changes definitely make a difference, which indicate it is time to update our current knowledge (James, 1991). It is important to understand that these changes solely provide opportunities for change, and it is human beings and social contexts that actually make the change, because new media, by themselves, are just “simply dead matter” (Poole & DeSanctis, 1990). Thus, in order to prevent the problem of technological determinism, which solely focuses on the changes that new media bring to the organization but neglects that human beings are active agents who can control the use of technology (Baldwin-Philippi, 2011; Berger & Luckmann, 1976; Giddens, 1979), the
current study does not focus on technology’s impact on organizations, but explores how individuals in organizations make sense and use technologies to achieve their goals.

New media have brought changes to modern organizations, creating opportunities. Based on pragmatism and social constructionism, emphasizing the importance of social context, this study explores how individuals use new media differently in different cultures. Earlier, it was articulated that pragmatic scholars punctuate moments of change with new inquiry, as they update their knowledge base to adapt to a changing social environment. Organizational members, when dealing with uncertainty at work, similarly seek to make sense of an otherwise undetermined situation by turning to their social environment for information. In this way, social actors, situated in their respective local culture, continue to update their collective understandings of their reality by turning to various tools in their toolbox. This dissertation project seeks to update empirical knowledge by attempting to answer the currently undetermined question: How do organizational members in Eastern versus Western cultures use new media to reduce their uncertainties in an ever-changing environment?

**Preview**

In the following chapters, an empirical study is detailed exploring similarities and differences of media usage in organizational contexts situated in very different cultures.

Chapter Two provides a systematic review of both empirical and theoretical literature. The literature covers topics of uncertainty reduction theory, socialization, and social information processing theory, suggesting that organizational members in divergent cultures may rely on very different modes of uncertainty reducing
communication strategies. From a pragmatic point of view, the practical implications of these divergent behaviors must be accounted for; therefore organizational identification is proposed as an outcome measure to explore the repercussions of the different meanings and behaviors surfacing across cultures. Research questions and hypothesis are presented in this chapter, resulting in a conceptual model presenting the predicted relationships among the above-mentioned topics.

Chapter Three offers an in-depth description of the research methods used to collect and analyze data. The sampling method, participants, procedures, and methods of assessing organizational members’ new media usage, levels of uncertainty and organizational identification are described.

Chapter Four explains the statistical procedures used to analyze the data and reveals the results of research questions and hypotheses suggested in Chapter Two. At last, the result of the conceptual model is presented.

The final chapter (Chapter Five) outlines the findings of this study and discusses them within the context of prior theories and research. Theoretical and practical implications are offered. The limitations of the study and areas of future research are also outlined.
CHAPTER 2: UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION, INFORMATION

One of the most frequently studied topics in organizational communication is socialization, which refers to the process that individuals go through to learn how to behave like an organizational member (Jablin, 2001; Jablin & Krone, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). During this process, individuals actively seek information that can reduce their uncertainty about the working environment; and hence are better able to understand how to finish a task, how they are going to be evaluated, and how to interact with others in organizations (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Effective socialization can result in higher job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993a), lower turnover rate (Morrison, 1993a) and smoother job transitions (Kramer, 1994; Kramer et al., 1995). Therefore, both individuals and organizations benefit.

Socialization has most typically been studied as the way that individuals traditionally learn about their organizations through face-to-face communication (e. g., individuals’ conversations with others in the organization) (Bernardi, 2006; Comer, 1991; Jian, 2012; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a; 1993b; 1995; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) and organizational documents (e. g., organizational memos, employee handbooks, etc.) (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Miller, 1996; Miller & Jablin, 1991). In contemporary organizations, individuals rely on new media to interact with others heavily. As argued before, new media here refers to the computer and mobile technologies that facilitate mutual communication (interactivity), open communication (everyone is involved) and increased flexibility of communication (cross the boundaries of time and space).
Examples of new media include but are not limited to emails, World Wide Web, social media networks, intranet, wiki, and group collaboration software.

Scholars have argued that new media facilitate communication between individuals and hence contribute to the socialization process (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004; Jablin, 2001; Waldeck & Myers, 2008; Waldeck, Seibold, & Flanagin, 2004). New media expand individuals’ opportunities to communicate with others and make information more available. However, literature on socialization provides very little understanding of modern socialization tools with the exception of two studies (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004; Waldeck et al., 2004). Moreover, most of the existing organizational socialization studies focus on the western context and seldom pay attention to other culture. As stated before, culture is always a big influence in human beings’ social activities. Therefore, the current study explores the selection and use of new media in the socialization process in two different cultures.

Meta-theories of pragmatism and social constructionism provide rationale for addressing the need to update our knowledge of socialization in response to new communication tools now available to organizational members, as well as the need to situate responses to new media in unique local cultural environments. This chapter moves on to examine the more micro-level processes at play to make concrete predictions of the plurality, as well as similarity of new media in organizations. Using uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) as the framework, the current study explores organizational members’ uses of new media for socialization in different cultural contexts. Specifically, it examines (a)
the patterns of new media use for socialization in terms of how frequent each new medium has been used for socialization information, what specific information individuals seek through particular new media, and who individuals talk to through new media; (b) the outcomes of new media use in terms of individuals’ uncertainty levels; (c) the influence of national culture as a social context for the selection and use of new media, and (d) the association between new media selection and use with organizational identification.

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature that establishes important connections between national culture, new media use and socialization. The problem statement from Chapter One offered theoretical framework to understand why examining new media usage is important and why cultural context should be taken into consideration from broad stand point of view. This chapter narrows down the scope of the problem into organizational socialization processes in different countries.

Socialization, the “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 3), may very well be a solitary process (as, for example, organizational members may review documents to learn more about their roles and responsibilities). Yet the focus on culture herein reminds us that even in solitary behaviors, we are situated in larger social norm-prescribing environments. Moreover, social information processing addresses the social aspect of reducing organizational uncertainties. Specifically, this theory describes a process through which members assess job-related needs and make sense of expected attitudes through their social context and their past experiences, rather
than orienting to their jobs based on any objective aspects of their work (Salancik &
Pfeffer, 1978). In other words, social information processing theory would argue that
socialization occurs in response to the social environment, and not necessarily in
response to the job itself. In other words, the pragmatist framework of this project
acknowledges the universal need to reduce uncertainty at work, using various tools and
strategies. The emphasis on culture, however, brings to light the pluralistic differences
that these tools come to bear on divergent cultures that collectively situate the meanings
of these tools in unique ways.

The next section first highlights the rationale behind the selection of two locations
(the U.S. and China) for cultural comparison. Then, uncertainty reduction theory (Berger
& Calabrese, 1975) is explored as the basic underlying mechanism for information-
seeking, which today has many more tools that individuals may responsively rely on than
ever before. Next, socialization literature is reviewed and problematized in that, although
traditionally it empirically focuses on newcomers as members with very high
organizational uncertainty, it conceptually posits that socialization may occur throughout
one’s tenure in an organization. Therefore, social information processing (Salancik &
Pfeffer, 1978) is introduced as a theory addressing uncertainties throughout one’s
membership in an organization, implicating the social environment and potential cultural
influences in resulting attitudes and beliefs about work. Finally, uncertainty reduction and
information-seeking in this socialization context are explored in light of an outcome
variable: organizational identification. Taken together, this review concludes with a
model depicting the universal process of socialization throughout the organizational member’s career.

**Culture**

Pragmatism (Dewey, 1927; Dewey, 2004; James, 1991) and social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) broadly argue that all sense-making is situated in social context and common sense is shared within the boundaries of social groups, highlighting the importance of culture as a social context in any kind of inquiry. At the micro-level of human interaction, communication scholars similarly highlight the importance of culture shaping communicative norms. Culture, as defined by Hall (1976), is the set of norms, rules and values shared by members of a certain community, organization, and/or social group. Cultural diversity in individuals, for example, leads to different communication behaviors (Gudykunst, 1983). Because all communication is governed by culture, new media use can be influenced by social contexts and by users situated in various cultures (Stephens, 2007).

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore a multitude of cultures internationally. Therefore, two cultures (the U.S. and China) have been selected to illustrate the unique situation of new media in divergent social environments. The two primary selection criteria deal with (a) the call from pragmatism to deal with practical matters; and (b) the tension between globalization and local knowledge.

First of all, studying the Chinese context can make a difference, which is an essential condition for inquiry from a pragmatic point of view (James, 1991). With the development of its economy, numerous Chinese corporations have emerged (Yusuf,
Nabeshima, & Perkin, 2007). However, the development of theories that can direct the operation of these Chinese corporations cannot keep up with the speed of economic development. Therefore, most Chinese corporations rely on a western knowledge base to help them solve local organizational problems (Zhang, Chen, Liu, & Liu, 2008). Although these theories can provide information for some general problems, they fail to capture the uniqueness of the organizational dynamics in China (Chen & Glen, 2004). Therefore, developing a more culturally sensitive organizational communication theory is in need. As argued before, members’ behaviors in organizations are situated in social context. It has been recognized for a long time that there are inherent cultural differences between western societies and eastern societies that direct how individuals organize, behave and communicate (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2001; Lim, Kim, & Kim, 2011). Hence, examining the differences as well as the similarities of new media use in organizations in the U.S. (the typical western society) and China (the typical eastern society) provide an insight to understand culture’s impact on how individuals organize.

Secondly, globalization brings western theories, cultures, and ideologies to the world, which masks the value of local knowledge (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Brewis & Linstead, 2000; Gibson-Graham, 1997; Haraway, 1991). Western corporations and eastern corporations develop along different paths that lead to inherent differences. Western modern corporations develop from the typical capitalist model, which emphasizes profit, efficacy and scientific management. However, Chinese corporations develop from a communist model, which stresses conformity to country, community, and caring; and most importantly the government owns them. In modern China most of the
corporations have switched from traditional government-owned, community-based models to more westernized business models; yet the influence of the traditional community-based models reliant on government are still prevalent. Therefore, western-based organizational communication theories are not compatible with these Chinese corporations, since they originate from different philosophical underpinnings and create a clash in goals and philosophies.

In fact, three decades ago Geertz (1983) highlighted the importance of local knowledge in solving local problems. According to Geertz (1983) and other scholars mentioned above, it would not be in China’s best interest to use Western organizational approaches to deal with local Eastern problems, despite globalizing trends promoting unified standards and norms when it comes to best practice.

Sometimes western theories can work in eastern climates, but they do not guarantee an appropriate solution to local problems faced by organizations. The cost of failure of using western theories to explain local eastern situations could be detrimental, ranging from loss of money to failure of the whole corporation. Developing theories and a more relevant eastern-oriented knowledge base is urgent, since Chinese organizations may function quite differently than their American counterparts. From a practical perspective, local eastern theories could be better able to help Chinese organizations solve their local problems. Comparing research results in China and the U.S. could inform us as to which phenomena are universal and which tend to be more locally situated, and thus, inform corporations about when western theory should be used and when local (Chinese) theory should be used. By doing this, many negative consequences
(loss of money, laying-off employees due to organizational failure, corruption of organizations, etc.) could ultimately be avoided.

The following sections address different theories and literatures related to organizational socialization and sense-making processes, with special attention paid to the role of culture in situating such information-seeking behaviors.

**Uncertainty Reduction**

In everyday life we face unknowns. Uncertainty reduction theory (URT) suggests that uncertainty causes an unpleasant feeling that individuals experience on a regular basis. In order to cope with this feeling, individuals actively look for information to help them know more about the environment and hence reduce their discomfort (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger, 1979). According to URT, high levels of uncertainty cause an increase in information-seeking behaviors and when levels of uncertainty decrease, information-seeking behaviors decrease as well (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Although suggested as a theory to examine the early dyadic interactions of new relational partners (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), URT has examined the uncertainty reduction process in various settings. In health contexts, people experience illness-related uncertainty, relational uncertainty and medical care uncertainty (Brashers et al., 2000; Sheer & Cline, 1995). In intercultural interactions, individuals experience uncertainties about others’ feelings, values, behaviors and attitudes, social background, social norms, nonverbal cues and verbal appropriateness  (Berger & Gudykunst, 1991; Gudykunst, 1995; Gudykunst, Sodetani, & Sonoda, 1987; Gudykunst, Yang, & Nishida, 1985). In social interactions with acquaintances, friends, and dating partners, people’s uncertainties
include demographic information, personal characteristics, lifestyle choices, partners’
attitudes and behaviors, and relational status (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998; Berger, 1979;
Berger & Gudykunst, 1991; Douglas, 1990; Knobloch & Solomon, 2002; Mongeau,
Serewicz, & Therein, 2004; Parks & Adelman, 1983). In organizations, individuals
experience uncertainty about organizational history, how to finish tasks, how to interact
with others, and how individuals will be evaluated in their organizations (Kramer, 1994;
Kramer, 2004; Teboul, 1994).

In order to acquire knowledge and reduce various uncertainties across these
diverse contexts, people seek information through different channels. Most studies focus
on face-to-face strategies to reduce interpersonal uncertainty (Berger & Kellermann,
1994). Berger (1979) suggested three information-seeking strategies to reduce uncertainty
about a target individual: passive (obtaining information by observing the target person or
assessing social expectations), active (obtaining information by directly asking others),
and interactive (obtaining information by directly asking the target person). More
specifically, individuals can use a wide array of strategies: self-disclosure, interrogation,
overt questions, convert question, or secret tests during the conversation (Berger &
related to the relationship stage of the communication partners or their individual
characteristics. For instance, direct questioning is preferred in acquaintance relationships
(Douglas, 1990), while partners in a close relationship prefer interrogation strategies
(Berger & Kellermann, 1994). Caucasians tend to ask more questions than non-
Caucasians (Gudykunst et al., 1987), and males prefer to ask more direct questions than
females (Douglas, 1990). In addition to these conversational techniques, nonverbal cue assessment is an alternative way for individuals to obtain information (Gudykunst et al., 1987).

We can clearly see the implications of culture on strategy selection, in that masculine and Caucasian cultures are more direct in asking questions (Douglas, 1990; Gudykunst et al., 1987). People from high-context cultures tend to ask fewer questions of strangers’ backgrounds than people from low-context cultures, because they rely on more implicit assumptions of culture in such scenarios (Gudykunst, 1983). Individuals from collectivistic cultures (e.g., Japan) act differently when interacting with in-group members and out-group members, while there is no such difference in individualist cultures (Gudykunst, Nishida, & Schmidt, 1989). Moreover, individuals from masculine cultures act reduce uncertainty differently depending on whether they are interacting with a same-sex strangers or an opposite-sex stranger, and this difference does not exist in feminine cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1989). Individuals from different cultural backgrounds show different degrees of self-disclosure intentions, display varying levels of nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and confidence during initial interactions (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984). These evidences all suggest that behaviors to reduce uncertainty are situated in the larger social context.

The above-mentioned URT studies all examine face-to-face interactions (in part due to the era during which such research was conducted), yet today new media can be another important channel that individuals acquire information through. New media is defined as interactive computer technology that may take various forms (e.g.: written
context, moving images) in allowing individuals to communicate (Culnan & Markus, 1987). The proliferation of communication channels available through new media provides many more choices to individuals seeking information, and also provides new ground for URT scholars to cover. In fact, certain cultural contexts may favor the use of some new media tools over others as individuals make sense of their environment. For example, in China, the online chatting tool QQ, which is not widely used in western countries, is extensively used in both personal and working settings. Individuals may have multiple QQ accounts for different purposes (e.g.: one for private personal life and one for work purposes).

The Internet provides a variety of means for information-seeking behaviors that aims at uncertainty reduction (Pratt, Wiseman, Cody, & Wendt, 1999; Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon, & Sunnafrank, 2002), and scholars have compared face-to-face to computer-mediated communication interactions in reducing uncertainty (Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Westerman & Tamborini, 2006). The few studies that have integrated new media in examining uncertainty reduction suggest that computer-mediated communication in general is effective in helping individuals reduce uncertainty (Pratt et al., 1999; Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Westerman & Tamborini, 2006), although the selection of information-seeking strategies vary from face-to-face contexts. For instance, interactive information-seeking and self-disclosure are strategies used more often in mediated-communication than face-to-face contexts (Tidwell & Walther, 2002) and asking questions is the most commonly used strategy to reduce uncertainty through emails (Pratt et al., 1999).

However, more studies still need to be done in this field. This study seeks to better
understand how (in terms of communication channels used) and why (in terms of various needs that people perceive) people seek information to reduce uncertainty.

While URT has been explored in different settings and relational contexts to examine individuals’ information-seeking behaviors, one specific context that receives a great deal of scholastic attention is organizational socialization due to the high levels of organizational uncertainty that members respond to in unique ways. In the following section, the socialization process is explored as another context during which new media may play an increasing role.

**Socialization**

Socialization is the process through which individuals gain knowledge so that they know how to perform an organizational role, which suggests that it is inherently an uncertainty reducing process.

**Traditional Socialization Research**

Socialization is usually studied as a phase model proposing that individuals in organizations move through the following phases: (a) anticipatory (Jablin, 2001) or investigation (Moreland & Levine, 2001), occurring before an individual enters an organization; (b) encounter (Feldman, 1981) or entry (Jablin, 2001), occurring during the first few weeks or months of entry; (c) metamorphosis (Jablin, 1982) or maintenance (Moreland & Levine, 2001), occurring once an individual has reached tenure in the organization; and (d) exit (Jablin, 2001), which occurs upon leaving the organization.

Although this phasic model captures the lifespan of organizational membership, most studies looking at uncertainty reduction and information-seeking in the socialization
literature examine newcomers’ experiences (in the encounter or entry phase) since they are thought to have the highest levels of uncertainty. Such studies focus on newcomers’ information-seeking strategies (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996), frequencies of strategy use (Morrison, 1993a, 1995; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992, Teboul, 1994), type of information sought (Comer, 1991; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1995; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), sources of information (Morrison, 1993b; Miller, 1996; Teboul, 1994), and certain outcomes of information-seeking behaviors (Ashford & Black, 1996; Holder, 1996; Kramer, 1994).

Newcomers proactively seek three types of information: referent information (how to function successfully on the job), appraisal information (how to gauge their level of success on the job) and relational information (how they are to interact with organizational peers) (Jablin & Miller, 1991). Comer (1991) condensed this typology into two general types of information: technical information (skill and knowledge individuals need to execute their jobs) and social information (having to do with norms and organizational identity).

Newcomers are likely to rely on particular information-seeking strategies that accomplish goals respective to the type of information sought (referent, appraisal, or relational information). As mentioned earlier, URT suggests three strategies that individuals may use to gather information to reduce uncertainty: active, interactive, and passive (Berger, 1979). In the organizational setting, a more dynamic environment than dyadic relationships, individuals can seek information through overt questions (asking for information directly), indirect seeking (e.g. hinting or noninterrogative questions, jokes,
self-disclosure), third parties (asking a secondary source for information), testing limits (creating a situation where the target must react), or observing others’ behaviors in the environment (Jablin, & Miller, 1991; Miller, 1996).

 Organizations are dynamic environments that allow members to utilize all of these information-seeking strategies to gain knowledge from various information sources. In general, supervisors (Jablin & Miller, 1991; Miller, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Teboul, 1994) and co-worker/peers (Jablin & Miller, 1991; Comer, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Teboul, 1994) are the two most important sources for socialization-related information; although romantic partners, families, and friends outside the organization can also be useful information sources (Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Teboul, 1994). In addition to social sources of information, written materials such as memos and training manuals can potentially be used by newcomers to better understand their role in the organization (Miller, 1996; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

 However, focusing only on newcomers’ experience is a weak link in the socialization literature. One recent study on assimilation, which is considered as a similar concept as socialization, provides empirical evidence that this process is ongoing rather than a singular momentary event (Gailliard, Myers, & Seibold, 2010). Actually, uncertainty characterizes individuals’ whole career span. Social information processing theory perfectly addresses this point.
Social Information Processing Theory and Socialization

Proposed by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978), social information processing (SIP) theory describes individuals’ job-related needs and attitudes as the outcomes of social context and personal past experience rather than needs and attitudes specific to jobs/organizational roles. Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) suggest that “individuals, as adaptive organisms, adapt attitudes, behaviors and beliefs to their social context and to the reality of their own past and present behavior and situation” (p. 226). According to SIP theory, individuals’ perceptions of their jobs are not fixed; rather they are influenced by the social environment. They argued that social context has two major effects on individuals’ attitudes and needs by (a) providing socially constructed meanings of accepted beliefs, attitudes and needs for action; and (b) making some information more salient than others which expresses certain expectations on individuals’ behaviors (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

The social and task environment of an organization is constantly changing. For instance, macro changes can include the introduction of new technology (Contractor, Seibold, & Heller, 1996; Herndon, 1997) or an organization merger (Chang & Ki, 2004; Pepper & Larson, 2006; Zhu, May, & Rosenfeld, 2004), and micro changes can take the form of promotion and transfer (Kramer, 1994; Kramer et al., 1995; Kramer & Noland, 1999) or new members joining the organizations (Gallagher & Sias, 2009). These organizational changes can create uncertainties about work and thus trigger information-seeking behaviors, thus, require socialization. Focusing only on newcomers’ uncertainty reduction and information-seeking behaviors only takes a snapshot of the uncertainty
reduction in organizational setting and fails to examine the dynamic of this on-going process. Using SIP theory and treating uncertainty as an on-going experience that accompanies one’s whole career can provide a more comprehensive account of uncertainty reduction and information-seeking behaviors in organizations. Therefore, the current study examines socialization as an on-going process, in response to the ongoing uncertainties that organizational members face. For this reason, all organizational members will be the targets of study instead of only newcomers.

Another manifestation of social environment is national culture. The above section explains that individuals need to seek information to reduce their uncertainty, thus, achieve the goal of socialization. SIP theory informs that social environment defines what actions are appropriate and what information is more salient. Since different cultures have different orientations toward certain behaviors and actions, it is reasonable to assume that an individuals’ understandings about what are the appropriate behaviors and what is the salient information in organizational setting is different according to different cultural background. For example, it is suggested that socialization in masculine cultures would emphasize more task-related information while socialization in feminine cultures would emphasize group interaction (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Landy & Conte, 2010). Therefore, culture affects individuals’ behaviors of information-seeking in the socialization process.

At last, social information directly relates to one’s perception of their job. Specifically, social information can influence an individual’s attitudes and needs directly or indirectly in four ways: (a) others’ statements about the job can influence individuals’
perceptions; (b) the frequency with which others talk about certain aspects of the job can make such aspects more salient to individuals; (c) others’ interpretation of environmental cues can shape individuals’ attitudes and (d) others’ interpretation of their own needs can also influence individuals’ need assessments (O’Reilly & Caldwell, 1979; O’Reilly & Caldwell, 1985; Pollock, Whitbred & Contractor, 2000; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). In investigating the social influences of one’s organizational environment, SIP scholars tend to focus on interpersonal interactions that include active and interactive information-gathering strategies and the physical setting that allows for more passive observations of norms and peer conversations (O’Reilly & Caldwell, 1985; Pollock et al., 2000; Thomas, 1986). As another channel of social information, new media provide social information that can influence individuals’ perceptions of their work. Consequently, the selection and use of new media can directly influence socialization, a process of forming work-related perceptions or attitudes.

Social information processing theory can inform the current study examining individuals’ information-seeking behaviors as an ongoing socialization process to reduce continuing organizational uncertainties by bringing attention to the role of culture and social media (as one potentially new media form) in this process. Because of the importance of the social environment, it is critical to look at culture as a social context that may also influence individuals’ information-seeking behaviors.

**Socialization and New Media: Reducing Uncertainty in the Modern Era**

Clearly the type of information-gathering strategy used coupled with the particular information source sought can result in various outcomes in terms of the
organizational member’s uncertainty reduction. In this way, socialization efforts may yield divergent levels of intent to leave (Morrison, 1993a), performance and job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996; Kramer et al., 1995; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b).

However, empirical studies cannot agree on the relationship between socialization and certain organizational outcomes. For example, some studies link information-seeking behaviors to job satisfaction (Kramer, 1994; Kramer et al., 1995; Morrison, 1993b) while others find no relationship at all (Ashford & Black, 1996). Morrison (1993a) argues that monitoring socialization strategies have a positive relationship with job satisfaction and a negative relationship with intentions to leave. Yet Kramer et al., (1995) counter these findings, suggesting that information received from both request and monitoring strategies have no influence at all on satisfaction, role clarity, or intention to quit. In addition to the lack of agreement as to how various socialization strategies affect organizational outcomes, the traditional studies in socialization are also problematic in that they have not largely accounted for all the new modes of communication that allow members to reduce uncertainty.

Organizational members today may rely on socialization tools that go beyond face-to-face interactions or reading of organizational documents. Technological advancements since the early theorizing of Jablin and Miller (1991) or Miller (1996) largely outdate traditional socialization research. As mentioned earlier, new media play an increasing role in the information-seeking process, both in daily life and in organizational settings. Therefore, new media need to be explored as important information-seeking channels relevant to the socialization process.
In general, socialization information is difficult for organizational members to obtain (Teboul, 1994). Scholars have suggested that traditional communication channels may not be able to provide enough socialization-related information due to individuals’ concerns for social cost (Huston & Burgess, 1979), power dynamics (Deetz & Munby, 1990) and the availability of sources (Waldeck et al., 2004). New media can address these problems by facilitating faster information exchange at a low cost (Baym et al., 2012; Beniger, 1996; Rainie & Wellman, 2012), enlarging the number and variety of people potentially involved in the communication (Huber, 1990; Rainie, 2000; Rainie & Wellman, 2012), and reducing temporal and physical constraint of traditional communication (Baym et al., 2012; Eveland & Bikson, 1988; Rainie & Wellman, 2012;). Realizing the changes new media bring to organizational communication, several studies (e.g., Barnes & Mattson, 2008, D’Urso & Pierce, 2009) have confirmed the popularity of new media use in the organization and suggest such technologies actually change communication practices.

Communication scholars exploring organizational socialization have been slow to incorporate new media as an alternative information-seeking channel (Waldeck et al., 2004; Jablin, 2001). Waldeck and Myers (2008) call scholars’ attention to the role of new media in the socialization process, arguing that the single representative empirical study on this topic (Waldeck et al., 2004) confirms that effective socialization relies heavily on new media as well as face-to-face communication. Another effort (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004) to document the role of new media in the socialization process is a purely theoretical piece that proposes a model to understand the antecedents and outcomes of
new media use in organizations. Although all the evidence above suggests that new media should be considered as important information-seeking tools in the socialization process, scholars know very little about this topic at this point. Due to this oversight, even basic knowledge of new media usage in organizational socialization is largely unknown. No empirical study provides a general understanding of what new media individuals use to seek for information during their socialization. Thus, the first task of the current study is to advance knowledge of organizational members’ new media use in the socialization process:

RQ1(a): Which new media tools do organizational members use to seek information? And (b): With what frequency is each type of new media used?

Both URT and socialization literature suggest that individuals have preferences for using particular strategies to seek particular information from particular sources. As mentioned earlier, individuals prefer interrogation and self-disclosure strategies to obtain information from close friends and partners (Berger & Kellermann, 1994). In organizations, individuals prefer technical information from supervisors and referent information from co-workers (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Therefore, the following questions address individuals’ preferences when relying on new media for information:

RQ1(c): Who are the primary sources of information sought through new media

RQ1(d): Are certain new media used for certain types of information gain?
RQ1(e): What kinds of information-seeking strategies (interactive, active, and passive) do individuals rely on new media for?

Increasing our knowledge of new media use for socialization purposes will also inform our understanding of uncertainty reduction in the workplace. In fact, organizational scholars have advocated that reducing uncertainty is the primary goal of communication in organizations (Farace, Taylor, Stewart, & Ruben, 1978). Yet URT studies typically treat uncertainty as an antecedent to individuals’ information-seeking behavior (Jablin & Miller, 1991; Teboul, 1994), despite Berger’s (2005) suggestion that “The amounts of verbal and nonverbal communication [are] postulated to be reciprocally related to uncertainty” (p. 423). In other words uncertainty reduction is simultaneously an antecedent and outcome of information-seeking behaviors. For example, Flanagin and Waldeck’s (2004) theoretical model of new media use in socialization contexts indicates that media selection and use result in sufficient, accurate and appropriate information, which could be tested through individuals’ uncertainty level as an outcome variable. In departing from the traditional antecedent-based treatment of uncertainty, the current study proposes uncertainty as the direct outcome of information-seeking behavior:

H1: Frequency of new media use is negatively related to organizational members’ uncertainty levels.

Because individuals look for different types of information in organizations, scholars suggest different uncertainty types. As discussed in the previous section, referent uncertainty, relational uncertainty and appraisal uncertainty are the most prominent uncertainty types explored in communication contexts (Miller, 1996; Miller & Jablin,
With the notion that different media choices may lead to different socialization outcomes (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004), the current study asks:

RQ1(f): Do organizational members seek out certain new media to address certain uncertainty types?

**Culture and Socialization**

One last shortcoming of traditional socialization studies is that they neglect the role that culture plays in this process. Most studies on socialization are done in a western cultural context, and very few of them are situated in other cultures (Bauer & Taylor, 2001). As a result, literature only provides understanding of western socialization efforts. Although to date empirical research has not examined socialization differences based on national culture, which is the purpose of the current study, several studies have focused on culture’s role in the uncertainty reducing process and provide some insightful understandings regarding this topic. In general, research findings do summarize that different cultural backgrounds result in different socialization processes. Golde (2005) shows how different disciplinary cultures create different socialization experiences for graduate students. Although there are similarities across the socialization of graduate students from different disciplines, students in each discipline have their unique concerns and problems due to the unique disciplinary culture (Gardner, 2010). Individuals from different cultural backgrounds usually have difficulty socializing themselves to local educational institutions (Morita, 2009) and business organizations (Jian, 2012) due to the lack of knowledge of local national culture. In particular, the more pronounced the differences between individuals’ home culture and local culture, the more difficulties
they experience in the socialization process. Examples of cultural differences include learning style (listen to learn vs. participate to learn) (Morita, 2009) and understanding of power distance (relationship with supervisors vs. relationship with co-workers) (Jian, 2012).

In general, there is no doubt that culture influences individuals’ socialization process but few empirical studies examine this topic. In order to fill this gap, the current study compares organizational socialization processes in China and the U.S. Specifically, the United States and China are significantly different in individualism-collectivism, power distance, and masculinity-femininity dimensions. These dimensions can impact the socialization process. For example, collectivistic cultures (e.g., China) emphasize relationships among people, and harmony is highly valued (Hofstede, 2001), and members may therefore perceive relational information as being more important than task information in organizations. Similarly masculine cultures (e.g., U.S.) emphasize more task related information while feminine cultures (e.g. China) emphasize relational information (Landy & Conte, 2010). People in long power distance cultures (e.g., China) respond to a social hierarchy, and subordinates are less comfortable interacting with supervisors (Hofstede, 2001). As a result, regardless of information type, people may seek information from co-workers more often in that culture. In order to confirm these assumptions, the current study asks the following research question and makes these predictions:

RQ2: Do individuals in two different cultures (China vs. U.S.) use different new media to seek information, in terms of (a) source and (b) information types?
While the above mentioned research questions aim to expand theorizations of modern day socialization, by addressing the selection and use of various new media tools to reduce organizational uncertainty in different cultural contexts, this study also seeks to expand theorizations of socialization by moving beyond the newcomers’ experience. Although newcomers have relatively high levels of uncertainty, uncertainty is an ongoing experience felt throughout one’s whole career (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Kramer, 2004; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Waldeck et al., 2004) and individuals need to constantly seek information to cope with it (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Kramer, 2010). For example, when newcomers join the organization, they create uncertainty for more veteran members (Gallagher & Sias, 2009). The next section revisits SIP theory, which can help us understand the information-seeking strategies that members use throughout their organizational tenure to reduce uncertainties.

**Organizational Identification**

As SIP theory and literature on organizational socialization indicate, information-seeking behaviors may be related to various socialization outcomes including divergent levels of intent to leave (Morrison, 1993a), performance and job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996; Kramer et al., 1995; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b). As aforementioned, these empirical studies are highly inconsistent in their findings perhaps due to their neglect of uncertainty as the direct outcome of information-seeking behaviors.

Another possible reason for such conflicted results is that these outcomes could relate to other antecedents rather than solely the influence of social information. For example, motivation to work, organizational climate, and individuals’ job characteristics
all can influence individuals’ perceptions of satisfaction, stress, and turnover rate (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). One approach to resolve this problem is to use a variable that is more directly related to the socialization process: Organizational identification (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006). This variable has been identified as a presumed outcome of socialization (Bullis & Bach, 1989), however, it has been neglected for decades in socialization studies. Organizational identification is associated with multiple positive organizational outcomes such as cooperation, participation, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Riketta & Dick, 2005), so identification may potentially moderate outcome variables such as satisfaction and commitment that have been previously studied. Moreover, compared to other aforementioned outcomes of the socialization process (which may be influenced by other organizational attributes such as payment, working environment, etc.), organizational identification is more closely related to the communication process. As Cheney (1983a), and Tompkins and Cheney (1985) argue, communication is the core reason for organizational identification, which is derived from the information individuals receive from organizations (Miller, Allen, Casey, & Johnson, 2000). Therefore, organizational identification is considered as an outcome of socialization in this research to fill the gap in previous socialization studies. Although existing studies treat organizational identification as a simplistic entity, the current study challenges this notion with focusing on both local and global levels, which is further explained below.

Based on Burke’s (1969) and Simon’s (1976) work, Cheney (1983a, 1983b) has defined organizational identification as individuals’ feelings of connectedness to
organizations and it occurs “when, in making a decision, the person in one or more of his or her organizational roles perceives that unit’s values or interests as relevant in evaluating alternatives of choice” (Tomkins & Cheney, 1983, p. 144). Although the concept of organizational identification can simply be operationalized as members’ connection with the organization as a whole (Tichy & Devanna, 1986), it would be an oversimplification to depict the organization as a single entity (Bartels, Pruyn, De jong, & Joustra, 2007). There are multiple levels of an individual’s identification at work including career identification (e.g.: lawyer, doctor), work group identification (e.g. working group, working department), organizational identification (e.g. companies) and occupational identification (e.g. manager, CEO, secretary) (Scott & Fontenot, 1999; Van Dick, 2004). In a dynamic organizational environment, divisions, departments, and other local groups may be more useful foci of organizational identification than a treatment of the organization as a whole (Reichers, 1985; Scott, Corman, &Cheney, 1998; Scott & Fontenot, 1999; Scott & Timmerman, 1999). Moreover, since the socialization process is multidimensional (Gailliard et al., 2010), individuals in this process involve themselves in both work groups (Anderson, Riddle, & Martin, 1999) and organizations (Ashford & Black, 1996) in this process. It is reasonable to argue that as an outcome of socialization, identification should be multidimensional as well (Scott et al., 1998).

In order to further explore identification as an outcome of information-seeking behavior using new media, the current study investigates organizational identification as the outcome of socialization at two levels: global level (identification with the whole organization) and local level (identification with a specific department or division).
Because media selection and use both influence the socialization process (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), the current study proposes and asks:

H2: Frequency of new media use is positively related to both local and global identifications.

RQ3: Do certain types of new media channels lead to local level versus global level identification?

Culture is one critical factor that influences individuals’ feelings of connectedness to organizations since social interaction is inherently influenced by social context. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that individuals from China and the U.S. may differ in their levels of connectedness with their respective employers. Although often critiqued, Hofstede’s (2001) cultural typology provides a basis to examine how national culture influences organizational culture (Kramer, 2010). One salient cultural dimension, individualism-collectivism, helps us better understand how organizational identification may diverge across national boundaries. Hofstede (2001) proposes that nations fall on a continuum that ranges from individualism (focus on self) to collectivism (focus on group), which directly ties with individuals’ tendencies to associate with and foreground their participation in larger social groups (Hofstede, 2001). Highly individualistic cultures emphasize the uniqueness of individuals and value individual goals, while highly collectivistic cultures emphasize the collective identity of a group and values the goals of the group above and beyond the goals of any given member (Hofstede, 2001). When examining organizational identifications in different social contexts, especially in cultures
that are dramatically different in individualism and collectivism, differences may exist due to this cultural dimension’s influence.

Because the situated view of organizational identification highlighted in the SIP suggests that the social context influences members’ orientations to their organization, Hofstede’s individualism-collectivism dimension implies that individuals across various national boundaries may connect differently to their respective organizations in response to their cultural values. Thus, the following prediction is proposed:

H3(a): Individuals in China (as a typical collectivist culture) have higher global (organizational) identification levels than individuals in the U.S (as a typical individualist culture).

It is important to note that Hofstede’s typology of cultural dimensions has been critiqued over the years, including his notion of individualism-collectivism. Empirical evidence showing contradictory results warrants such avid critique (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002, Lim et al., 2011). For example, although Hofstede typifies Asian cultures as collectivists and Americans as individualists, one study found that Japanese scored higher than Americans on an individualism scale (Oyseman et al., 2002), which means Japanese (a typically collectivistic culture) can be more individualist than Americans (a typically individualistic culture). Conflicting results have triggered several discussions of this cultural dimension.

One promising argument by Lim et al. (2012) is to develop a more sophisticated understanding of this dimension by treating collectivism as a cultural feature in all cultures, but underscoring that different cultures have different forms of collectivism
(e.g., group collectivism vs. relational collectivism). Instead of positioning nations between individualism and collectivism, they argue that individualism and holism should operationalize the differential on the continuum. Eastern cultures, typically exemplifying collectivistic values (as opposed to their western counterparts that value individualism) can now be reconceptualized as valuing holism; as both eastern and western cultures embody collectivism uniquely.

According to Lim et al. (2012), eastern and western cultures differ in terms of the types of collectivism valued. Borrowing the distinction between group and relational collectivism from Brewer and Chen (2007), Lim et al., (2012) found empirical support substantiating that western culture has higher group collectivism (emphasizing the boundary of in-group and out-group and caring for the group itself) while eastern culture has higher relational collectivism (stressing relational obligation, maintaining relationships between group members and creating harmonious relationships within the group). In essence, group collectivism emphasizes the boundaries of the group and sensitizes members to distinctions of in-group and out-group membership, while relational collectivism focuses more on interpersonal relationships that occur within groups. As a result, group collectivists may perceive the group as a whole and relational collectivists may just see individuals bound within a group (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Lim et al., 2012). The now outdated individualism-collectivism bifurcation previously suggested that Eastern cultures would value the group more than Western cultures; but the new distinction between group collectivism and relational collectivism indicates that westerners also bear allegiance to the group in their own unique ways. Because western
organizational members emphasize group membership above and beyond the micro-level relationships that occur within those contexts, we propose herein that group collectivism may lead to stronger local identification than its relational counterpart.

H3(b): Individuals from the U.S. (as a group collectivistic culture) will have higher local (workgroup) identification levels than individuals from China (as a relational collectivistic culture).

It has been argued that uncertainty reduction is the direct outcome of information-seeking behaviors. The less uncertainty individuals experience, the more knowledge they have about their organizational role, and the more socialized they therefore are. Uncertainty reduction theory also suggests that a decrease in uncertainty leads to an increase in liking. This positive attitude of liking may increase the individuals’ willingness to identify themselves with the respective organizations because intuitively, no one would like to identify with something they do not like. Therefore, identification should also be related to uncertainty level. With this in mind, the current study proposes:

H4: The relationship between information-seeking frequency and identification is mediated by individuals’ uncertainty level.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed a large body of literature on topics of national culture, uncertainty-reducing information-seeking behaviors, organizational socialization, social information process, and organizational identification. Although there are extensive studies on information-seeking behaviors in the socialization context (e.g.: Comer, 1991; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b), most studies focus on newcomers’
experiences and neglect the role of new media. They fail to recognize that socialization can be a life-long process (Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Van Mannen & Schein, 1978) that occurs in dynamic ways based on the tools available to members. In order to fill this gap, the current study aims to better understand individuals’ use of new media for socialization related information-seeking behaviors.

Secondly, reducing uncertainty is largely treated as a motivation for individuals’ information-seeking behaviors in organizations (Kramer, 1994; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Teboul, 1994). However, literature fails to recognize that the relationship between uncertainty and information-seeking is reciprocal. That is to say, uncertainty reduction can also be the result of information-seeking. Thus, the current study proposes uncertainty as the outcome of information-seeking behaviors using new media.

Thirdly, social context heavily influences individuals’ perception of work (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) in terms of highlighting information that is most important as well as highlighting the appropriate ways to obtain such information. Previous studies on socialization fail to recognize this variable on a large scale (e.g., national culture) due to the heavy number of western-based socialization studies. In order to fill this gap, the current study asks whether people in two different cultures (China and United States) act differently in the socialization related information-seeking behaviors using new media. If they do, what are those differences?

Finally, socialization may lead to several possible outcomes including job satisfaction, work stress, turnover rate, or organizational commitment (Ashford & Black, 1996, Kramer, 1994; Kramer et al., 1995; Morrison, 1993a). However, previous studies
have yielded highly inconsistent results. The current study argues that organizational identification (Cheney, 1983a, 1983b), unlike other outcomes tested, is a more direct outcome of the socialization process. Therefore, it suggests that organizational identification is influenced by an individual’s selection and use of new media, mediated by uncertainty level (a direct outcome of information-seeking behaviors). In sum, the current study proposes the following model, see figure 1 for visual representation:

**Figure 1.** Proposed model.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY
In order to test the theoretical model detailed in Chapter Two – predicting the relationships among culture, uncertainty, information-seeking strategies, and organizational identification – an empirical study is proposed herein. The following pages describe in detail the quantitative method used to gather data to answer the research questions and hypotheses posed. The procedures and variable measurements outlined in this chapter address the methodological means to investigate the divergent uses of new media in culturally different organizational contexts.

**Procedures**

All procedures are approved through the university’s Institutional Review Board, please see Appendix A for IRB approval. This section outlines the sampling of participants, explains the research design, and details the data collection methods and data analysis plan for this dissertation.

**Sampling and Participants**

The target population is full-time employees who have experienced using new media for work-related information in organizations in China and the United States. For four major predictors, to achieve a power level of .80, a sample size of 115 is needed from each population (China and the U.S.) (Algina & Keselman, 2000). For a two-tailed hypothesis t-test (comparison between China and the U.S.) to reach a power level of .80, a sample size of 64 is needed from each population (Cohen, 1988; Soper, 2012). Therefore, taking these power levels into consideration, at least 115 participants are needed from each population, for a total of 230 participants.
Data Collection

Data were collected online. The data collection was done in two waves; one taking place in China and the other in the United States. In order to increase the response rate, a series of three emails was sent out to participants (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). For data collection in China, an invitation email was sent to participants to explain the purpose of this study with a link to the online survey. Participants were also encouraged to forward this email to anyone they know that may be interested in this study. Two follow up emails were sent to remind the participants to complete the online survey. Participants were reminded to pass the link to other potential participants.

For data collection in the United States, university students were asked to forward the survey to anyone they know that works as a full-time employee. A short presentation was made to students to explain the purpose of the study and directed them to forward the survey link to anyone who they know as a full-time employee. Two follow up emails were also be sent to instructors to ask them to remind the students about forwarding the online survey. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.

Measurement

The online survey measures respondents’ new media usage at work, uncertainty levels, and organizational identification with their current employer.

New Media Usage

Based on D’Urso and Pierce’s (2009) findings of the most commonly used ICTs in organizations, as well as the definition of new media from Culnan and Markus (1987), the following six media are examined in the current study: E-mail, Internet, Intranets,
corporate social media, personal employee social media and online chatting tools. The use of new media is measured in two sections with the first section asking information about general usage frequency of each medium for work-related information and the second section asking information about specific media usage frequency for different types of information (Jablin & Miller, 1991), different sources of information (Teboul, 1994) and different strategies (Berger, 1979).

First of all, the general usage of these six media is measured with two scales. The first scale asks participants to identify in general how often they use these six media for work related information with the answer choices of hourly basis, everyday basis, weekly basis, monthly basis, and N/A. These choices come from a previous study on organizational members’ usage of new media (Waldeck et al, 2004). The second question asks participants to estimate how much time they spend on each medium for work-related information everyday. If participants do not use the medium on a daily basis, they can choose the answer “not use on daily basis” and if the medium is not available to the participants, they can choose the answer “N/A”, otherwise, participants fill out the blank with a specific time (in hours). By using objective units of time, individuals’ answers are standardized and the frequency estimate can be reported (Morrison, 1993a).

Next, more fractionized use of the abovementioned media is measured. To measure the types of information employees seek through new media, Jablin and Miller’s (1991) typology of task, appraisal, and relational information will be used. Participants will be asked to rank the media, in a 6 X 3 matrix, from 1=most often used to 5=least often used, or N/A, based on the frequency they use each ICT to seek these three types of
information. A description of each information type will be given so that participants can understand what each term clearly means. To identify the sources that individuals seek information from using new media, Teboul’s (1994) typology of supervisor, co-workers, subordinates, friends, partner, and family is adapted. Again, participants will be asked to rank the media in a 6 X 6 matrix (i.e., source type X frequency of each new medium).

Finally, Berger’s (1979) typology of information-seeking strategies (Passive, Interactive, and Active) will be used to measure individuals’ preferences for particular strategies of new media use. Participants will be asked to rank the frequencies in a 6 X 3 matrix (i.e., strategy used X frequency), and an instruction of each strategy will be provided on the top of the matrix.

**Uncertainty**

Based on uncertainty types suggested by Miller and Jablin (1991), Teboul (1994) conducted a follow up study to collect narratives and create a typology of uncertainty types (referent, appraisal, and relational). Using Teboul’s (1994) typology, a 5-Point Likert-Type scale of the three types of uncertainty was constructed to measure employees’ uncertainty levels. Although Teboul’s typology (1994) is based on newcomers’ experiences, it has been used to test veterans’ uncertainty (Gallagher & Sias, 2009) as well. Therefore, this typology is not only good for newcomers but also can be used on all employees at any stage of organizational tenure. Some sample items of this measurement are: “I was unsure what jobs I was supposed to do” (referent uncertainty); “I was not sure about my level of competence” (appraisal uncertainty); and “I was
uncertain about if others get along with me” (relational uncertainty). The alpha reliability of this uncertainty scale in the current study is .83.

Identification

Although Cheney’s (1983a) 25-item organizational identification questionnaire is the most commonly used scale for measuring identification, this scale mainly measures macro-level identification. Because the current study seeks to measure both global and local levels of identification, a shorter and simpler visual scale adapted from Shamir and Kark (2004) is used that asks respondents to visually represent the degree to which they identify with both their organization and associated work unit. See figure 2 for this visual scale. This one-item scale has evidence of reliability of two test-retest correlation with .73 and .80 respectively, and evidence of validity of correlation ($r=.69$) with the verbal identification scale (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Riordan & Weatherly, 1999). This visual measurement looks as follows:

![Figure 2. Visual scale of identification.](image)

Figure 2. Visual scale of identification.
However, it is risky to use this one-item scale, which has evidence of moderate reliability and moderate correlation with the verbal identification scale, as the only measurement for identification. As a complement, a shortened version of a verbal identification scale is used (Miller et al., 2000), developed from Cheney’s original 25-item scale. This scale was developed from Cheney’s 25-item scale under the concern that Cheney’s scale lacks validity (Miller, Johnson, & Grau, 1994; Sass & Canary, 1991) and possesses multiple dimensions (Cheney, 1982). In order to investigate these criticisms, Miller and her colleagues employed a series of confirmatory factor analyses to assess Cheney’s measurement in four organizations at four different times. As a result, Miller’s study was able to narrow the scale from 25 items to 12 items that only represent one dimension. The reliability of this new 12-item scale in their study ranged from .88 to .95. In addition, although the 12-item scale did reach strong validity as they expected, this scale have better validity than Cheney’s 25-item and contains only one-dimension (Miller et al., 2000). In this sense, this scale is a better one. Although Miller et al. (2000) raised caution of using this 12-item scale for organizational identification, a more valid and reliable organizational identification scale is still lacking (Fontenot & Scott, 2003). Therefore, given the fact that this 12-item scale may be the most reliable and valid scale for communication identification in the communication field, the current study relies on this scale to test identification.

This scale was used twice in the questionnaire in order to measure both local and global identification. To measure global identification, no changes were made to the original 12-item scale developed by Miller and her colleagues (2000). To measure local
identification, the word “organization” in all the items was replaced with “work unit/work department”. Both local and global identification scales had high alpha reliability of .96.

**Cultural Differences**

Cultural differences were not directly measured in this study. Hofstede’s (2001) index of cultural differences among different countries confirms the cultural differences between China and the U.S., predominantly as they relate to individualism-collectivism. China and the U.S. are also confirmed as the typical representations of relational collectivism and group collectivism (Lim et al., 2012).

**Demographic Data**

Demographic information pertaining to the participants and their organizations were solicited. Participants were asked to report their age, sex, nature of their work (e.g. officials and managers, professionals, sales workers, operatives, etc.), educational background, length of employment, position in the organization, to what extent they feel comfortable using technology (from extremely uncomfortable to extremely comfortable), ethnic background, the number of employees in the organization, the sector of business of their organization (e.g. IT, Commerce, Service, Retail), the annual income of the participants, and on what device they finish the survey.

All of the above measurements were translated to Chinese and back translated to English to make sure that the Chinese version is as close as possible to the English version. See Appendix C for a copy of the Chinese version of the survey.
Demographic Information

Data analyzed herein accounts for 332 responses from Chinese participants and 289 responses from American participants with 74 empty cases deleted.

Chinese Respondents

Among the 332 Chinese participants, approximately 60% provided demographic information, described below (all demographic variables below report on averages given the available data). Of the respondents sampled, 43.3% reported being males and 51.2% reported being females, with 5.5% choosing not to disclose their sex. The average age was 31 years ($SD=7.02$), with ages ranging from 20 to 58. The majority of Chinese participants (87.1%) held a college level degree or beyond, and were members of organizations of various sizes: From 10 employees or less (5%), 11-50 employees (16.9%), 51-200 employees (21.4%), 201-500 employees (22.9%), to above 500 employees (21%). In addition, participants were from different sectors of business: information (25.4%), service (20.9%), educational institution (16.4%), government (7.5%), manufacturing (6%), trade (6%), transportation (3%), finance and insurance (6.5%), real estate (2.5%), and health care (1.5%).

American Respondents

Among the 289 American participants, approximately 70% reported on demographic information detailed below. Of these, 38.7% reported males and 60.4% reported females, with 0.9% choosing not to disclose their sex. The average age was 34 years ($SD=12.83$) with ages ranging from 18 to 66. The majority of participants (77.5%) held a degree at the college level or above, and were members of organizations ranging in
size: From under 10 employees (12.2%), 11-50 employees (28.8%), 51-200 employees (21.6%), 201-500 employees (7.2%), to over 500 employees (30.2%). Participants reported from different sectors of business: information (4.1%), service (23.9%), educational institution (23.9%), government (5%), manufacturing (5.9%), trade (13.1%), transportation (2.3%), finance and insurance (5.9%), real estate (2.3%), and health care (13.5%).

**Cross-Sample Equivalence**

In order to better understand the samples’ comparability in subsequent analyses, one must consider the similarities and differences across the Chinese and American respondents. Means across the various demographic categories were compared using t-tests to determine whether the two samples were relatively equivalent. T-test results indicated that the two samples were significantly different in age, \( t(345.75) = -3.13 \), and organizational sizes, \( t(420.41) = 3.78 \). The Chinese sample was younger (\( M = 30.76, SD = 7.02 \)) than the U.S. sample (\( M = 33.91, SD = 12.83 \)) and was from larger organizations (\( M = 3.64, SD = 1.25 \)) than the U.S. sample (\( M = 3.14, SD = 1.43 \)). Therefore, these two variables were statistically controlled for when needed in statistical analyses herein.

**Plan of Data Analysis**

After specifying the variable components of this study and how they will be measured, and detailing the demographic information of the two samples collected, the following pages explain how the research questions posed and hypotheses proposed will actually be tested. That is, to reach any valuable conclusions, the relationships between variables must be explored carefully to test the proposed model. The following pages
explain the data analysis plan employed. First, some preliminary analyses must be done before any analysis may be conducted. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) must be performed to ensure that the uncertainty scale can represent the three types of uncertainty (referent, relational and appraisal) suggested by Miller and Jablin (1991). In addition, because both the visual identification scale and the verbal identification scale have potential problems with validity and reliability (and were therefore both employed to minimize any methodological issues), a comparison of these two types of scales needs to be performed using a Pearson correlation test to see if these two scales are positively related to each other. This step provides further information on which type of scale should be used for this study and for further analysis or whether both scales should be combined together to gain a more precise measure of identification. The subsequent analysis regarding identification should necessarily follow the results of this comparison.

**Primary Data Analysis Plan**

Research question 1(a) asked which new media tool organizational members use and (b) with what frequency. This question asked for very general information regarding new media usage, thus, a simple frequency test of calculating the means of usage reported by participants would provide answers. The average score of participants’ answers regarding their general usage (e.g.: hourly basis, or daily basis) of each new media can answer to what frequency each new media were used. In addition, if participants answered they used certain types of new media on a daily basis, they need to report how many hours they use such new media on an average day. The average score of this
answer would provide more detailed information on the frequency with which each new media was used daily.

Research question 1 (c) through 1(e) asked for the patterns of specific new media usage in terms of what are the source of information (c), what are the types of information (d) sought from new media and what information-seeking strategies (e) do individuals rely on new media for. In order to answer these questions, rank order data can be used. Participants ranked their use of each new media based on different sources, different information type and different strategies. Based on averaged rank order scores, preferences of information sources, information types and information seeking strategies should be obtained.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that general new media usage is negatively related to organizational members’ uncertainty level. General new media usage would be calculated by averaging participants’ usage frequency (5=hourly basis, 4=daily basis, 3=weekly basis, 2=monthly basis, and 1=N/A) across all six new media. Members’ uncertainty level would be calculated by averaging the scores of the uncertainty scale. A Pearson correlation test would be performed using these two scores to test the hypothesis.

Research question 1(f) asked do organizational members seek out certain new media to address certain uncertainty types. To answer this question, means of the scores from items that represent each type of uncertainty (referent, relational and appraisal) would be calculated respectively. Each new media usage frequency would be calculated by obtaining means. Then a Pearson correlation of each new media usage (six new
Research question 2 asked do individuals in two cultures use different new media to seek information differently in terms of (a) sources, and (b) information type. In order to answer this question, first of all, the data set would be separated into Chinese sample and the U.S. sample. Then, the rank order data would be used again. Participants’ ranking of their preferences on sources from each new media, and preferred information type from each new media would be average. Based on the averaged rank order scores, preferences of different new media for sources and information type would be obtained.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that frequency of new media use is positively related to both local and global identification. The score of the frequency of new media use would be obtained by averaging individuals’ answers across six new media usage frequencies. Local and global identification scores would be calculated based on the results from comparison of two forms of identification scales. Then, the scores of averaged general new media usage, local identification, and global identification would be used to perform a Pearson correlation test to see if there is any significant relationship existing among these variables.

Research question 3 asked do certain types of new media channels lead to local level versus global level identification. To answer this question, a Pearson correlation test would be performed. The scores of each new media usage would be calculated by averaging individuals’ report on how often (e.g.: hourly basis, daily basis) they use each new media. The scores of local and global identification would be calculated based on the
comparison of two forms of scales. Then, these eight variables (six new media usage, local identification and global identification) would be entered into a Pearson correlation to test if any significant relationship exists.

Hypothesis 3(a) and 3(b) predicted that individuals from China and the U.S. would report different levels of local and global identification. Since Cheney (1983a) suggests that individuals’ age, length of employment and organizational size can influence both local and global identification, there is good reason for controlling these variables. Therefore, ANCOVA would be used to test these two hypotheses. A test of the assumptions of ANCOVA would be performed first to examine if these three covariates are equivalent across groups. Then, the ANCOVA test would be performed. Local identification and global identification would be entered as dependent variables respectively, age and organization size would be entered as covariates, and where respondents come from (China v.s. the U.S.) would be entered as fixed variables.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the relationship between information-seeking frequency and identifications is mediated by individuals’ uncertainty level. In order to test this mediating model, four conditions need to be met: (a) significant correlations between dependent (global and local identification) variables and independent variable (new media usage); (b) significant correlation between independent variable (new media usage) and mediating variable (uncertainty); (c) significant correlation between independent variable (new media usage) and dependent variable (global and local identification) after controlling mediating variable (uncertainty); and (d) significant correlation between mediating variable (uncertainty) and dependent variable (global and
local identification) after independent variable (new media usage) is controlled (Warner, 2008). New media usage score would be calculated by averaging individuals reported usage frequency across all six new media. Local and global identification score would be calculated based on the analysis of comparison of visual and verbal scales, and uncertainty score would be calculated by averaging individuals’ reported scores on uncertainty scale. Then, Pearson correlations would be performed to test if the first two conditions (significant relationships between identification, general new media usage, and general new media usage, uncertainty) can be met and a hierarchical regression would be performed to test if the third and forth conditions can be met (and significant relationships still exist after controlling for mediating variables and independent variable).

This chapter has outlined the data collection process, measurements of each variable, demographic information from the sample, and the plan of data analysis. The next chapter presents the specific results of each research question and hypothesis, respectively.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents information about preliminary and primary analyses of data. Preliminary analyses consisted of a) exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the uncertainty scale to confirm whether the three-dimension scale of uncertainty actually measured three types of uncertainty, as well as b) a check on the results of the verbal and graphic identification scales using a Pearson correlation to provide information on their validity. Primary analyses present results of research questions and hypotheses posed in the previous chapter.

**Preliminary Analysis to Clear Up Variable Measurement**

Before the hypotheses and research questions can be explored through primary data analysis, some preliminary data analysis must be done to demonstrate the functionality of the scales implemented in the survey design. In this section, two preliminary analyses are explained: the first investigates (through factor analysis) how respondents reported on various forms of uncertainty and the second compares results from two different scales measuring the same variable (identification).

**Uncertainty Factors**

The Uncertainty scale used was constructed from Teboul’s (1994) 3-factor typology (referent, appraisal, and relational uncertainty) and lacks evidence for reliability and validity from previous studies. An EFA was performed to explore whether the scale presented the three theoretically hypothesized factors. Criteria for the EFA included accepting factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 and factor coefficients with at least a .60 primary loading with no secondary loading greater than .40 (Allen, Titsworth, &
Hunt, 2009). The result of the EFA showed a four-factor solution instead of the three-factor scale suggested in chapter three based on the eigenvalues. However, according to the 60/40 loading criteria, only four items were left: “(5) I am not sure about others’ evaluation of my job performance,” “(6) I am not sure about my level of competence,” “(8) I am not sure if I am appearing successful in my job,” “(9) I am not sure who to turn for help/support;” and these four items all loaded to one factor. Below, table 1 provides the detailed factor loading results of all 12 items.

Table 1

*Factor Loadings for Uncertainty Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tasks I should do</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My job duties</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My job description</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Steps of accomplishing job</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.41</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Others evaluation of job performance</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My level of competency</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Confident in my skills</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Appearing successful or not</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Whom to ask for help</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Fit in or not</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Belong to work place</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continue)

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. How others feel about me</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bolded items were used to measure Interactional Uncertainty

The remaining four items indicated a one-factor scale of uncertainty rather than the three factors suggested in Chapter Three. Among these four items, three of them (item 5, 6, 8) were from the appraisal cluster of the original scale, and one of them (item 9) was from the relational cluster of the original scale. Appraisal and relational uncertainties have the common nature of interaction. Therefore, these 4 items were combined under a new title of “interactional uncertainty.” For all subsequent analyses, this interactional uncertainty scale (with an acceptable reliability of .74) was used which consists of four items that serve to replace the original 12-item, three-factor uncertainty scale.

**Measuring Identification: A Comparison of Verbal and Graphic Scales**

To measure identification (both local and global identification), two forms of scales – one graphic and the other verbal – were used in the questionnaire. As, explained in the previous chapter, the graphic scale has less evidence of validity (Shamir & Kark, 2004) and reliability while the verbal scale has strong evidence (Miller et al., 2000). A comparison of these two scales was made to decide which scale should be used for analysis in the present study. Scores were averaged across two 12-item verbal identification scales, one measuring global (organizational) identification and the other measuring local (workgroup) identification. Scores from the verbal local and global
scales, along with scores from the graphic measures of local and global identification, were reasonably normally distributed, and were entered into a Pearson-correlation test to compare the relationship between verbal and graphic identification scales. See table 2 for correlation matrix.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Verbal global identification scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Verbal local identification scale</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Graphic global identification scale</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Graphic local identification scale</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.75**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **p < .01.

The correlation matrix showed a strong positive correlation between verbal local (workgroup) identification and graphic local identification (r = .62, p < .01). However, there was no significant correlation between verbal global (organizational) identification and graphic global identification (r = .03, p = .50). This result indicates that verbal and graphic organizational identification scales may not measure the same property. A decision must therefore be made here regarding which scale to use for subsequent analyses. Considering previous evidence for using verbal and graphic scales (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Miller, et al., 2000; Riordan & Weatherly), the verbal scale has stronger
evidence of reliability and validity (Miller et al., 2000). All subsequent analyses would rely on the verbal measure of identification: two 12-item scales adapted to measure global as well as local organizational identification. Both verbal global (organizational) identification and local (workgroup) identification had high reliability of .96 for current study.

**Primary Analysis of Data**

Primary analyses reported in the following pages describe the quantitative results in response to this project’s hypotheses and research questions (proposed in the previous chapter). Results here are grouped into four topic-specific sections: information-seeking and uncertainty, cross-cultural information-seeking behaviors, identification levels across culture, and finally testing a proposed model.

**Information-seeking and Uncertainty**

Research question 1(a) asked which new media tools individuals use to seek information. Research question 2(b) asked with what frequency each type of new media is used. Participants were asked to rate the frequency of using different new media for work-related information using a 1-5 scale where 1 means N/A, 2 means monthly basis, 3 means weekly basis, 4 means daily basis, and 5 means hourly basis. Across the 563 participants responding to this question, descriptive analyses indicate that all of the new media in question were used for information-seeking: Internet ($M=3.91$, $SD=1.11$), email ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.16$), and intranet ($M=3.42$, $SD=1.38$) were most often used by participants, followed by online chatting tools ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.58$), personal social media ($M=2.99$, $SD=1.43$), and organization social media ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.36$).
Participants were also requested to report the specific amount of time they spent on each type of new medium used on a daily basis. The numbers of participants that reported using each new media on a daily basis and the means of use (in hours) on a typical day are reported below: Internet \((n=384)\) with the daily usage of 3.13 hours, email \((n=370)\) with daily usage of 2.83 hours, Intranet \((n=286)\) with daily usage of 2.53 hours, personal social media \((n=250)\) with daily usage of 2.29 hours, organization social media \((n=175)\) with daily usage of 1.93 hours, and online chatting tools \((n=266)\) with daily usage of 3.44 hours. Because not all the participants reported their daily use of new media and one participant could only reported using certain new media types instead of using all six new media on daily basis. These means of daily usage hours were not accumulative. See Table 3 for detailed information on frequencies of new media use.

Table 3

*Frequencies of New Media Daily Use*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New media type</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational social media</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In sum, organizational workers tend to rely on all of the new media options identified herein (email, intranet, social media, etc.) for information-seeking on a regular basis. In fact, many employees spend upwards of 2-3 hours daily on such new media channels.

Research questions 1(c) through (e) ask about patterns of usage across all six types of new media. Participants were asked to rank order their new media usage for various information sources, information types and information-seeking strategies. Research question 1(c) asks about the primary sources of information sought through new media. Respondents were asked to rank order each type of six new media from 1 to 6 (1 means highest frequency and 6 mean lowest frequency) considering each source they seek information from. Each new medium had a score by averaging the rank order it received from respondents for each sources. According to this score, the averaged rank order results were obtained. Email was the most popular media choice for communication across four of the five sources: Supervisors ($M=2.07$), coworkers ($M=2.29$), subordinates ($M=2.31$) and family members ($M=2.48$) are all the preferred sources of email correspondence. Moreover, respondents sought information through Intranet for supervisors ($M=2.89$), subordinates ($M=2.76$) and family members ($M=2.48$). Internet was often used for information-seeking from supervisors ($M=3.32$), coworkers ($M=3.30$), and subordinates ($M=3.13$). Organization social media were used when individuals want information from supervisors ($M=3.64$) and friends ($M=3.15$). Personal social media were used to seek information from friends ($M=2.62$) and family ($M=2.56$). Online chatting
tools were mainly used for information from coworkers ($M=3.06$), subordinates ($M=3.05$) and families ($M=2.86$).

Research question 1(d) asked whether certain new media are used for certain types of information (referent, appraisal, relational). Results indicate that in order to seek referent information, email ($M=2.20$) was used most often, followed by intranet ($M=2.87$), organization social media ($M=3.07$), online chatting tools ($M=3.17$), Internet ($M=3.32$), and personal social media ($M=3.38$). In order to seek appraisal information, email ($M=2.53$) was also reported as most often used, followed by online chatting tools ($M=2.86$), intranet ($M=3.08$) organization social media ($M=3.29$), personal social media ($M=3.13$) and Internet ($M=3.43$). In order to seek relational information, email ($M=2.42$) was selected as the most frequently used new media again, followed by intranet ($M=2.93$), organization social media ($M=3.09$), Online chatting tools ($M=3.24$), personal social media ($M=3.36$) and Internet ($M=3.41$). See table 4 for the matrix of new media rank order usage for different types of information.
Table 4

*Rank Order of New Media Use for Different Types of Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New media Type</th>
<th>Referent information</th>
<th>Relational information</th>
<th>Appraisal information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants rank ordered all six forms of new media from 1 to 6 with 1 means highest frequency and 6 means lowest frequency.
Research question 1(e) asks about the types of information-seeking strategies (passive, active, interactive) that individuals rely on new media for. Rank order results indicate that email and intranet are relied on for all three strategy types. Internet and organization social media are mainly relied on for passive information gathering. Personal social media are relied on for more interactive and active strategies. Finally, online chatting tools were mainly used for interactive and active strategies as well. See table 5 for a summary of new media rank ordered usage for different information-seeking strategies.
### Table 5

*Rank Order of New Media Use for Different Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New media type</th>
<th>Passive strategy</th>
<th>Active strategy</th>
<th>Interactive strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants rank ordered all six forms of new media from 1 to 6 with 1 means highest frequency and 6 means lowest frequency.
In sum, email was the most often used new medium for individuals in the work setting. It was used to seek information from five sources, used for seeking all three kinds of information and were used for all three different information-seeking strategies. All the rest of the new media were also relied on to different degrees in terms for different sources, different information type and different strategies.

Research question 1(f) asked whether organizational members seek out certain new media in response to certain uncertainty types. The preliminary analysis indicated that the scale actually only measured one uncertainty type, interactional uncertainty. Therefore, a Pearson Correlation test was performed to test relationships between different new media usage frequency and interactional uncertainty. The result showed that email use \( r = -0.14, p < 0.01 \) and intranet use \( r = -0.09, p < 0.05 \) reduce organizational members’ interactional uncertainty, while online chatting tools use \( r = 0.21, p < 0.01 \) actually increases this type of uncertainty. Other new media options did not have any significant relationships with interactional uncertainty. See table 6 for a correlation matrix.
Table 6

Zero-Order Correlations for New Media Use and Uncertainty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New media type</th>
<th>Interactive uncertainty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01.

Three new media usages were significantly related to respondents’ interactional uncertainty level (email, intranet and online chatting tools). However, they associated with the uncertainty level in different directions in the way that the first two were negatively related and the latter is positively related. The positive relationship between online chatting tools and uncertainty level was somehow surprising. The possible reason for such relationship could be the unofficial nature of this new medium. As a result, the communication through this media could be high quantity but with poor quality, which made participants even more confused about their organizations.

H1 predicted that the frequency of general new media use is negatively related to organizational members’ uncertainty level. New media general use is calculated by averaging the general use frequency scores of all six new media options provided because
not all new media were reported being used on a daily basis (Waldeck et al., 2004) and if using hours, part of the information would be missing, which could be hazardous to the result. Because the uncertainty scale only provided information for interactional uncertainty, interactional uncertainty was used in this test as another variable. A Pearson correlation was performed to test the hypothesis. The result indicated that general new media usage had no significant relationship with individuals’ interactional uncertainty level ($r=.00, p=.95$)

After gaining more knowledge about general information-seeking behaviors related to new media options, we now turn to a more cross-cultural perspective in exploring whether respondents from China and the US report cultural distinctions in such new media usage at work.

**Cross-Cultural Information-seeking**

Research question 2 asked whether individuals in two different cultures (China vs. U.S.) use different information-seeking strategies in terms of source, information type and channel selection. Results indicate differences among Chinese and American participants’ new media choices for seeking information from supervisors, coworkers, subordinates, family and friends.

Based on averaged rank order, when seeking information from supervisors, Chinese participants’ top three choices are online chatting tools ($M=2.66$), intranet ($M=2.67$), and organization social media ($M=2.76$), while American participants’ top three choices were email ($M=1.46$), intranet ($M=3.10$) and Internet ($M=3.28$). When seeking information from coworkers, Chinese participants’ top three choices are online
chatting tools ($M=2.16$), intranet ($M=2.70$), and organization social media ($M=2.76$), while American participants’ top three choices are email ($M=1.70$), intranet ($M=3.09$), and Internet ($M=3.30$). When seeking information from subordinates, Chinese participants’ top three choices are online chatting tools ($M=2.26$), intranet ($M=2.35$), and email ($M=2.68$), while American participants’ top three choices are email ($M=1.93$), Internet ($M=3.24$), and intranet ($M=3.27$). When seeking information from friends, Chinese participants’ top three choices are online chatting tools ($M=2.09$), organization social media ($M=2.32$), and intranet ($M=2.56$), while American participants’ top three choices are personal social media ($M=2.41$), email ($M=2.49$), and Internet ($M=3.20$). Finally, when seeking information from families, Chinese participants’ top three choices are online chatting tools ($M=2.24$), organization social media ($M=2.60$) and email ($M=2.68$), while American participants’ top three choices are email ($M=2.29$), personal social media ($M=2.59$), and Internet ($M=3.30$). See Table 7 for specific information regarding the rank order of new media preference on information source across two cultures.
Table 7

*Rank Order of New Media Preferences for Different Sources Cross Cultures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New media type</th>
<th>Supervisors</th>
<th>Coworkers</th>
<th>Subordinates</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>2.79 /1.46</td>
<td>3.01 /1.70</td>
<td>2.68 /1.93</td>
<td>2.71 /2.29</td>
<td>3.23 /2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>2.67 /3.10</td>
<td>2.70 /3.09</td>
<td>2.35 /3.27</td>
<td>2.45 /4.22</td>
<td>2.56 /4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3.38 /3.28</td>
<td>3.31 /3.30</td>
<td>3.03 /3.24</td>
<td>2.77 /3.30</td>
<td>3.11 /3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
<td>3.25 /4.07</td>
<td>3.12 /3.52</td>
<td>2.90 /3.78</td>
<td>2.53 /2.59</td>
<td>2.86 /2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational social media</td>
<td>2.76 /4.15</td>
<td>2.76 /3.97</td>
<td>2.60 /3.96</td>
<td>2.29 /4.41</td>
<td>2.32 /4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>2.66 /4.47</td>
<td>2.16 /4.27</td>
<td>2.26 /4.32</td>
<td>2.24 /3.75</td>
<td>2.09 /3.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants rank ordered all six forms of new media from 1 to 6 with 1 means highest frequency and 6 means lowest frequency. Bold numbers represent data from Chinese sample and un-bold numbers represent data from the U.S. sample.
Taken together, across various information sources and communication partners, Chinese employees prefer chatting tools while their American counterparts prefer e-mail. This is an interesting finding that may suggest a preference for synchronous communication (chatting) over asynchronous messaging (email) in China. Another possible explanation deals with degree of formality—since e-mail in organizational contexts may be a more formal channel of communication preferred in American work settings.

In addition to cross-cultural differences in new media choice given the information source, differences also existed in how new media are selected according to different types of information sought. See table 8 for specific information regarding the rank order of new media preference on information type across two cultures.
Table 8

*Rank Order of New Media Preferences for Different Information Types Cross Cultures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New media type</th>
<th>Referent information</th>
<th>Relational information</th>
<th>Appraisal information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>2.90 /1.61</td>
<td>3.45 /1.81</td>
<td>3.05 /1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>2.50 /3.25</td>
<td>2.81 /3.36</td>
<td>2.63 /3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3.13 /3.28</td>
<td>3.35 /3.51</td>
<td>3.33 /3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
<td>2.91 /3.93</td>
<td>2.74 /3.58</td>
<td>2.92 /3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media</td>
<td>2.41 /3.88</td>
<td>2.64 /4.08</td>
<td>2.41 /3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>2.54 /4.00</td>
<td>2.18 /3.82</td>
<td>2.59 /4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants rank ordered all six forms of new media from 1 to 6 with 1 means highest frequency and 6 means lowest frequency.

Bold numbers represent data from Chinese sample and un-bold numbers represent data from the U.S. sample.
To seek referent information, Chinese participants’ prefer organization social media ($M=2.41$), online chatting tools ($M=2.54$), and intranet ($M=2.50$); while American participants’ top three choices are email ($M=1.61$), intranet ($M=3.25$), and Internet ($M=3.28$). To seek appraisal information, Chinese participants’ top three choices are organization social media ($M=2.41$), online chatting tools ($M=2.59$), and intranet ($M=2.63$); while American participants’ top three choices are email ($M=1.86$), intranet ($M=3.25$) and Internet ($M=3.50$). To seek relational information, Chinese participants’ top three choices are online chatting tools ($M=2.81$), organization social media ($M=2.64$), and personal social media ($M=2.74$); while American participants’ top three choices are email ($M=1.81$), intranet ($M=3.36$) and personal social media ($M=3.58$).

Again, across different information, Chinese participants reported heavily relied on online chatting tools and the U.S. participants favored email much more, This interesting finding merits attentions and the possible reasons for such different were discussed in the next chapter.

**Local and Global Identification across Cultures**

The frequency of new media usage is proposed, in H2, to be positively related to both local and global identifications. Two hierarchical regressions were performed to test this hypothesis. General new media usage was entered as independent variable, then, demographic information of age, length of employment, and organizational size were entered as the first block of variable, so they can be statistically controlled. Finally, local/global identification were entered as dependent variables respectively. Both of the hierarchical regressions produced significant models of global identification $F (4,$
385)=3.29, \( p<.05 \), \( R^2=.03 \); and local identification \( F(4, 385)=3.46, p<.01 \), \( R^2=.04 \).

However, new media usage contributed nonsignificant changes to these models: global identification (\( \Delta F(1, 385)=1.78, \beta=.07, p>.05 \)) and local identification (\( \Delta F(1, 385)=2.78, \beta=.08, p>.05 \)). Therefore, H2 was not supported, and new media usage cannot predict levels of global or local identification. See table 9 for a summary of both regression models:
Table 9

*General New Media Use as Predictor of Local and Global Identification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global Identification Regression Model</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Demographic information</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>3.78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Size</td>
<td></td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of employment</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Predictor</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Media Use</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Local Identification Regression Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Demographic information</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>3.67*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization Size</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>$\Delta F$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of employment</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Predictor</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Media Use</td>
<td></td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *$p$<.05, **$p$<.01.*
Research question 3 asked whether certain new media channels lead to local versus global levels of identification. Pearson-correlation results indicate that the use of email ($r=-.23$, $p<.01$) and online chatting tools ($r=.28$, $p<.01$) are significantly associated with global identification. The use of email ($r=.15$, $p<.01$), intranet ($r=.15$, $p<.01$), organization social media ($r=.09$, $p<.05$), Internet ($r=.10$, $p<.05$) and online chatting tools ($r=-.09$, $p<.05$) are significantly associated with local identification. See table 10 for a correlation matrix.
Table 10

Zero-Order Correlations for Specific New Media Use, Local Identification and Global Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</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>1. Local identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Global identification</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Email</td>
<td></td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intranet</td>
<td></td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal social media</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organization social media</td>
<td></td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Online chatting tools</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01.
Email, online chatting tools, personal social media, intranet and Internet associated with different levels (global v.s. local) identifications. Interestingly, although email and online chatting tools were reported as most heavily used new media, they actually did not enhance the both identification level simultaneously. This result definitely merits caution. One possible reason could be the quality of the information through these new media, which would be elaborated on next chapter.

H3(a) and H3(b) predict that Chinese organizational members have higher levels of global (organizational) identification and lower local (workgroup) identification than their American counterparts. Because Cheney (1983a) suggested that individuals’ age, length of employment and organization size all influence their identification level, these three variables are considered to be covariates in this analysis. In order to test the assumption of ANCOVA that covariates, in this case, age, organization size and length of employment, should not be significantly different across group, a series of t-tests were performed. As indicated in Chapter Three, the U.S. sample and Chinese sample are significantly different in age and organization size, so these two variables are not tested here and this condition of homogeneity has not been met. T-test results of length of employment indicate no significant difference across Chinese ($M=4.78$, $SD=6.21$) and U.S. participants ($M=6.10$, $SD=7.82$), $t(399.65) = 1.89, p = .06$. As a result, part of the assumption of ANCOVA is violated and this violation should be recognized when running the ANCOVA test.

H3(a) predicts that Chinese organizational members have higher levels of global (organizational) identification. An ANCOVA was conducted across Chinese and
American samples. Age, length of employment and organization size were entered as covariates in this model. The result indicates a significant difference in the levels of global (organizational) identification between the Chinese ($M=3.37$) and American respondents ($M=2.33$); $F(1, 390)=148.78, p<.001$. The strength of the association between national culture and global (organizational) identification was $\eta^2=.28$ when organization size, employment length and age were statistically controlled. This result suggests that culture does have an effect on global (organizational) identification level. Hypothesis 3(a) is supported, suggesting that after controlling for participants’ age, length of employment and the organization size, organizational members in China tend to have higher levels of global identification than their American counterparts.

H3(b) proposes that Americans have higher levels of local (workgroup/work unit) identification than Chinese employees, because Americans focus on group collectivism (or the formal boundaries of group membership) as opposed to the relational emphasis of group participation in China. An ANCOVA was conducted to compare local (workgroup/work unit) identification across the American and Chinese samples. Age, length of employment, and organization size were entered as covariates in this model. The result indicates a significant difference between local identification levels for Chinese ($M=3.43$) and American employees ($M=3.78$); $F(1, 390)=17.16, p<.001$. The strength of the association between national culture and local (workgroup/work unit) identification was $\eta^2=.04$ when organization size, length of employment and age were statistically controlled. This result again demonstrates the important influence that culture
has on identification, this time framing the importance of workgroup/work unit identification in group-collectivistic populations.

**Model Proposed**

H4 proposes that the relationship between information-seeking frequency and identification is mediated by individuals’ uncertainty level. In order to test a mediated model, four conditions need to be met: (a) significant correlations between dependent (identification level) variables and independent variable (new media usage); (b) significant correlation between independent variable (new media usage) and mediating variable (interactional uncertainty); (c) significant correlation between independent variable (new media usage) and dependent variable (identification level) after controlling mediating variable (interactional uncertainty); and (d) significant correlation between mediating variable (international uncertainty) and dependent variable (identification level) after independent variable (new media usage) is controlled (Warner, 2008).

In order to test this model, a Pearson correlation test was performed by entering the independent variable (new media usage), mediating variable (uncertainty level) and dependent variables (local and global identification). See table 11 for a correlation matrix. The result indicates that new media usage is significantly associated with local (workgroup/work unit) identification \( (r=0.10, p<0.05) \) but not significantly related to global (organizational) identification \( (r=0.04, p>0.05) \). However, result from H2 suggested that when other variables were statistically controlled, general new media usage did not contribute to the change of either identification levels. Therefore, the significant Person correlation between new media usage and local identification could be the results of other
confounding variables such as ages, length of employment or organization size. In addition, interactional uncertainty and new media usage was not significantly correlated with each other ($r = -.00$, $p > .05$). The first two conditions of (a) significant correlations between dependent variable and independent variable and (b) significant correlation between independent variable and mediating variable were not met. Therefore, the mediated model was not established. Interactional uncertainty did not mediate the relationship between new media usage or local identification or global identification. H4 was not supported and the model was not established.

Table 11

*Zero-Order Correlations for New Media Use, Uncertainty, Local Identification and Global Identification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New media use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uncertainty</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Local identification</td>
<td>0.10*</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Global identification</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *$p<.05$, **$p<.01$. 

However, previous results indicated that some specific new media use had significant impact on interactional uncertainty, local identification and global
identification. Since the overall new media usage model was not established, treating specific new media separately may yield significant results. Moreover, previous results indicated that Chinese and the U.S. participants’ experience of using new media in work setting were different. Separating the Chinese sample and the U.S. sample is also necessary. Thus, a series of analyses treating specific new media usage as a dependent variable was done with the Chinese sample and the U.S. sample separately. First of all, a series Pearson Correlation analyses were run among the variables of specific new media usage (email, intranet, Internet, personal social media, organization social media and online chatting tools), local identification, global identification, and interactional uncertainty to test if the first two conditions of a mediating model can be met. The results indicated that for the Chinese sample, organizational social media usage was significantly related to global identification ($r=.18, p<.01$), local identification($r=.18, p<.01$) and interactional uncertainty ($r=-.18, p<.01$), Intranet usage was significantly related to global identification ($r=.16, p<.01$) and interactional uncertainty ($r=-.13, p<.05$). See table 12 for a correlation matrix of all variables for the Chinese sample. Intranet usage and organization social media usage were kept as independent variables for future testing.
Table 12

*Chinese Sample Zero-Order Correlations of Specific New Media Use, Interactional Uncertainty, Local Identification and Global Identification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal social media</td>
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<td>.16**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chatting tools</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International uncertainty</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local identification</td>
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<td>.12</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global identification</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>.84**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01.
However, for the U.S. sample, the results indicated that two conditions were not met for all the correlations. That is to say, there was no single new media that had both significant correlations with identification (local or global) and interactional uncertainty. Therefore, the whole U.S. sample was excluded from further testing. See table 13 for a correlation matrix of all variables for the U.S. sample.
Table 13

*U.S. Sample Zero-Order Correlations of Specific New Media Use, Interactional Uncertainty, Local Identification and Global Identification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intranet</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.29**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Organization social media</td>
<td></td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Online chatting tools</td>
<td></td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. International uncertainty</td>
<td></td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Local identification</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Global identification</td>
<td></td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01.
A series of hierarchical analyses were then ran to test whether the third and fourth conditions could be met when using intranet and organization social media usage as independent variables, local identification and global identification as dependent variables and interactional uncertainty as the mediating variable in the Chinese sample. First, a hierarchical regression using organization social media usage as the independent variable, local identification as dependent variable and interactional uncertainty as control variable was performed. The result indicated that organization social media usage was significantly correlated to local identification when interactional uncertainty was statistically controlled ($\Delta R^2=.02, \Delta F(1, 243)=4.47, p<.05$). The third condition was met. Next, another hierarchical regression using interactional uncertainty as an independent variable, local identification as dependent variable and organization social media as control variable was ran. The result indicated that when organization social media usage was controlled, interactional uncertainty and local identification was significantly related ($\Delta R^2=.09, \Delta F(1, 243)=23.80, p<.01$). Condition four was met suggesting a mediating model among organization social media usage, local identification and interactional uncertainty was established. Please see table 14 for a summary of both regression models.
Table 14
Regression Model of Organization Social Media Use, Local Identification and Interactional Uncertainty in Chinese Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Control variable:</th>
<th>Step 2: Predictor:</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Control variable:</td>
<td>Organization social media use</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
<td>Organization social media use</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p*<.05, **p*<.01.
The same procedure was taken to test if the mediating model of Intranet/organizational social media usage, global identification, and interactional uncertainty could be established. The result indicated that the mediating model of intranet use, global identification, and interactional uncertainty was established since organization social media was significantly related to global identification after interactional uncertainty was statistically controlled ($\Delta R^2=.01$, $\Delta F(1, 284)=4.67$, $p<.05$) and interactional uncertainty was significantly related to global identification when organization social media usage was statistically controlled ($\Delta R^2=.10$, $\Delta F(1, 284)=32.98$, $p<.01$). Please see table 15 for a summary of both regression models.
Table 15

*Regression Model of Intranet Use, Global Identification and Interactional Uncertainty in Chinese Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactional Uncertainty as control variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta F )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Control variable:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
<td>-0.33*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Predictor:</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>0.01*</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet use</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization social media use as control variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Control variable:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01.
The mediating model of intranet usage, global identification and interactional uncertainty was also established. When interactional uncertainty was statistically controlled, intranet usage and global identification ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(1, 284) = 4.51, p < .05$) was significantly correlated. And when intranet usage was statistically controlled, interactional uncertainty and global identification was significantly correlated ($\Delta R^2 = .11$, $\Delta F(1, 284) = 34.88, p < .01$). Please see table 16 for a summary of both regression models.
Table 16

*Regression Model of Organization Social Media, Global Identification and Interactional Uncertainty In Chinese Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactional uncertainty as control variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Control variable:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>38.52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Predictor:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.01*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization social media use as control variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Control variable:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet use</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>9.62**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Predictor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional uncertainty</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>32.98**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *$p$<.05, **$p$<.01.
Summary of Results

In sum, the original model proposed in Chapter Three was not supported. However, when treating each form of new media separately and splitting the data to isolate the Chinese sample and the U.S. sample, some significant findings result from the Chinese sample. Three mediating models of new media usage, interactional uncertainty, and global and local identification were established. In addition, through the comparison of different new media usage patterns and comparison of different identification levels across culture, social context’s influence on organizational members’ socialization process was revealed. The overall finding of the current study can be summarized in the following figure 3, where showing the dynamics of new media usage as a socialization effort in China. The topic model in the following figure indicated that the more often individuals use organization social media the less interactional uncertainty they would experience, and thus, be more connected to their immediate work unit. The middle model indicated that organization social media also works in the same way to global identification that they more often individuals use this new media, the less interactional uncertainty they would experience and thus, they feel more connected to the overall organizations. At last, the bottom model demonstrated the dynamic among intranet use, interactional uncertainty and global identification: the more individuals use intranet to look for socialization related information, the less interactional uncertainty individuals would experience and thus, they would feel more connected to the overall organization.
Figure 3. Using new media in socialization process in China

This chapter explained the statistical procedures used to answer research questions and test hypotheses and suggested models, and the results found. The next chapter discusses
the results detailed above, specifically addressing them in light of theoretical and practical implications for organizations.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter outlines the findings of this study and discusses them within the context of prior theories and research. Theoretical and practical implications are offered. The limitations of the study and areas of future research are also outlined.

Discussion of Findings

Previous research has shown that successful organizational socialization is related to several positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations, including low turnover rate (Morrison, 1993a), high job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993a), and smoother job transitions (Kramer, 1994; Kramer et al., 1995). However, until now scholarship has lacked knowledge about this process in the digital age: Very little is known about new media’s role in socialization. The current study fills this gap by exploring individuals’ usage of six different new media (email, intranet, Internet, online chatting tools, personal social media, and organizational social media) for information-seeking in the socialization process. In addition, most socialization research is based on western populations, and how this process works in other cultures remains vague at best. The current study recruited participants from both China and the U.S. to understand similarities and differences cross-culturally. Finally, existing empirical studies have produced conflicting results for information-seeking behaviors and outcomes of socialization. Thus, the current study argues that organizational identification should be treated as a more communication-related outcome of information-seeking behaviors happening in members’ ongoing socialization process and suggests that members’ uncertainty levels should be treated as a mediating variable in this relationship.

105
In sum, this study sought to advance scholastic understanding of new media’s role in the socialization process by (a) providing information on organizational members’ new media usage patterns and testing their relationship with uncertainty level; (b) understanding cross-cultural information-seeking behaviors in various organizations situated in two different countries; (c) testing local and global organizational identification across cultures; and (d) testing a model of new media use, uncertainty level and identification levels in organizations. This chapter discusses the results of these four goals accordingly. Some theoretical and practical implications are revealed as well. Finally, this chapter ends with limitations and suggestions for future research.

**Information-seeking and Uncertainty**

Research question 1 asked (a) which new media tools individuals use to seek information and (b) with what frequencies. Results indicate that in general, using new media to seek information is a prevalent phenomenon in today’s working environment, which confirms that this is the time to update current knowledge regarding organizational communication, as knowledge should be as contemporaneous as possible (Dewey, 1927; James, 1991). All six forms of new media were reported being used for gathering work-related information. Internet was reported being used almost on a daily basis ($M=3.91$). Email ($M=3.80$), intranet ($M=3.42$) and online chatting tools ($M=3.31$) were reported being used between a weekly basis and a daily basis (i.e., several times per week). Personal social media ($M=2.99$) was reported being used nearly on a weekly basis and the least used new media tool, organization social media ($M=2.43$), was reported being used between a weekly basis and monthly basis (i.e., several times per month). In this way, we
see general usage patterns across organizational members, who tend to prefer using Internet, email, intranet, and online chatting tools over social media tools for their information-seeking at work.

Individuals who reported using each of the six media also indicated the specific amount of time they spent on each new medium daily. Statistics suggest that about 2-3 hours daily (or about one fourth of individuals’ working time daily) were spent using new media for information-seeking. This result clearly indicates that new media are becoming a part of the contemporary working environment (Rainie & Wellman, 2012) and merits scholars’ attention when examining organizational communication in this era.

In general, the abovementioned result echoes the call from Jablin (2001), Waldeck and colleagues (2004), and Waldeck and Myers (2008) to integrate new media in socialization studies. These scholars may find valuable empirical evidence of new media’s role in the socialization process in the current study. Specifically, these findings expand the existing list of new media used in organizations provided by D’Urso and Pierce (2009) in two ways. First, D’Urso and Pierce (2009) listed the most popular new media tools used in top Fortune 500 companies, but did not include data on usage frequencies. The findings in this study help us to better understand how often each technology tends to be used in the workplace. Second, their list was published in 2009 before the ubiquitous popularity of online social media. The findings here suggest that social media is an important technology for organizational members’ information-seeking habits.
Although individuals generally use all six types of new media for information-seeking purposes at work, results suggest that several new media types are preferred over others. The Internet, intranet and emails were used more often than the other three new media tools (online chatting tools, personal social media and organizational social media) for general information-seeking purposes. One potential explanation is that Internet, intranet and email technology are all considered to be more formal forms of communication at work compared to chatting tools and social media tools. Therefore, individuals may feel that using them to seek information is more appropriate at work. This trend indicates that although using new media is prevalent, each form of new media is used differently across different populations, reinforcing the philosophies of pluralism and social constructionism argued here. The following section, elaborates on individuals’ differing preferences and uses for certain new media, further articulating the plurality of media use behavior.

Research questions 1(c) through (e) asked about patterns of usage across all six types of new media. More specifically, question 1(c) sought to better understand whether organizational members prefer using certain media to communicate with particular sources, resulting in one consistent response: Email was reported as the most popular “universal” medium to talk to all sources except for friends. However, responses did illustrate a trend of preferences in pairing new media selection with targeted sources. Specifically, individuals preferred to seek information from colleagues (supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates) through professional new media specific to the organization (e.g.: intranet, organizational social media) and to seek information from families and
friends through personal social media and online chatting tools used by the general public. Generally, we see a matching of more formal, professional tools to communicate with professional peers, while non-professional contacts (such as friends and family) are sought through more social, personal new media forms.

This matching of technology with information sources echoes with the studies on sources of socialization information (Berger & Kellermann, 1994; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowwski, 1992). It confirms that although these source types were suggested over twenty years ago, they are still prevalent in the modern working environment. The result further expands these above studies by adding another dimension, new media, to the information-seeking behaviors through different sources. The result indicates that in the modern working environment, individuals not only have choices as to whom they should turn to for information, but also through which media they can reach or prefer to reach certain kinds of sources.

Research question 1(d) asked if individuals had preferences for using certain new media depending on the information type sought (referent, relational and appraisal). Again, results indicate that email is the preferred new media tool used for information-seeking for all three information types; users prefer e-mail regardless of the type of information sought or the source of that information. Beyond their use of email, individuals did suggest a preference for matching other new media tools to certain types of information sought. For referent and appraisal information, more formal/professional new media (intranet and organizational social media) were preferred. The reason for such preferences could be that referent and appraisal information are rather fixed: They deal
with the parameters of enacting one’s job and the evaluation of such work, respectively. Therefore, information about job requirements and their evaluation are fixed in that they relate to one’s role in the organization, and may be delineated in formal organizational documents such as handbooks and employee workbooks. This trend could be linked to earlier studies on socialization by Miller (1996), and Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992), which pointed out that written materials such as memos and training manuals, are good for newcomers to look at for fixed information such as job descriptions. Therefore, these findings related to referent and appraisal information actually confirmed the findings of Miller (1996) and Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) in a more modern working environment. That is, the formal types of documents that socialization scholars have addressed in previous research have now moved to digital form, so clearly organizational members will seek out such information on more digital media such as intranet sites.

For relational information, online chatting tools, intranet and personal social media were preferred. Relational information centers on one’s interaction with peers, and is sought out through more interactive new media tools that allow for synchronous communication with immediate feedback. Additionally, relational aspects of work life are not necessarily part of members’ formal task-related responsibilities, and therefore rely on more informal channels of communication.

These findings provides partial empirical evidence for the proposition suggested by Flanagin and Waldeck, 2004: The use of new media by newcomers for socialization-related information is a function of information type (), since the participants in this study included both newcomers and veterans. The result indicates that individuals seek
different information types from different new media, however, it is not the unique phenomena of newcomers. Thus, more detailed investigation of newcomers’ new media usage would provide more solid evidence for the proposition.

Finally, research question 1(e) asked if certain new media were preferred for certain information-seeking strategies (active, passive, and interactive). Responses suggest that organizational members primarily rely on email and intranet tools for all three strategies. When using other new media options, however, organizational members do discriminate somewhat between communication tools depending on the strategy employed. The Internet and organizational social media tools were largely selected when seeking information passively. These technologies allow organizational members to observe rather than necessarily interact with others at work. More interactive and active strategies rely on personal social media and online chatting tools that provide synchronous communication with others. In face-to-face communication settings, when individuals consider which strategies to use to obtain information, social cost (Huston & Burgress, 1979), power dynamics (Deetz & Mumby, 1990) and availability of the sources (Waldeck et al., 2004) tend to be the general considerations. However, when acknowledging the reliance on new media for socialization purposes in this era, another consideration emerges: The new media’s nature and capacity. This consideration and the traditional concerns could jointly influence individuals’ choices of new media in the socialization process. For example, if one feels there is a huge social cost of asking things directly, that person may choose a passive strategy of observing to obtain information in a face-to-face environment. In today’s organizational environment, digital forms of
interaction are also available, allowing members to rely on intranet, social media and Internet tools that allow one to observe for information. In this way, our social world becomes more and more complex, as we have more and more opportunities (and tools) that allow us to seek information in contextually appropriate ways. It is worthy to note that organizational members sampled responded with identical new media choices for both active and interactive strategies, suggesting that they may perceive these two strategies very similarly. Let us return, briefly, to the definitions of these two strategies to unravel this lack of distinction among respondents. Earlier, we defined active strategies as obtaining information by asking others (i.e., third parties) while interactive strategies involve obtaining information from the target source directly (Berger, 1979). Both interactive and active strategies share the common feature of asking others for information. It seems, therefore, that organizational members use certain new media tools for any type of interaction – despite who the target of such communication may be. We may therefore collapse these two strategies into one: An (inter)active strategy. Taken together, we see matching of new media tools with specific information-seeking strategies, whereby specific tools are sought to accomplish goals relevant to observation (i.e., reading) versus interaction (i.e., talking, writing).

In synthesizing the results discussed above, I found beyond the contribution to traditional socialization literature which focused on face-to-face communication (e.g.: Bernardi, 2006; Comer, 1991; Miller & Jablin, 1991), the above results also have some implications that defeat technology determinism and argue for a socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) of new media. A common theme across new media
usage for information-seeking is observed: Despite the fact that a social-constructionist perspective has been proposed herein, the nature of the new media is critical in assessments of function and usage. When examining each of the six new media, they can be grouped into different categories according to different attributes they possess. On the formality continuum, email, intranet, and organizational social media can be considered to be highly formal while personal social media and online chatting tools are rather informal tools, with Internet falling in the middle. And the degree of formality attributed to the medium corresponds to the degree of formality of the source sought. On a continuum of social interactivity, email, online chatting tools, and personal social media can provide more instantaneous and immediate feedback often via synchronous communication as compared to the Internet or organizational social media, with intranet falling in the middle. And the degree of interactivity characterizing each medium largely determines the type of information-seeking strategy sought: From passive strategies (with the lowest need for interaction) to interactive strategies (necessitating tools that allow for feedback and synchrony).

In this way, a “matching” process is in place, which helps organizational members choose new media tools based on their goals and situated contexts. The perceived characteristics of new media technologies influence individuals’ selection and use of such tools to seek information at work. For example, when the communication is formal, like seeking referent information from supervisors, formal/professional new media tools are usually selected. When seeking more interactional information, like relational information, personal new media tend to be chosen.
Adaptive Structuration Theory (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) provides theoretical support for the above results. This theory states that both the “structural features” and the “spirit” (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994, p. 126) of a technology should be taken into consideration when examining its role in the organization. Structural features refer to the rules, resources or capabilities of the technology and spirit refers to the underlying values and goals of such technology. The abovementioned new media choices made by organizational members are assessed in light of the various purposes and functions of the communication at hand. As organizational members seek information in their work settings, considerations about strategy and information type, as well as information source sought are inherently determinations made about structural features and spirit of the various new media options at their disposal. Therefore, it is not necessarily assumed here that deterministic features of new media technologies render them more or less appropriate for various situations at work. Rather, it could be possible that both the structural features and the spirit of the technology are socially constructed in an organizational context to warrant certain applications and “best fit” scenarios. The social construction of technology can more prominently be seen in cross-cultural comparisons of new media use, discussed in the following pages. Here, a brief preview of one notable example demonstrates that the “spirit” of technology is not in the technology itself, but is created in its users. In China, for example, organizational members rely on online chatting tools for information-seeking while at work, in contrast to their American counterparts who prefer email. This difference cannot be explained by any fixed technological features embedded in these new media tools, but rather is the result of
different society’s perceptions of “spirit” and therefore appropriateness at work. This study, therefore, acknowledges the delicate balance between the structural features and spirit of new media tools, as organizational members negotiate the uses and functions of these technologies at work.

After understanding the general usage patterns of new media tools, the study went on to explore the relationship between new media use and uncertainty level at work. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the frequency of new media usage is negatively related to individuals’ overall uncertainty levels, since new media use increases information acquisition, which would therefore lower a member’s level of uncertainty. Since the measurement of uncertainty only contained significant factor loadings for interactional uncertainty level (in EFA analysis) this uncertainty type was treated as a variable for this hypothesis instead of the general uncertainty level bearing three types. The general new media usage frequency, which is the average score of all six new media usage frequencies, had no significant relationship with interactional uncertainty level. This actually is very supervising considering that organizational scholars advocated that reducing uncertainty is the primary goal of communication in organizations (Farace, et al., 1978). However, when examining each form of new media usage separately, results indicate that use of email, intranet, and online chatting tools influenced one’s uncertainty level. Flanagin and Waldeck’s (2004) work lend an explanation to the above result in the way that they argued that in a socialization context, media selection and use result in sufficient information that reduce individuals’ uncertainty level. Therefore, use of the new media is one aspect but the selection of them is another aspect. By treating all six...
new media as one single variable, the test missed the selection part, which could possibly be the cause of the nonsignificant relationship. However, when treating each new media separately, the use and selection dimension could be recognized and, thus, produced some interesting result. Among these three new media, email ($r = -.14, p < .001$) and intranet ($r = -.09, p < .05$) usage negatively influenced the interactional uncertainty level for organizational members, but online chatting tool usage ($r = .21, p < .001$) positively influence that uncertainty. The fact that online chatting tools actually increase uncertainty is counter-intuitive, and one possible explanation could come from the structural features and spirit (Poole & DeSanctis, 1990) of this new medium. Online chatting tools, while providing synchronous feedback, may be considered less reliable than e-mail and intranet tools. When chatting with a peer online, responses are immediate and brief, which can be perceived to be less thoughtful and less detailed/informative. On the other hand, email and intranet tools provide information at a slower rate (which can increase the quality and reliability of the information by allowing its author to carefully and thoughtfully craft the message) and with higher volume capacity (since the author of the information can “speak” in developed paragraphs rather than brief sentences or even words). Intranet documents provide reliability since they uniformly inform the organizational population. Perhaps intranet and email tools also provide more valid information, since the lack of complete synchronicity provides opportunities for thoughtful reflection and articulation of ideas. It is for these reasons that intranet and emailing tools may reduce uncertainty, while online chatting tools increase that uncertainty.
Two other interesting observations are worthy to note. First, among the six new media investigated, only the use of three (email, intranet and online chatting tools) had significant influence on uncertainty level. These three new media were also reported as being frequently used tools at work in response to research question 1(a) and (b) noted above. It might very well be the case, therefore, that organizational members’ frequency of use necessarily shapes their perception of information-gathering utility and uncertainty resulting from such efforts. The more one uses a new media tool, the greater that tool’s effects are on the user’s perceived uncertainty level.

On the other hand, there is an exception. The most frequently used new media, Internet, had no significant relationship with uncertainty level. This nonsignificant relationship seems surprising, especially given the trend noted above. But when comparing the Internet with intranet, email and online chatting tools, one difference is obvious: The latter three all have more capacity for synchronous communication, which allows interaction and feedback to a greater extent than the Internet does. Organizational members report using the Internet more during passive information-gathering, suggesting that these users are observing or reading documents that offer general, public information rather than engaging in opportunities to confirm the validity of information with another or gather more specific, private information unique to that user’s specialized needs. Although organizational members spend the greatest amount of time on the Internet, as compared with other new media tools, the quality of information gathered is more general rather than uniquely specific and tailored to that individual’s unique needs. More
interactive tools, although used less often, can provide more tailored and distinct information to members at work, as well as information that is more private or subjective. Flanagin and Waldeck (2004) would be interested in the above discussion on new media usage and uncertainty in the socialization process in the way the it adds empirical evidence (to their otherwise theoretical piece) about the relationship between specific new media usage and uncertainty level for their theoretical piece on new media in socialization.

In sum, the predictions of Hypothesis 1 were only partially met, indicating that the frequency of new media usage matters. However, frequency is not the only critical factor. The nature of the information itself (i.e., general versus specific, public versus private, etc.) also matters. If the communication medium cannot provide enough feedback or interaction with the information source, even when individuals spend a fairly sizable amount of time using the medium each day, it cannot reduce uncertainty. New media tools that do seem to reduce uncertainty for organizational members tend to be more interactional in nature, but more importantly, provide thoughtful feedback via media such as email rather than instantaneous—and perhaps less thoughtful and therefore reliable—media such as online chatting tools which actually increase uncertainty for workers.

Until now, a great deal of discussion has focused on the “nature” of each new medium available to organizational members, and the various uses and parameters of these divergent tools. However, let us not lose sight of the social construction of these new media as communication tools. According to Adaptive Structuration Theory (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994), the spirit of new media (as it pertains to perceptions of
information types sought, appropriate information sources targeted, uncertainty reduction, etc.) may be socially constructed in organizations. To address this perspective, and further depart from a purely deterministic view, next we turn to a comparison of new media use across two cultures: The U.S. and China.

**Cross-Cultural Information-seeking Patterns**

Until now, media use has been uniformly discussed in light of responses given by organizational members in two nations, taken together as one collective sample. However, considering that incommensurability is the inherent feature of human societies (Craig, 2006), the call from pragmatism is to acknowledge inherent differences. Thus, the meta-theoretical impetus for this study, a pragmatic approach, demands a deeper investigation into the different patterns of new media use in two culturally divergent societies. The following pages reveal some differences in media use across two cultures, and illuminate the role of culture in shaping perceptions of the spirit of technology in light of structural features that “dictate” usage patterns given the types of information types and sources sought.

Research question 2(a) asks whether Chinese and American organizational members differ in terms of media choices given specified information sources sought. The most notable difference between the cross-cultural samples is that Chinese respondents rely heavily on online chatting tools when communicating with every type of information source whereas American respondents rely heavily on email for every source type excluding friends. The reason for such distinct usage patterns across cultures could be the result of Adaptive Structuration and social influence. As argued in Chapter One,
different cultures define the use of the same technology in very different ways (e.g., cameras and trains) and dictate the spirit of technology in ways unique to their respective culture.

First, these results help up to better understand the socialization process in China, which is a non-western country that has otherwise been relying on western theories and scholarship. Although some previous studies on socialization (Gardner, 2010; Golde, 2005; Jian, 2012; Morita, 2009) touched the topic of socialization in different cultures, none of the studies have directly compared the socialization process on the national culture level. This part of the result adds empirical data of culture’s influence into the traditional socialization literature and also provides evidence for Kramer’s (2010) claim that situated in large social context, organizational socialization is influenced by national culture since different cultures presents divergent preferences on new media for socialization-related information.

When examining the shared connotations of email and online chatting tools in China versus the U.S., a significant difference is found. In China, individuals using online chatting tools most typically use a free chatting program called QQ, which has gained popularity in mainland China (Liu & Yao, 2010). Nearly every netizen has at least one QQ account, which allows them to add friends to their chat list and talk to them at any time. The ubiquitous QQ program is widely accepted as a common communication tool used by individuals to connect with friends, families, as well as co-workers (Chiu, 2009; Chu & Choi, 2010). In fact, organizations in China allow and even encourage the use of
this program for work purposes. Thus, such an online chatting tool is actually perceived as an appropriate new medium to use for work-related communication in China.

In the U.S., online chatting tools such as MSN Messenger and Skype have also gained popularity. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, however, most American users of such online chatting programs solely use them for networking with personal connections (Baym, 2002) instead of work-related communication. Therefore, using online chatting tools during work or for work purposes may be perceived as unprofessional and informal in many cases. This could explain why online chatting tools were ranked lower (ranked as the 4th most frequently used new media) in the U.S. sample and ranked higher (ranked as 2nd most often used new media) in the Chinese sample. Rather than relying on online chatting tools (which are perceived as more social/informal in American culture), American employees prefer the use of email as a more formal medium to be used for work-related information. In fact, D’Urso and Pierce (2009) reveal, through survey data, that emails are among the most often used technologies in fortune 500 companies in the U.S.

Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1979) helps us understand the divergent use of new media tools across disparate cultures. Giddens (1979) suggests that rules and norms, and the behaviors governed by these rules and norms, are mutually influenced. Because behavior is symbiotically affected by and also affects rules and norms unique to a social system, we can come to understand differences in terms of how individuals across cultures ascribe unique meanings (e.g., the structural features and spirit) and therefore uses to various new media tools. Unique meanings, situated in culture, relate to unique
norms and rules that consequently inform the ways that individuals communicate with one another and their environment, and reify those rules, norms, and meanings. Although we may generally address the “trends” of new media usage in organizational settings, it is critical to always remember and understand the social context’s influence on specific new media preferences. Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984), with its emphasis on unique context, helps us to appreciate differences across culture and alerts us to the dangers of transplanting Western theories (with rules and norms embedded into their fabric) to Eastern contexts.

In addition to divergent cross-cultural media choices generally, we also find variance in new media choice depending on the information type sought, which expands the proposition of Flanagin and Waldeck (2004) to a cross-cultural level. Chinese participants heavily rely on online chatting tools for all three information types (referent, appraisal, and relational) while their U.S. counterparts rely on email for all three types. Another interesting difference is seen in the prevalent use of organizational social media among Chinese participants for all three information types. Organizational social media usually serve the function of maintaining communication between an organization and its public rather than its internal members. However, results indicate that in China this particular medium may also serve to inform the employees of the organization itself. To date, there is limited empirical research about the use of social media as an internal communication tool for organizational members; therefore, the functions and uses of such a tool for Chinese employees remains unclear and worth exploring.
Local and Global Identification across Cultures

Socialization is inherently an information-seeking process, and results indicate that new media tools are increasingly used in the workplace for work-related information. In the following pages, local and global identification is explored across both samples combined, to illuminate general trends related to media use and identification. Next, cultural distinctions are highlighted, demonstrating unique differences in the socialization process in American versus Chinese contexts.

As argued previously, identification is one potential outcome of such socialization-related behaviors. Hypothesis 2 predicted that new media usage (in general) is positively related to both local and global identification, in that communication tools can increase solidarity amongst local peers and the organization at large. Results, however, suggest no significant impact on either local or global identification in both American and Chinese samples. One potential explanation is that not all six forms of new media, taken together, are effective in the socialization process. The results of research questions 1(a) and 1(b) demonstrate the true plurality of new media use, while also providing evidence that emails, intranet, Internet and online chatting tools were most frequently used for information-seeking purposes. Additionally, the fact that only email and intranet tools had significantly positive impacts on reducing uncertainty, while online chatting tools had a negative impact, could also confound the relationship between general new media usage and identification.

In light of this, further exploration of each new media tool and its relationship to local and global identification was used to parse out the relationship between tools and
outcomes. Results indicate that use of online chatting tools positively impacts global identification, while use of emails has a negative impact. Interestingly, email, intranet, organization social media, and Internet all served as positive predictors of local identification while online chatting tools negatively affected local identification.

These results yield two interesting points. First, it seems that in general, new media are more effective in facilitating the local socialization process, which impact local identification levels, since five out of the six new media options were significantly correlated to this variable. Second, the role of email and online chatting tools in the socialization process is noteworthy in the way that email is positively related to local identification but negatively related to global identification while online chatting tools conversely are positively related to global identification but negatively related to local identification. The opposing roles that these two forms of new media play in local and global identification cannot be explained with our current understanding of technology use and a more detailed probe into the content of information communicated through these two forms of new media and users’ perceptions of their roles and functions (along with benefits and detriments) may provide a possible explanation for this intriguing result. But this result raises caution when considering the implementation of either of these two forms of new media into organizational communication: While each fortifies one type of identification, it does so at the expense of the other.

New media use can therefore influence one’s level of identification at work. Culture may also play an integral role in this variance as well. Hypothesis 3(a) predicted that Chinese employees would report higher levels of global identification while 3(b)
predicted Americans would report higher local identification levels. These hypotheses were both supported. Results revealed that Chinese organizational members have higher levels of global identification and their counterparts from the U.S. have higher levels of local identification. This further supports the argument that culture (with its unique rules and norms) situates behavior and experience: Feelings of connectedness as organizational members were significantly different across the two cultures’ samples, demonstrating that affiliation of local versus global membership is situated in culture. Previous studies have examined identification in different national cultures (e.g., Gibbs, 2009; Maneerat, Hale, & Singhal, 2005), yet the influence of culture is most accurately investigated in cross-cultural contexts where two distinctly different cultures are compared. Additionally, these previous investigations measured identification as one univariate concept, and here we clearly see a distinction between local and global identification levels. Had we not explored local identification, we may have inadvertently overlooked the fact that American workers do connect with their organization, but typically with near-peers and workgroups as opposed to the entire organization at large.

Individuals from the collectivistic/relational collectivistic culture (China) reported having higher levels of global (organizational) identification while individuals from the individualistic/group collectivistic culture (U.S.) reported higher levels of local (workgroup/work unit) identification. The contrasting regions of identification across these national cultural boundaries confirm the importance of social context, and the situatedness within national culture specifically, as important considerations in organizational identification research. Scott and colleagues’ (1998) theoretical work
would be interested in this finding in the way that it provides empirical evidence that identifications are situated in specific context and change of the social environment changes the salience of different identification. Although some studies have addressed the situated identifications (May, 1995; Kuhn & Nelson, 2002; Russo, 1998; Scott & Fontenot, 1999; Scott & Stephens, 2009) across different social contexts in terms of group meetings, different departments and virtual teams, the current study is the first one to expand the scope of social environment into national culture level and successfully provide evidence that this context also influences identifications.

Moreover, results reported here indicate that individuals do hold multiple identifications (organizational and workgroup identifications), although culture plays a role in highlighting or foregrounding the salient regions of identification within organizations. This role is a bit more complex than previously thought, since both “individualists” and “collectivists” identified strongly with their respective organizations. Therefore, the individualism-collectivism dichotomy should no longer inform our understandings of identification across culture since members of nations typifying both ends of the continuum reported local and global levels of identification. Organizational members in a collectivistic culture (valuing relational collectivism) reported higher levels of global identification while traditionally individualistic members (valuing group collectivism) reported higher levels of local identification. This finding again raises caution of using Hofstede’s typology. As argued by scholars (Oyserman et al., 2002; Lim et al., 2011), although this typology serves the foundation to understand some cultural differences, more in-depth examinations need to be done. The examination of different
identifications here illustrated a good example about how to treat the typology in a more sophisticated way.

Taken together, this dispels the myth that Asians are better team players than Americans. In fact, members of teams in individualistic cultures (according to Hofstede’s country rank) may actually be more cooperative and perform better than people from collectivistic cultures: Collectivists value relationships and harmony, but it is individualists that are more astute to observe and react to group boundaries and their goals. In highlighting the importance of social context from the Structurational Model perspective (Scott et al., 1998), these nuances of organizational identification were brought to the surface. The structuration approach makes it essential to consider the unique positionality of organizational members, situated in interpersonal and group contexts and larger cultural parameters that shape their experience. And this shared experience, according to Adaptive Structuration Theory (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994), symbiotically shapes perceptions of spirit as well as structural features of technology, which inherently results in unique uses and functions of tools in everyday life.

Model Proposed

The ultimate goal of this project was to test a model proposing the relationships between uncertainty, information-seeking, and culture in the organizational socialization process. Unfortunately, the overall proposed model was not established because the first two conditions of a mediated model (Warner, 2008) were not met: (a) significant correlations between dependent variables (general new media use) and independent variables (local and global identification) were not found; and (b) significant correlations
between independent variables (local and global identification) and the mediating variable (uncertainty level) were not found. Although previous empirical research (e.g.: Berger & Kellermann, 1994; Gailliard et al., 2010; Kramer, 1994; Westerman & Tamborini, 2006;) and theoretical work (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004; Kramer, 2010) bolsters the predictions made herein, and suggests that these relationships across variables should yield significant results, interestingly that is not the case. One possible explanation is that the variable of new media usage here only contains the frequency of usage, overall all six tools and overlooked the selection of specific new media (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004) and specific new media properties (DeSanctics & Poole, 1994).

Organizational members do in fact use new media to seek information at work, although the high frequency of usage can also reflect time spent in cyberspace without valuable information being found. The negative correlation between use of online chatting tools and uncertainty level further refutes the argument that frequency alone ensures the reduction of uncertainty, and the accumulation of valuable information. Thus, as a result, general new media usage frequency cannot predict outcomes of socialization such as identification.

A second possible explanation lies in the measurement of variables making up the model. More specifically, the model originally proposed a relationship between general new media usage and identification but did not differentiate between different forms of new media use. According to the results of research question 3, specific new media forms contribute to local or global identification in different ways. For instance, online chatting tools served as a positive predictor of global identification but as a negative predictor of
local identification, while intranet served as a positive predictor of local identification with no significant relationship to global identification. Therefore, treating all six forms of new media usage together as a single variable minimizes the valuable contribution of each medium to the dependent variables (local and global identification). As a result, the correlation cannot be established.

A third possible reason for the failure of the model is that the uncertainty scale did not measure three dimensions of uncertainty as Teboul (1994) suggested. Rather, it only provided information on interactional uncertainty. Because Teboul (1994) suggests that organizational members can experience three distinct types of uncertainty at work (referent, appraisal, and relational), focusing solely on interactional uncertainty neglects the full range of uncertainty types faced in any organization. It may very well be that other forms of uncertainty not covered here (i.e., referent and appraisal) are more predictive of members’ identification levels. Thus, a more reliable and valid uncertainty measurement is needed. Although there have been several studies related to uncertainties in various socialization contexts (Kramer, 1994; Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Ramirez et al., 2002; Teboul, 1994; Westerman & Tamborini, 2006), up to date, no uncertainty measurement of high validity and reliability has been established. This could be the result of different typologies of uncertainty in the literature (Miller, 1996; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Teboul, 1994). In order to solve this part of the puzzle in the socialization literature, a more systematic development of studies on uncertainty is necessary.

However, three alternative models were established in the Chinese sample, reinforcing the need to treat each form of new media separately (Flanagin & Waldeck,
2004) rather than treating new media as one general variable. Even though new media in general is a trend and scholars often lump all technologies in the Digital Age as new media, plurality exists in different forms of new media. Research must treat each one of them as a unique technology, which possesses unique features and have unique social functions.

More specifically, the three models established provide some interesting information and questions for socialization. First of all, the role of organization social media is worth noting. As most of the current studies argued, organization social media mainly target external members of the organization to serve the goals of maintaining public relations and promoting organizations (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). However, these models indicate that this type of new media is also used by internal members to serve the function of facilitating both levels of identification, which may be a point overlooked by many scholars and organizational practitioners. Therefore, reexamination of each new media’s functions may be necessary to understand their real functions in organizational settings. Second, while organization social media contributes to both levels of identification, intranet only contributes to global identification. This raises two interesting questions that need further investigation: (a) while intranet was considered as a more formal internal communication tool compared to social media, why is it not as useful as social media in terms of facilitating identification? And (b) why does intranet only facilitate global identification and not local identification? What unique information obtained from this media can influence global identification but not local identification? At last, we need to remember these models are only established in China.
but not in the U.S., so what could be the possible reason for the failure of the models in the U.S. beyond some methodological concerns?

In general, the findings of the proposed model also serve as a reminder that social context makes a difference: The updated models proposed here demonstrate that culture situates action and different models are needed for different cultural contexts.

Although the proposed model did not help to explain the experiences of organizational members, the following pages detail some conclusions and practical implications for the results found herein. This chapter also concludes with limitations of this study, and how these limitations may inform future research on organizational identification, uncertainty levels, and new media use.

**Methodological Implications**

The current study yielded some methodological implications. First of all, there are some implications regarding the measurements that have been used. The first implication is about the identification scale. Organizational identification has been extensively studied in the communication field recently (e.g.: Fay & Kline, 2012; Frandsen, 2012; Stephens & Dailey, 2012; Williams & Connaughton, 2012). However, in contrast to these abundant and fruitful empirical studies, the existing identification scales usually suffer from lack of validity (Fontenot & Scott, 2003; Miller et al., 2000). Ten years have passed and there is still no highly reliable and valid identification scale that is communication-centered. Cheney’s (1982b) 25-item scale is the most traditional and often used one (Fontenot & Scott, 2003; Miller et al., 2000), however it receives substantial critiques at the same time. As argued in Chapter 3, this scale suffers from validity issues and has
multiple dimensions (Miller et al., 2000). In order to overcome this problem, several other scales have been developed, such as Miller and colleague’s (2000) 12-item scale and Mael and Ashforth’s (1992) scale, but none of these scales have been widely accepted as legitimate ones to measure the construct of identification because of either the validity or reliability issue.

Since verbal scales of identification have so many inherent problems, this study employed a visual scale to measure this construct from another perspective in the hopes that it would at least partially solve the dilemma of existing verbal scales since the one-item visual scale is more parsimonious in nature. However, the results of the scales’ correlations indicated that when measuring global identification, the visual scale was not correlated to the verbal scale at all, although when measuring local identification, the visual scale and verbal scales had high correlation ($r=.63$, $p<.01$). This result did not provide evidence for the argument that the visual scale may work better than Miller’s (2000) 12-item scale. Since literature suggested that this verbal scale has higher reliability and validity, this scale works better for the current study. Hence, the effort of trying to find a better measurement of identification failed in this study and there is still a need to further develop the identification scale to facilitate the studies related to topics of organizational identification.

The one contribution that this study made to explorations of organizational identification, while we remain without a valid measurement tool, is the notion that identification exists at various levels of the organization. Therefore, as scholars develop
a more effective tool to measure identification, they should also consider the levels of organizational affiliation that may be incorporated into such a scale.

The second implication of measurement is on the uncertainty scale. In socialization literature, uncertainty has also been studied extensively in the ways that scholars suggest different typologies of uncertainty that employees, especially newcomers, may experience related to task, role, culture and group (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), uncertainties of job competency, role negotiation, organization acculturation, supervisor familiarity, involvement and recognition (Myers & Oetzel, 2003). Kramer (2010) concluded there are 7 typologies of uncertainty in the socialization literature. However, most uncertainty studies do not capture all 7 of these types (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1995; Teboul, 1994;) and most of them are qualitative (Teboul, 1994; Gallagher & Sias, 2009) in nature. As a result, a comprehensive scale measuring individuals’ uncertainty levels and types is lacking.

The uncertainty scale used in the current study was developed from works of Miller and Jablin (1991) and Teboul (1994) and lacks the information of validity and reliability. Therefore, an EFA was performed to confirm that this scale measured three-dimensions as proposed. However, instead of loading on three factors EFA results suggested only four items should be kept, which measured a new factor (interactional uncertainty) rather than the originally proposed three (referent, relational, and appraisal). This is one unique contribution that the current study made to the topic of uncertainty in the socialization literature. A new type of uncertainty may be added to Kramer’s (2010) discussion of uncertainty types relating to interaction – a highly communication-based
form of uncertainty. For instance, one item measuring this type states “I am not sure about others’ evaluation of my job performance”, so the key point of this uncertainty is individuals’ understanding the others’ evaluation of them, which essentially requires communication in this process. This communicative uncertainty type may be best understood through the lens of social comparison theory. Therefore, the interactional uncertainty type at least provides directions and foundations for future development of the uncertainty scale in the socialization context.

**Theoretical Implications**

Since scholars first acknowledged the importance of the socialization process in organizational life, research in this area has flourished (e.g.: Ashford & Black, 1996; Jablin, 2001; Miller, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Waldeck et al, 2004). Research has revealed different aspects of the socialization process such as the sources of socialization-related information (Miller, 1996; Morrison, 1993b; Teboul, 1994), strategies for information-seeking (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996), and outcomes of socialization (Ashford & Black, 1996; Holder, 1996; Kramer, 1994). Unfortunately, current scholarship on this topic lacks knowledge on the role of new media (Jablin, 2001; Waldeck & Myers, 2008), which is an emerging form of communication in all areas of human communication (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). The current study examined the frequency of new media use in the socialization process, the preferences of different forms of new media for specific types of information, sources and strategies, and the differences of new media preferences across two divergent national cultures. The theoretical model proposed and tested in this study attempted to establish the relationship
among new media usage, uncertainty level and identification, during members’ ongoing socialization at work.

One of the unique contributions of the current study is that it examined the role of new media in the encounter (Feldman, 1981; Jablin, 2001) and metamorphosis (Jablin, 1982; 2001) stages of socialization. Among the existing socialization literature that integrates new media, most of them examine the anticipatory (Jablin, 2001) stage of the socialization process. These studies focused on how individuals use social media to find out organization-related information before they enter an organization (e.g.: Maureen & Michael, 2010; Vorvoreanu, 2009). The current study is one of the few (Gailliard, 2010) that examine how employees use new media while they are already in the organization. The current study contributes to socialization literature in the way that it demonstrates the complex role of new media in this process (some can facilitate identification and some hinder). It addresses a very contemporary and popular dilemma facing organizations today: should organizations allow employees to use new media during the workday? By revealing the relationship between use of new media, employee uncertainty and identification, as outcomes of socialization, this study reveals that organizations should generally allow the use of new media tools in the work setting, although a more sophisticated understanding of each new media type is required.

More specifically, in an attempt to update pre-existing socialization research, the goal of this study aimed to fill the new media gap in our understanding of the socialization process in this digital era by providing general information about how and why employees use new tools available to them in their various organizational settings.
Traditional socialization literature provides a sound foundation for this current study, which serves to extend such literature by: (a) confirming and providing evidence for the prevalent use of new media in the socialization process; (b) providing evidence for national culture’s influence on the socialization process; and (c) suggesting multiple levels of socialization.

First, the current study establishes the important role of new media in the socialization process. Conventionally, face-to-face interactions and traditional media are the two primary forms of communication explored in the socialization process. Although scholars have realized that new media is emerging in the organizational setting (Jablin, 2001; Waldeck et al., 2004; Waldeck, et al., 2008), until now, only one study (Waldeck et al., 2004) has directly asked or examined the use of new media for socialization purposes. The findings reported in the previous chapters, detailing participants’ use of new media for information-seeking indicates that nearly all participants have had experience using new media tools for socialization purposes and at most use these tools approximately one third of the workday (assuming an 8 hour day). This alone indicates the need to expand and update our knowledge on socialization processes involving new media.

Moreover, the current study examined different forms of new media to their unique role in and contribution to the organizational socialization process. Accord to D’Urso and Pierce’s (2009) ranking and definition of new media (Culnan & Markus, 1987), the six most frequently used new media (Internet, intranet, email, organizational social media, personal social media, and online chatting tools) were selected as the focus of this study. Results indicate that email and online chatting tools merit scholars’
attention, since they are both associated with interactional uncertainty, and both local and global identification. Further empirical research must be done to uncover why and how email and online chatting tools enhance or hinder the socialization process for organizational members.

Second, this study confirms the role of national culture in the socialization process. Previous literature has acknowledged that socialization is influenced by national culture (Kramer, 2010). However, very few studies have examined the socialization process in non-Western settings, which results in very limited empirical data entirely neglecting the influence of culture. The current study compared the work experiences of organizational members in China as well as the U.S. to examine the potentially divergent use of new media in the socialization process and the respective outcomes of information-seeking efforts. While the popularity of new media use at work is clearly seen across both cultures, members in China and the U.S. diverge in their media choices. For example, American employees report using the most often at work while online chatting tools were the preferred communication tool in Chinese organizations (of the six explored). This variance in media choice can be the manifestation of cultural influence on the socialization process in the way that email is perceived as a legitimate tool to use in the U.S. while online chatting tools are perceived as a more appropriate tool in China. In this way, we clearly see the social construction of technology, and the unique “spirit” that is culturally negotiated and defined.

In addition to media preferences, individuals from the two different cultures also expressed different socialization outcomes manifesting as unique ways that they identify
with their respective organizations. Chinese employees seem to identify more strongly with the organizational at large (global identification) while American employees identify more strongly with their near-peers and workgroups (local identification). Culture, therefore, not only plays a role in terms of media choice, but also influences perceptions of affiliation at work. Culture shapes individuals’ feelings of connectedness; and a cross-cultural comparison across a prototypically “collectivistic” and prototypically “individualistic” culture reveals these subtle distinctions. The contrasting regions of identification across these national cultural boundaries confirm the importance of social context and the departure from a purely deterministic view of media use and effects.

Social Information Process Theory (SIP: Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) provides a theoretical explanation for the influence of national culture described above. According to SIP, members assess job-related needs and make sense of expected attitudes through their social context as well as past experiences, rather than orienting to their jobs based on any objective aspects of their work (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). In this way, socialization occurs in response to the social environment, and not necessarily in response to the job itself.

When examining the role of national culture in the socialization process, Hofstede’s typology is the most frequently used framework when delineating social environment (Kramer, 2010). However, the individualism-collectivism dichotomy proposed in this typology only acknowledges the importance of social environment on one end of the continuum. Data gathered here joins the existing body of literature (Oyserman et al., 2002, Lim et al., 2011) challenging the utility and validity of this over-
simplified typology of national culture. Clearly, the social environment is integral to the
everyday experiences of all organizational members – regardless of their individualistic
or collectivistic proclivities. While collectivists did affiliate with the organization as a
whole, individualists affiliated with their near-peers and work groups serving as a
counter-intuitive in light of their more self-serving nature.

Social Information Processing would not find this counter-intuitive, however. From this perspective, all individuals turn to their social environment for information
about their work; yet this study suggests that culture may help an individual determine
the parameters of the appropriate reference group. Thus, a more comprehensive
theoretical foundation is needed, that acknowledges the importance of social context
universally. Along these lines, a reconceptualization of Hofstede’s typology – particularly
the dimension of individualism-collectivism – is necessary to highlight the importance of
one’s social environment.

Borrowing from Lim and colleagues (2011), updating the dimension to varying
degrees of collectivism highlights the way that culture foregrounds certain “social
environments” at the expense of others. Although Eastern cultures tend to epitomize
collectivism, the organizational social environment is demarcated by the boundaries of
the organization at large (i.e., the global environment). In this way, we may specify
relational collectivism at the heart of their interactions at work, emphasizing harmony in
relationships across the entire system. Conversely, Americans tend to epitomize
individualism, which largely neglects social elements by focusing on the self. However,
organizational members in the U.S. do in fact rely on a social environment at work,
demarcated by the boundaries of their respective workgroups and divisions. In this way, they relate more tangibly to near-peers and coworkers (the local environment), rather than foregrounding the organization as a whole. A deeper understanding of socialization is only possible when acknowledging these nuanced elements of every day life, situated in culture that frames our behaviors in subtle and taken-for-granted ways.

The final contribution of this study to the socialization literature is that it provides a more sophisticated understanding of the entire socialization process by suggesting that socialization can have multiple layers as both local and global levels, during the lifespan of an employees’ tenure at work. Although the proposed model was not established, some correlations predicted in the model are still worth notice.

Previous studies have produced conflicting results on information-seeking behaviors as they relate to various outcomes of socialization (e.g.: Ashford & Black, 1996; Kramer, 1994; Morrison, 1993b). The current study proposed that identification is a more appropriate outcome of socialization due to its communicative nature. Moreover, instead of treating identification as a simple entity, the current study proposed a dual focus on local and global identification to develop a more comprehensive view of the outcome of socialization. Results indicate that the use of specific new media was significantly related to local but not global identification, and vice versa. While this finding may lead to many more questions for organizational scholars, it also potentially addresses the conflicting results (e.g.: Ashford & Black, 1996; Kramer, 1994; Morrison, 1993b) previously found in research on socialization outcomes: Research may be oversimplifying the socialization process in treating it as one unilateral entity. It may be
beneficial, in light of the findings outlined here, to differentiate between global socialization to the whole organization and local socialization to a specific work unit. When individuals enter an organization, on one hand, they need to become familiar with the whole organization (understanding its norms and rules, practices and goals, etc.) and simultaneously they must also learn the norms and rules of their respective work units (which may deviate or be in line with the organization-wide culture) (Scott et al., 1998). Previous research has focused solely on socialization outcomes at the organizational level, and neglected the more local processes involved in one’s everyday interactions with colleagues and other near-peers. Therefore, correlations amongst variables may be confounded producing conflicting results. Hence, future studies may develop a more sophisticated understanding of this process and treat global and local socialization separately to provide a more dynamic appreciative for our adaptation to social environments.

**Pragmatic Implications**

Pragmatism serves as the meta-theoretical framework directing this study. The empirical design and results echo this perspective in several ways. First of all, the current study confirms that it is time to update current knowledge on the role of new media in the socialization process. As Dewey (1927) suggested, “inquiry must be as nearly as contemporaneous as possible, otherwise, it is only of antiquarian interest” (p. 179) and James (1991) proposed, “our knowledge is incomplete at present and subject to addition” (p. 74). Knowledge should be constantly renewed; and social changes (such as updates in technological tools available) can serve as opportunities for knowledge-building.
However, only when the change makes meaningful differences in our lives must we take the time to update our inquiries. The amount of time that organizational members report using new media tools in their daily work lives demonstrates that society is undergoing a change in how we communicate. In fact, some new media tools, including email and Internet, were reported being used more than one third of the working day. The results concretely show a change in organizational communication, as members rely less and less on face-to-face communication or telephone and replacing their information-seeking behaviors with new media alternatives. Thus, a new opportunity exists to renew our understanding of the role of various technologies in our daily lives. The current study takes the first step in updating scholastic knowledge by providing empirical evidence to underscore how organizational members use technology, and how these various uses for technology relate to information-seeking behaviors and outcomes.

However, it is important to keep in mind that the changes in our communication routines are not entirely due to deterministic features of the technology itself. Pragmatism, as a philosophy, is the antithesis to technological determinism, which believes that social change is inherently the byproduct of technology. Pragmatism acknowledges human beings’ agency in societies (Giddens, 1986) and acknowledges that human beings have ultimate control over any ensuing change. In the same vein, social constructionism holds the idea that reality is socially constructed and this reality is created in response to the social environment rather than a byproduct of any inherent quality that it possesses in itself (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Therefore, instead of examining the changes that new media bring to the socialization process, this study
examines how individuals in organizations use new media to satisfy their needs. Individuals’ matching of different new media forms for certain informational purposes or to direct at certain target sources indicate that individuals evaluate each form of new media in terms of “structural features” and “spirit” (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) choose a tool depending on social appropriateness and goals determined. In this way, new norms for media use surface, which reflect the pragmatic and social constructivist trajectory of the social system.

Agency is even more salient when comparing individuals’ new media preferences across cultures. New media are the same across any two countries; however, individuals’ preferences diverge across disparate cultures. By exploring cross-cultural use of identical tools, we may further see that new media alone do not change communication; otherwise individuals would have the same new media choices and uses across countries. Here, we see different preferences by individuals from two cultures demonstrating that human beings actively construct the meaning or reality of these new media tools by co-constructing unique social norms and rules that dictate culturally situated use.

By arriving at empirical findings that are socially situated, we also arrive at empirical findings that are more valid. Pragmatism rejects any idea that is not practical, and the situatedness of human behavior in culture is a precursor for any practical implications reaped. Pragmatism is concerned with the problems of pluralism and incommensurability, implying inherent differences that exist across different social entities, which cannot be unified. Pragmatists believe that there is no absolute truth in this
world (Carey, 2005), but that any social entity may embody its own truth. Practices or routines that are acceptable in one culture may not play the same role in another culture.

Therefore pragmatic inquiry should always be situated in context. That is to say social context, explored here as culture, should be treated as a vital component in the inquiry process. Time and space, which are the two manifestations of social context, are two essential parts of such inquiry (Dewey, 1927; 2004; James, 1991). The results of the proposed model perfectly support this point. When cultural influence was abandoned, the model was not supported. However, when considering the cultural influence, that is to say when the Chinese sample and the U.S. sample were treated separately, some significant results emerged. It is worth noting that three alternative models were established in the Chinese sample and no model was established in the U.S. sample, which just echoes the point that knowledge is culturally and socially situated.

In addition, the differences in organizational members’ reporting of local and global identification levees across the two cultures demonstrates that there is no absolute truth in this world (Carey, 2005); culture plays a vital role in the constructions of reality, and this constructions reflects the rules and norms of the governing culture. Although local and global identification levels were both reported in each of the two cultures, they are not treated in the same among Americans (who reported higher levels of local identification) versus Chinese (who reported higher levels of global identification) respondents. This is the direct result of culture’s influence, as many other extraneous variables were controlled for. Societies uniquely foreground levels of identification due to unique cultural facets such as orientations to collectivism. This study uses actual
empirical evidence to support the pragmatic notion that social context should be taken into consideration and it is dangerous to treat all cultures the same and neglect their inherent incommensurability and plurality.

At last, the process of human creation and recreation needs to be recognized. Pragmatism (Dewey, 1927; James, 1991), which is evolved from instrumentalism has emphasized human beings’ ability of creating tools to better live in the environment. In this context, the manifestation of pragmatism is human beings’ creation of tools as new media for better, easier, faster and cheaper communication. The creation of the new tools brings consequences to society and in this context, brings changes to the communication within the socialization process in organizations. Human beings then adapt to such changes and then, doing the creation again, thus, the human society keeps moving forward. The current study has revealed some social phenomena due to the creation of communication tools in the socialization setting. The results of this study provide information on how humans adapt to this changing communication environment such as individuals’ preference and usage patterns for different new media. Hopefully some of the results, such as the established models and correlations, also can provide some information on how to improve the use of tools to facilitate an even better communication experience within the socialization context.

In sum, from a pragmatist point of view, the current study proposes that it is time for an update of current empirical knowledge since new media tools bring an opportunity for social change in the work place. However, human beings have the agency to control the trajectory of change; new media solely provide the opportunity. In addition, social
context is critical in the inquiry process and finally it illustrated the progress of human society with the organizational socialization context from pragmatism perspective of view. The incommensurability and plurality of social collectives should always be acknowledged. Due to the prescriptive focus of pragmatism, the following section detailing practical implications is of utmost importance. The next sections addresses this by focusing on real-world inferences that may result from this study, and help organizational designers and managers learn from the lessons learned here.

**Practical Implications**

Participants of the current study indicated spending a fair amount of time (2-3 hours) using new media daily. In light of these findings, managers and practitioners are encouraged to educate employees on using new media at work.

This study explored the use of six forms of new media, and discovered that not all new media choices positively influence individuals’ uncertainty and identification levels. The most adverse effects result from the use of online chatting tools at work. Online chatting tools were reported as being the most frequently used new media on a daily basis, engulfing almost half of employees’ workdays (3.44 hours daily). However, the more employees report using these online chatting tools, the higher their interaction uncertainty and the lower their local identification. Because chatting online seems to lead to detrimental consequences to the organization, managers may attempt to limit the amount of time spent or the ways in which members engage with such new media tools at work. Tutorial lessons or formal organizational documents may be prepared for educating employees about this particular form of new media. In the same vein, how to educate
employees about proper use of other forms of new media should also be on managers’ agenda.

On the other hand, organizations also should learn how to use new media to maximize their functions as well. One interesting finding of the current study is that individuals also use organizational social media for socialization-related information and this was especially salient in the Chinese sample. Usually, organizational social media are thought to be the external media for stakeholders, customers and the public (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). The purpose of this media is to make connections to the external members of the organizations. The findings of the current study suggest that this form of new media also also has the potential to connect internal members of organizations, since individuals do look for socialization-related information through it to learn about the very organizations they are a part of. Managers may rethink their strategies when it comes to using such new media and consider how to redesign it to maximize its function for both internal and external members. Similarly, this result warns managers to rethink their taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations of all new media tools available to organizational members. A closer review on how internal and external members use new media may help managers to reconceptualize each medium to maximize the functions respectively.

In addition to generic implications for managers and organizational designers, the cross-cultural nature of this study allows us to draw on culturally sensitive prescriptions for organizations. The importance of national culture has been highlighted throughout, notably foregrounding the subtle influence of culture on the lived experience of
individuals. For organizations seeking to expand their business across national boundaries or for organizations that have employees with diverse cultural backgrounds, it is important to take culture into consideration. Although high levels of identification are always desired, it is important to understand that different cultures yield different foci of identification. Thus, to achieve equally high identification levels at both local and global regions may not be possible or even desirable. When international/cross-cultural cooperation is needed, organizations do not need to automatically assume that people from individualistic cultures are bad team players and individuals from collectivistic cultures are better suited for group work. Individuals from different cultures have different strengths when considering their multiple identifications. Individuals with high collectivism may make more contributions to the organization as a whole while individuals with high individualism may make stronger contributions to their workgroup/work units.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

This study is not without limitations and in fact, several limitations indicate directions for future study. First, the uncertainty scale used in this study needs further testing, as it did not yield three factors as predicted. As a result, the uncertainty scale failed to capture the complex nature of the various uncertainty types experienced by individuals during the socialization process. The inaccuracy of the scale could be one of the reasons why the overall model was not significant and why some of the research questions could not be answered (e.g., Do individuals seek information from specific new media to reduce particular types of uncertainty?). Thus, if future studies attempt to further
explore the topic of uncertainty during socialization, a more valid and reliable measurement should be used.

Second, participants in this study from two cultures were not equivalent in many ways including age, organization size, and business sectors. Although some of the unequivalent factors (age, length of employment, organization size) were statistically controlled for more precise result, this controlling cannot remove the fundamental differences between the two samples. In addition, except for these three variables, some other confounding variables are also possible. For instance, different organizations may have different new media use policies, which may directly impact individuals’ new media usage behavior in this study. Different organizational cultures also direct employees’ perceptions of the appropriateness of using new media. Twenty-four percent of the participants who reported demographic information from China were from the information industry, but only 3% of their American counterparts were from the information industry and this difference could directly impact participants’ pattern of new media usage. Having participants from such diverse backgrounds with several confounding factors may be the reason why the overall model is not established. Also these differences raise the caution when interpreting and generalizing the findings of the current study.

One way to solve the problem of unequivalent samples is to dramatically oversample (Candy & Temes, 1992) and then, pick the corresponding samples from the large sample pool. For instance, by comparing new media usage patterns of individuals from different sectors of business across two cultures, the influence of the business
section could be discovered. However, in reality, this method costs a huge amount of resources and may not be practical.

Another limitation due to the unequivalent sample is the ANCOVA test to compare the different levels of identification levels across two cultures. Due to the significant differences of participants’ age and organization size, the assumption of homogeneity was violated. Therefore, although ANCOVA results indicated significant difference in local and global identification across two cultures, the interpretation and generalization of this result should be made with cautious.

At last, using ordinal data to investigate individuals’ new media usage pattern. The reason of using such data is under the consideration of the length of the questionnaire. In order to encourage participants to finish all the items on the questionnaire, the survey was made as short as possible considering there were over 100 items that participants needed to answer. Although as one kind of quantitative data, ordinal data is able to provide “information about the magnitude of differences in terms of the amount of some characteristic” (Warner, 2008, p.9), this kind of data lacks the information of the distance along the ordering. Therefore, based on the results based on ordinal data, it may be clear that which new media was preferred the most, and the least. However, the distance between the most preferred new media and the second preferred new media is unknown. That is to say, for example, results indicated that email was the most often used for seeking referent information and Intranet was reported as the second most often used. But what is unknown is the differences in terms of the usage frequency between email and intranet for referent information. It could be the case that email was used about 2 hours a
day but internet was just used 10 minutes a day. Losing this aspect of information hinders the further understanding of new media usage patterns.

Despite these limitations, the current study is still promising that it provides directions for future research. First of all, more can be done with the existing data base. Several post-hoc analyses could be conducted to investigate different demographics’ influence in the new media usage in the socialization process. As abovementioned, these demographics could be business sectors, educational background, and annual income. More reading needs to be done to guide the rationale of using such demographics as variables. Thus, the understanding of specific new media use in socialization can be more detailed.

With the established interactional uncertainty scale in the current study, future research could further test the validity and reliability of it to validate this scale. Then it can be used to advance existing knowledge of the role of uncertainty in the socialization process.

Since unequal data is one of the major limitations for this study, future research could be more focused on specific data collected from certain contexts instead of collect general data. In this way, it could exclude some possible confounding variables. Case analysis could be employed to investigate new media usage during the socialization within organizations. Future studies could focus on one or several specific organizations to exclude the influential factors including organizational policy, size, and culture to obtain a more precise result.
The current study did not obtain information regarding employees’ perceptions of the quality of the information they obtain from each type of new media. Insightful information on the quality aspect of new media usage may provide answers to why certain new media were preferred for certain sources, information type and strategies, as well as how the same media is perceived across culture. In addition, more detailed information on the content of the information individuals obtain from new media may also provide detailed explanations as to why certain new media forms are related to certain identification levels (global vs. local). Thus, future studies could spend more effort on exploring the quality and content individuals obtain from new media. Some qualitative studies may be especially helpful in obtaining such information. Moreover, focus groups may be a helpful first step in determining perceptions of media use. In the previous sections, some conjectures were made as to users’ perceptions of media tool choices (i.e., formal vs. informal, general vs. specific, synchronous vs. asynchronous, thoughtful vs. hasty, etc.) and how these perceptions may explain some of the findings herein. It may be useful for scholars to begin articulating a scale to determine the structural features and spirit attributed to various new media technologies. With such a scale, cross-cultural distinctions may become more evident and better understood.

Another direction future research can focus on that deviates from new media is the concept of organizational identification. As the methodological implication indicated, there still lacks a highly reliable and valid scale, so an identification scale could be further developed. In addition, as results indicated that the Chinese sample and the U.S. sample reported different levels of local and global identification, further investigation in
each country should parse out both global and local identification in terms of what are people’s perceptions of these concepts and are constructions of these concepts the same across two cultures? At last, the comparison of local and global identification could be expanded to other countries. For example, measuring the levels of local and global identifications in some countries that are at the middle of the continuum of individualism-collectivism. It would be interesting to see how local and global identification being parsed out in such countries. Hence, the idea of identification can be expanded internationally.

**Conclusion**

New media has profoundly influenced every aspect of modern society (Webster, 2002). This study explored just a tip of the iceberg by surveying organizational members’ use of new media in the socialization process. We now have a better sense of individuals’ patterns of new media usage, as well as the relationship among new media usage, uncertainty levels and identification levels. And, yet, for every question answered in this study a plethora of new ones surface, indicating the need for scholars to continue advancing our knowledge about socialization in changing technological and cultural landscapes.

This study provided one small step towards this goal. In integrating national culture as one independent variable, we see the subtle influences of our social environment on our most personal choices and experiences: From the tools that we use to communicate with others to the affiliative feelings that we share with those around us. As argued earlier, new media is symbiotically and simultaneously shaping and shaped by
society (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). As empirical scholars, we must never lose sight of the role of social context in any study.

Very few studies have compared the influence of national culture in empirical research relating to new media usage in the socialization process. A technological determinist may overlook the role of culture in a seemingly non-culturally relevant study. The current study, however, reveals the importance of a cultural lens in any study, since culture shapes our existence, perceptions, behaviors, norms, etc. Even in terms of technology use at work, Chinese versus American employees sampled in this study report subtle differences in their everyday work practices and the unique outcomes of these culturally prescribed ways.

In sum, this study is an exploratory effort to incorporate new media and national culture into our current understanding of the organizational socialization literature. It confirms that new media has already been a widely used communication tool in the work setting across two different cultures. Although both countries use new media, the specific patterns of usage are different (e.g.: Chinese prefer to use online chatting tools and Americans prefer to use email), which confirms the notion that the socialization process is shaped by the social environment. Although the theoretical model was not established, some correlations on new media usage, uncertainty levels and identification levels could enlighten the current knowledge on the outcomes of using new media in the work place. Hopefully, this kind of information also can shed light on regulations about new media in the workplace for managers and policy makers.
REFERENCES


165


APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL AND CONSENT FORM

The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies).

Project Title: A Model to Understand Information Seeking Behaviors as Organizational Socialization: New Media Use, Uncertainty Reduction, Organizational Identification and Culture

Primary Investigator: Ran Ju
Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Mirit Shoham
Department: Communication Studies

Rebecca Cale, AAB, CIP
Office of Research Compliance

Approval Date: 7/13/12
Expiration Date: 7/12/13

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation. Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence. 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.
Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: New Media Use and Organizational Identification

Researchers: Ran Ju

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, you will be asked to participate in this study. You may print a copy of this document to take with you.

EXPLANATION OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships among new media use, organizational identification and employee uncertainty. You will be asked to complete multiple-choice questionnaire about your use of new media, the organization for which you work, and your job experiences. This questionnaire will take you about 30 minutes to complete.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks or discomfort associated with this project. However, you may feel discomfort about answering questions about their workplace. You should take the survey on a home computer or in a place where their employer will not see their answers, even by accident.

Benefits

You will receive no direct benefit from this study. The results of this research will help researchers better understand the organizational communication in online context.
Confidentiality and Records

All data collected for this study will be kept in a password-protected computer file and will not be seen by anyone who is not directly working on the project. 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.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:
Ran Ju
rj285909@ohio.edu

Mirit Shoham
shoham@ohio.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing that
- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
APPENDIX B: ENGLISH VERSION OF THE SURVEY

This research project is being administrated by a doctoral student in the School of Communication Studies, Ohio University. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from participation at any time. All information collected will remain confidential and will not be personally identifiable to you. If you have questions, please contact Ran Ju, 740-590-8297, rj285909@ohio.edu

Survey on Information and Communication Technologies in Organizations

Thank you for agreeing to participate! This survey should only take you a few minutes to complete; however, please read all questions carefully and give careful thought to your responses.

A. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your job.

1. I am unsure what tasks I am supposed to do.

2. I know what duties I should be performing. (reverse coded)

3. I understand what my job description is. (reverse coded)

4. I am not sure about the steps involved in accomplishing my job.

5. I am not sure about others’ evaluation of my job performance.

6. I am not sure about my level of competence.

7. I am confident in my skills. (reverse coded)

8. I am not sure if I am appearing successful in my job.

9. I am not sure whom to turn to for help/support.
10. I am not sure if I “fit in” with others in the work place.

11. I feel like I belong to the social environment of my work place. (reverse coded)

12. I am not sure how others in my workplace feel about me.

B. Please choose the one picture that can best present to what extent you identify with your organization [That is, the extent to which your organization defines you]. The white circle represents you and the grey one represents your organization. In the first rectangle (number 1), they are totally separate and represent a situation in which you do not identify at all with your unit. In the last rectangle (number 7), the circles are totally overlapping and represent a situation in which you totally identify with the unit. Choose out of the 7 rectangles the one that most highly represents the extent to which you identify with your unit.

C. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the organization you work in.
   1. I am proud to be an employee of my company/organization.
2. I talk up my company/organization to my friends as a great company/organization to work for.

3. I really care about the fate of my company/organization.

4. I have warm feelings toward my company/organization as a place to work.

5. I would be willing to spend the rest of my career with my current company/organization.

6. The record of my company/organization is an example of what dedicated people can achieve.

7. I would describe my company/organization as a large “family” in which most members feel a sense of belonging.

8. I am glad I chose to work for this company/organization rather than another company.

9. I feel that my company/organization cares about me.

10. My company/organization’s image in the community represents me well.

11. I find it easy to identify myself with my company/organization.

12. I find that my values and the values of my company/organization are very similar.

**D.** Please indicate in a typical working day, how much time you spend using the following technologies (or N/A if that technology is not available to you) for *work-related information both at work or off work.*
1. ___ hour(s) ____ minutes **Email** (includes individual emails, listserv, and group emails): ___N/A
2. ___ hour(s)____ minutes **Intranet** (the private network that is contained within an enterprise for members to share information, and talk to each other. Intranet may include internal website, local area networks, internal collaboration software and programs, etc.):  
___N/A

3. ___ hour(s)____ minutes **Corporate Social Media** (Company’s Facebook page, twitter, etc.)  
___N/A

4. ___ hour(s)____ minutes **Personal Employee Social Media** (your own personal Facebook page, twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc.)  
___N/A

5. ___ hour(s)____ minutes **Internet** (Other online sources like search engines, Wikis, various information websites, etc.)  
___N/A

6. ___ hour(s)____ minutes **Otheronline chatting tools** (MSN Messenger, Google Chat, Skype, etc.)  
___N/A

**D. Please indicate how often you use the following technologies (or N/A if that technology is not available to you) for work-related information both at work or off work.**

1. **Email** (includes individual emails, listserv, and group emails)  

2. **Intranet** (the private network that is contained within an enterprise for members to share information, and talk to each other. Intranet may include internal website, local area networks, internal collaboration software and programs, etc.):  

3. **Corporate Social Media** (Company’s Facebook page, twitter, etc.)  

4. **Personal Employee Social Media** (your own personal Facebook page, twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc.)  

5. **Internet** (Other online sources like search engines, Wikis, various information websites, etc.)  
6. **Other online chatting tools** (MSN Messenger, Google Chat, Skype, etc.)

E. Please choose the one picture that can best represent to what extent you identify with **people that you work with everyday**. The white circle represents you and the grey one represents your working department. In the first rectangle (number 1), they are totally separate and represent a situation in which you do not identify at all with your unit. In the last rectangle (number 7), the circles are totally overlapping and represent a situation in which you totally identify with the unit. Choose out of the 7 rectangles the one that most highly represents the extent to which you identify with your unit.

![Diagram of overlapping circles representing identification with work unit](image)

F. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the **work unit/work department** you work in.

1. I am proud to be an employee of my work unit/work department.

2. I talk up my work unit/work department to my friends as a great place to work.

3. I really care about the fate of my work unit/work department.
4. I have warm feelings toward my work unit/work department as a place to work.

5. I would be willing to spend the rest of my career with my current work unit/work department.

6. The record of my work unit/work department is an example of what dedicated people can achieve.

7. I would describe my work unit/work department as a large “family” in which most members feel a sense of belonging.

8. I am glad I chose to work for this work unit/work department rather than another.

9. I feel that my work unit/work department cares about me.

10. My work unit/work department image represents me well.

11. I find it easy to identify myself with my work unit/work department.

12. I find that my values and the values of my work unit/work department are very similar.

G. Please rank (1-6) the frequency of your usage of the following new media to obtain work-related information from different media sources. Mark a 1 next to the source you use most and a 6 by the source you use least (or N/A if it does not apply):
   Supervisor: ____ Email, ____ Internet, ____ Intranet, ____ Corporation social media, ____ Personal employee social media, ____ Other online chatting tools
   Co-Worker: ____ Email, ____ Internet, ____ Intranet, ____ Corporation social media, ____ Personal employee social media, ____ Other online chatting tools
   Subordinate: ____ Email, ____ Internet, ____ Intranet, ____ Corporation social media, ____ Personal employee social media, ____ Other online chatting tools
   Friends: ____ Email, ____ Internet, ____ Intranet, ____ Corporation social media, ____ Personal employee social media, ____ Other online chatting tools
Family: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools

H. Please rank (1-6) the frequency of your usage of the following new media to obtain work-related information using the following strategies. Mark a 1 next to the source you use most and a 6 by the source you use least (or N/A if it does not apply):
  • Passive: obtaining information by observing someone or assessing social expectations
  • Interactive: obtaining information by directly asking someone
  • Active: obtaining information by asking others that may not be directly involved

Passive: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools
Interactive: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools
Active: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools

I. Please rank (1-6) the frequency of your usage of the following new media to obtain different types of work-related information from different media sources. Mark a 1 next to the source you use most and a 6 by the source you use least (or N/A if it does not apply):
  • Referent Information: How to accomplish my task
  • Appraisal information: How my job will be evaluated
  • Relational information: How to interact with others in my workplace

Referent Information: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools
Appraisal Information: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools
Relational Information: _____ Email, _____ Internet, _____ Intranet, _____ Corporation social media, _____ Personal employee social media, _____ Other online chatting tools

J. Demographic Information
1. Your age: __________
2. Your sex: ___ male ___ female ___ undisclosed
3. Which category best describes the nature of your work?
   ____ Executive, administrative, and managerial employees
   ____ Other professionals (support, service)
   ____ Technical staff and paraprofessionals
   ____ Clerical and secretarial staff
   ____ Skills crafts staff
   ____ Service/maintenance
4. Your length of employment in your current organization: _____ year(s) _____ month(s)
5. Your position in the organization __________________
6. How comfortable are you with the use of the aforementioned technologies (Emails, Intranet, Facebook, Internet, Wiki, etc.) to communicate with others at work?____
   5. Extremely Comfortable
7. How long have you been using new media for your work? ____year(s)____month(s)
8. What is your education background?
   ___ Below High School
   ___ High School
   ___ College Degree
   ___ Master
   ___ Doctor
9. Please briefly describe your organization’s policy of using new media.

__________________________________________________________________________________
11. Number of employees in the organization you work in
   ___ Under 10   ___ 11-50   ___ 51-200   ___ 201-500   ___ Above 500
12. What is the sector of business of your organization?
   ___ Mining and Logging
   ___ Construction
   ___ Manufacturing
   ___ Trade (retail, wholesale and etc.)
   ___ Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities
   ___ Information
   ___ Financial and Insurance
   ___ Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
   ___ Service (Professional and Business Services, Educational Service and etc.)
   ___ Health Care and Social Assistance
   ___ Government (Federal, State)
   ___ Educational Institutions
   ___ Others
11. Your race:  ___ Caucasian
       ___ African-American
       ___ Latino
       ___ Asian
       ___ Native American
       ___ Other
12. What type of device did you use to finish this survey?
   ___ computer   ___ cellphone   ___ tablet   ___ laptop   ___ other: _____________
13. What is your annual income?
   ___ below or equal $20,000   ___ $20,001-$50,000   ___ $50,001-100,000
   ___ $100,001-200,000   ___ above $200,000
APPENDIX C: CHINESE VERSION OF THE SURVEY

调查问卷

此调查问卷由美国俄亥俄大学传播学院的博士生设计。您的参与对我们研究十分重要，我们邀请您参与。我们保证对您提供的一切信息保密。如果您有任何疑问，请联系：居然：rj285909@ohio.edu 或者 Mirit Shoham：shoham@ohio.edu 十分感谢您的参与！

关于组织内部信息与沟通方式的调查

1. 关于你的工作，请选择最贴合你的情况的描述。

1）我不是很满意自己需要完成什么任务。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

2）我清楚自己的工作职责。
A. 完全不是 B. 很少是 C. 有时候 D. 通常是这样 E. 总是这样

3）我明白自己的工作性质。
A. 完全不是 B. 很少是 C. 有时候 D. 通常是这样 E. 总是这样

4）我不是很确定如何完成我工作的具体步骤。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

5）我不确定他们是如何评价我的工作成果的。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

6）我不清楚自己的工作竞争力如何。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

7）我对自己的技术能力十分自信。
A. 完全不是 B. 很少是 C. 有时候 D. 通常是这样 E. 总是这样

194
8）我不确定自己是否在向事业成功迈进。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

9）当工作中遇到问题时，我不清楚要向谁寻求帮助。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

10）我不确定自己是否和我的同事合得来。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

11）我感觉自己很适应工作的整体环境。
A. 完全不是 B. 很少是 C. 有时候 D. 通常是这样 E. 总是这样

12）我不知道其他同事是怎么看我的。
A. 完全没有这种情况 B. 一般没有 C. 有时候有 D. 经常发生 E. 总是发生

2. 请选择一张最能够代表你对你的工作单位的认同度。白色圆圈代表你，灰色代表你的工作单位。两张图片的重叠度代表对你所在的工作单位的认同程度。例如第一张图片代表你完全不认同你工作单位的规章制度，也不愿意把自己看作工作单位的一分子，以此类推。
3. 请告诉我们您对以下关于您和您工作单位的关系的描述的态度。
1) 我很骄傲我能够成为现在工作单位的一员。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

2) 我经常和我的朋友提起我的工作单位是一个很棒的工作地方。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

3) 我很关心我的工作单位的前途。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

4) 我觉得我的工作单位提供了一个温暖的工作环境。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意
5）我愿意把我以后一直为现在的工作单位工作。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

6）我的工作单位让勤奋工作的人得到他所应得的。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

7）我觉得我的工作单位像一个大家庭，每个员工都有归属感。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

8）我很高兴我选择了现在的工作单位。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

9）我觉得我的工作单位关心我。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

10）我的工作单位的形象能很好地代表我的个人形象。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

11）我觉得我很认同我地工作单位。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

12）我认为我地价值观和我工作单位的价值观很相似。
A. 非常不同意 B. 不同意 C. 中立 D. 同意 E. 非常同意

4. 请啊你回想在一个典型的工作日，你在与他人交流工作相关问题的时候，使用各种媒体的时间是多少（N/A 表示你或者您所在的单位没有此媒体）？
1）电子邮件（包括私人邮件，公司邮件，群发邮件等）：（ ）小时（ ）分钟，或者（ ）N/A

2）公司内网（单位内部的局域网，只有雇员能够进入。你可以从内网获得信息，与同事交流。内网包括内网页面，数据库，内部交谈软件等）：（ ）小时（ ）分钟，或者（ ）N/A。

3）个人社交媒体（你的社交媒体账户，你的博客，微博，人人等）：（ ）小时（ ）分钟，或者（ ）N/A。

4）工作单位社交媒体（工作单位的博客，微博，人人页面等）：（ ）小时（ ）分钟，或者（ ）N/A。

5）互联网（除了以上的其他一些网上资源，比如百度搜索引擎，其他的网站等）：（ ）小时（ ）分钟，或者（ ）N/A。

6）其他网上聊天工具（MSN，QQ，Skype等）：（ ）小时（ ）分钟，或者（ ）N/A。

5. 请选择一张最能够代表你对你的工作部门的认同度。白色圆圈代表你，灰色代表你的工作部门。两张图片的重叠度代表你对你所在的工作部门的认同程度。例如第一张图片代表你完全不认同你工作部门的规章制度，也不愿意把自己看作这个部门的一分子，以此类推。
6. **请选择您对于以下关于你和你所在的工作部门的关系的描述的态度**

1) 我很**骄傲**我能够成为现在部门中的一员。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

2) 我**经常**和我的朋友提起我的工作部门是一个很棒的工作地方。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

3) 我很**关心**我的工作部门的前途。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

4) 我**觉得**我的工作部门提供了一个温暖的工作**环境**。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

5) 我愿意把我以后一直**为**现在的工作部门工作。
   A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意
6）我的工作部门让**勤奋**工作的人得到他所**应**得的。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

7）我**觉**得我的工作部门像一个大家庭，每个成员都有**归属感**。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

8）我**很**高兴我**选择**了**现在**的工作部门。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

9）我**觉**得我的工作部门**关**心我。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

10）我的工作部门的形象能很好地代表我的个人形象。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

11）我**觉**得我很**认**同我的工作部门。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

12）我**认**为我地**价**值观和我工作部门的**价**值观很相似。
A. 非常不同意  B. 不同意  C. 中立  D. 同意  E. 非常同意

5. 您在工作中会向不同的人**询**问工作相关的信息。请您回想您使用不同媒体与不同人的交流情况，对以下媒体的使用**频**率进行排序。1 代表使用**频**率最高，6 代表使用**频**率最低，N/A 代表您没有**这**项媒体。
1）上司与**领**导：（    ）电子邮件，（    ）互联网，（    ）内网，（    ）工作**单位**社交媒体，（    ）个人社交媒体，（    ）其他聊天工具。
2）同事： ( ) 电子邮件， ( ) 互联网， ( ) 内网， ( )
工作单位社交媒体， ( ) 个人社交媒体， ( )
其他聊天工具。

3）下属： ( ) 电子邮件， ( ) 互联网， ( ) 内网， ( )
工作单位社交媒体， ( ) 个人社交媒体， ( )
其他聊天工具。

4）朋友： ( ) 电子邮件， ( ) 互联网， ( ) 内网， ( )
工作单位社交媒体， ( ) 个人社交媒体， ( )
其他聊天工具。

5）家人： ( ) 电子邮件， ( ) 互联网， ( ) 内网， ( )
工作单位社交媒体， ( ) 个人社交媒体， ( )
其他聊天工具。

6. 您在工作中会使用不同的方法获取工作相关的信息。请您回想您用不同的方法时使用的不同媒体情况，对以下媒体的使用频率进行排序。1 代表使用频率最高，6 代表使用频率最低，N/A 代表您没有这项媒体。以下三种方法是最常见的获得信息的方法：

被动策略：观察工作环境以及他人的行为中获得工作相关信息。
主动策略：直接询问他人（这些人也许不能提供很明确的信息，但是他们比较容易接近）以获得你想要的信息。
互动策略：直接询问目标人物（能够提供明确信息的人）。

例如：如果你想得知请休假是否会被上司允许，上司则是你的目标人物，同事为他人。

1）被动策略： ( ) 电子邮件， ( ) 互联网， ( )
工作单位社交媒体， ( ) 个人社交媒体， ( )
其他聊天工具。
7. 您在工作中需要各种相关的信息。请您回想您用不同的媒体获得以下不同信息的情况，对以下媒体的使用频率进行排序。1 代表使用频率最高，6 代表使用频率最低，N/A 代表您没有这项媒体。

以下三种信息是最常见工作相关信息：

任务职责相关信息：如何完成我的工作？
评价信息：我的工作将会怎样被（上司，同事，整个工作单位）评价？
人际信息：我该怎样和我的同事在工作单位相处？

1）任务职责相关信息：（ ）电子邮件，（ ）互联网，（ ）内网，（ ）工作单位社交媒体，（ ）个人社交媒体，（ ）其他聊天工具。

2）评价信息：（ ）电子邮件，（ ）互联网，（ ）内网，（ ）工作单位社交媒体，（ ）个人社交媒体，（ ）其他聊天工具。

3）人际信息：（ ）电子邮件，（ ）互联网，（ ）内网，（ ）工作单位社交媒体，（ ）个人社交媒体，（ ）其他聊天工具。

8. 相关信息：
1. 你的年龄：______

2. 你的性别： 男  女

3. 以下哪项最能描述你工作性质？
   ____ 高层管理人员
   ____ 专业类（如金融分析师，人力资源专家，电脑软件师，老师，培训顾问等）
   ____ 技术类（如生物工程师，实验室化验师等）
   ____ 销售类
   ____ 行政类
   ____ 手工业类
   ____ 技工类（如司机等）
   ____ 其他体力劳动者（如建筑工人等）
   ____ 服务业

4. 你在现有单位工作时间  年  月

5. 你现在的职位是______________

6. 在工作中与他人交流的时候，你使用电子媒体的适应程度是多少？
   ____ 非常不适应  ____ 不适应  ____ 一半  ____ 适应  ____ 很适应

7. 您在工作中使用以上所提到新媒体有多长时间？（_____）年（_____）月

7. 你的工作单位现有多少员工
   ____ 10 个以下  ____ 10-51 个  ____ 51-200 个  ____ 201-500 个
   ____ 500 个以上

8. 您的教育背景是：
   1. 高中以下   2. 高中职之高专   3. 大学本科   4. 研究生   5. 博士生

9. 请简单地描述一下您工作单位对于工作时电脑网络使用相关规定

10. 您的工作单位是从事哪方面的工作的？
（ ）矿产林业
（ ）建筑
（ ）制造业
（ ）贸易
（ ）货运仓储
（ ）信息产业
（ ）金融保险
（ ）房地产产买卖租赁
（ ）服务无行业
（ ）医疗健康社会服务
（ ）政府部门

11. 你的国籍： _____中国 _____其他（请注明）_____

12. 您用何种工具完成这份问卷？
（ ）台式电脑 （ ）手机 （ ）平板电脑（ipad等） （ ）手提电脑 （ ）其他

13. 您工作单位的性质
（ ）中方独资 （ ）中外合资 （ ）外国独资

14. 您的年收入为？
（ ）¥20,000或以下 （ ）¥20,001－50,000 （ ）¥50,001－100,000
（ ）¥100,001－200,000 （ ）¥200,000以上