

*Human Communication*. A Publication of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association. Vol. 12, No. 2, pp.199 - 213.

**Cross-Cultural Differences in Approach-Avoidance Communication In South Korea and the US**

Rebecca S. Merkin  
Baruch College – CUNY  
Department of Communication Studies  
1 Bernard Baruch Way, VC 8-241  
New York, New York 10010  
646-312-3732  
Fax: 973-916-2698  
Rebecca\_Merkin@Baruch.cuny.edu

This paper was presented in 2009 at the Meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois. Correspondence to: Rebecca S. Merkin, Baruch College- CUNY, 1 Bernard Baruch Way, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010, USA. Tel: 646 312-3720. The author would like to thank Dr. Hilary Silver for her help with data collection in Korea.

Abstract

This study examines differences in the cultural motivations of South Korean and US Americans to communicate by reflecting on their different motivations to approach (i.e., immediacy) and avoid (i.e., intercultural communication apprehension) communication. Analyses of self reports completed by high-context South Koreans and low-context US Americans indicate that South Koreans have more overall shame and intercultural communication apprehension, than US Americans. Further results show that South Koreans have greater intercultural communication apprehension and are less nonverbally immediate than their US American counterparts.

Cross-Cultural Differences in Approach-Avoidance Communication in South Korea and the US Misunderstandings in communication tend to occur between members of different cultures because cultures encode and decode messages differently (Hulbert, 1994). Because the nature of intercultural communication is complex, it is imperative that differences relating to culture be considered lest, for example, inadvertent “insults” should cause others to lose face, which, in turn might cause communication to break down. Culture is significant because it is mostly through culture that human groups organize, direct, and pattern their behavior (Kim, 1993).

#### Culture, Values, and Needs

Historically, South Koreans and US Americans have lived their lives focusing on opposite value dimensions (Hofstede, 2001). In particular, South Koreans have emphasized Confucian values (Stipek, 1998), shame avoidance, conformity, and social comparison (Yang & Rosenblatt, 2001; Yoon, 1994). Alternatively, US Americans live their lives based on individualistic values (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede also classified Korea as a culture that is strong in power distance (PD) – culturally willing to accept all authorities – versus the US which is weak in PD (culturally accepting authorities yielding legitimate power). Because Koreans are strong in PD, which is correlated with collectivism, they show more obedience towards superiors and they are also more other oriented (Hofstede, 2001). Historically, status has been an important indicator of South Korean communication. Thus, the loss of status leads to being shamed (Ambady, Koo, & Lee, 1996). In contrast, US Americans traditionally have been more equally other-oriented toward all targets regardless of their status because status in the US is dependent on legitimate power or competence (Hofstede, 2001).

On the other hand, Korea’s fast-growing economy has created cultural changes resulting in a transformation from a face-saving culture to a modern culture (Lee, 1999). In fact, Thomas (1998) has found that South Koreans communicate with a low-context emphasis on relationships, choosing direct organizational patterns with deductive lines of reasoning, just like individualistic US Americans. Similarly, the increased exposure of Korea to the world has led some researchers to believe that South Koreans have become more individualistic (Choi & Kibum, 2004; Lee, 1999; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002; Thomas, 1998). If this is the case, then past findings on South Korean and US communication (e.g., Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996; Park & Kim, 1992) do not adequately reflect present South Korean communication --indicating a need for further examination of the divergence of perspectives between Korea and the United States.

For example, if differences in communication are understood correctly, the US could improve its relations with South Korea to help build an increasingly prominent position in the newer, more rapidly expanding areas of business it is trying to pursue. The South Korean economy has been the fastest growing economy in the world (Lydon & Wasik, 2008). Korea is also an important economic partner for America. However, Noland and Pack (2002) point out that South Koreans perceive US American prominence in the merchandise trade to be eroding, especially in comparison with China. Understanding communication differences between South Koreans and US Americans could help cultivate successful South Korean/US relationships. In turn, the purpose of this study is to examine cross-cultural differences in shame and communication behavior associated with shame to capture a present view of modern-day communication. This will be accomplished by examining communication traits associated with approach avoidance theory.

#### Approach Avoidance Theory

Approach avoidance theory is a motivational theory which distinguishes between the direction of behaviors (in our case communication) on the basis of different valences. The approach avoidance division relates to Lewin’s (1935) conceptualization of positive and negative valences that are linked directly to tendencies to approach or avoid stimuli based on individuals

needs. McClelland (1951) conceptualized approach and avoidance tendencies as well but focused primarily on underlying preferences for acquiring aspired states -- such as a need for achievement and for avoiding states such as failure. Similarly, those who hope for affiliation in relationships approach communication with warmth and those who fear shame most would be most likely to avoid face-threatening communication.

Empirical research has actually shown that positive or negative evaluations evoke approach or avoidance behavior (Chen & Bargh, 1999). The valences of evaluations however, vary by culture (Erez & Earley, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, cross-cultural differences in shame and communication behavior associated with shame (i.e., Intercultural Communication Apprehension, Nonverbal Immediacy) will be examined keeping in mind the distinction of approach-avoidance communication orientations.

#### Differences in Communication Approaching and Avoiding Shame

Shame, according to Scheff and Retzinger (1991), is a threat to the social bond. Moreover, Shame has been established as the cause of social conflict (Retzinger, 1991). For example, when someone feels shamed by another, the social bond comes under stress and he/she is likely to avoid communicating to relieve the tension of an interaction developing into a potentially face-threatening situation. In contrast to US American expressiveness, South Koreans and their inner Confucian values practice collective restraint (Bailey, 1997). South Koreans have also been found to be less likely than US Americans to reciprocate self-disclosures by discussing the same topic as that initiated by the other person than are US Americans (Ambady et al., 1996). This restrained mode of communication could be a reaction to a self-conscious fear of shame.

An avoidance of shame is likely to be expressed as communication apprehension. Communication apprehension is an "individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977). This anxiety results in withdrawal from communication, eliminating the need for managing one's impression through remedial communication. However, research shows that relationships are less likely to survive after a conflict has been expressed when communication apprehension is higher because parties are less able to discuss their feelings subsequently and thereby overcome the shame and rage that results from experiencing conflicts (Loveless, Powers, & Jordan, 2008).

Those with a stronger need for affiliation would be likely to communicate with a goal of emotional closeness referred to as immediacy. According to Mehrabian (1969), communicating immediacy diminishes psychological distances between people and increases social bonding. Immediacy has been shown to generate satisfaction between people because of its inherent inclusiveness, acknowledgement, and acceptance of others. Research shows, for example, that immediacy leads to satisfaction in relationships between physicians and patients (Conlee, & Olvera, 2002; Koermer, 2008) and instructors and students (Andersen, 1979, Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001).

#### Cultural and Individual Explanations of Shame and Communication

Doise and Mapstone (1986) indicated that it is important to make clear how levels of individual, interpersonal, intergroup, and cultural communication are interrelated in cross-cultural studies. On the interpersonal level, which explains our exchange of messages when we act as individuals based on our concept of self, we have a corresponding need for intimacy with people. At the intergroup level, that of employee workgroups, messages are exchanged based on group membership (our social identities). Finally, the cultural level is related to the development of complementary orientations among individuals from varying national cultures in how they share work values. One way of viewing varying levels of communication is based on the identities guiding our communication with other individuals, socially, and personally (Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, & Ogawa, 2005). We use all of our identities during interactions with one identity predominating at a particular time depending on the context (Turner, 1987).

To avoid shame and resulting conflict, Erez and Earley (1993) propose that individuals choose salient identities for social comparison that enhance their self-efficacy, like national culture. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that situational factors might create and maintain in-group preferences within an organization in various types of interactions, despite the development of corresponding orientations among individuals from different national cultures in how they work together. These preferences could, in turn, cause differences in individual influence to be associated with nationality. An aspect of personal differences is the individual's orientation toward established norms. Acceptance as a member of a group in an organization entails being able to act in ways that are consistent with the normative expectations of other members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The question is what multinational employees identify with as a group and how they will enact their communication. To help determine this, further analysis will be carried out on the cultural level.

In general, cross-cultural research has shown how basic assumptions, values, and behavioral norms vary across cultures (Hall, 1983; Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1989). Cross-cultural studies often identify cultural differences as causing difficulties including conflict, misunderstandings, and poor performance (Shenkar & Zeira, 1992). In other cases, cultural diversity could increase performance by providing more varied perspectives in problem solving (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991). Culture has been defined as the "collective programming of the mind" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 9).

National culture is considered to be particularly compelling; and its effects on individuals are thought to be particularly resistant to change. Nevertheless, Schein (1985) puts forward that organizational cultures arise from specific historical events experienced by a group and organization in addition to the influence of individuals engaged in their routine interactions. Thus, within the same, relatively stable national cultural context, organizational and group cultures can vary (Boyacigiller, Kleinberg, Phillips, & Sackman, 2004). Even if members accord less attention to national identities over time, national identity-based intergroup dynamics can persist in the absence of conflict and performance difficulties (Salk & Brannen, 2000). In order to better understand cultural factors relating to a person's identity, the concept of a description of high and low-context cultural differences will follow.

#### High- versus Low-Context Cultures

Research has shown that the degree of context and the amount of information in a culture effectively differentiates between communication in Eastern cultures as opposed to Western cultures (Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998; Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999). In particular, Hall (1973) categorized cultures into *high-context cultures* -- where the communication style in which most of the information is already shared by people in the society, leaving very little information in the explicit transmitted part of the message -- and *low-context cultures* -- where the communication style in which most of the information is incorporated into the message and detailed background information is needed in the interaction with others). Kim et al., (1998) found South Koreans to exhibit tendencies that are consistent with Hall's description of high-context cultures and US Americans to exhibit tendencies that are consistent with low-context cultures.

Findings support assertions that low-context relationships are based on equality rather than hierarchy (Hynson, 1990). In high-context cultures, however, the relational and hierarchical context, rather than the content of the message per se, conveys meaning (Hofstede, 2001). In high-context cultures, individual identity is embedded in socially defined roles. Therefore, contextual factors such as group membership and the roles of target and speaker are used in conveying and interpreting meaning (Ambady, et al., 1996).

According to social-identity theory, individuals are triggered by situational and other cues to "act out" primary social identities as a basis for self-evaluation and enhancement of self-images (Erez & Earley, 1993). An important factor that determines the difference in the

communication behavior of Koreans and US Americans at all levels is the need for inclusion (to be socially bonded) which emphasizes avoiding shame. Ting-Toomey (1993) argues that the more individuals need inclusion, the more they value ingroup and relational boundaries. In enacting one's social identity, individuals emphasize intraclass similarities and interclass differences (Erez & Earley, 1993) or in-group out-group distinctions (Triandis, 1989). The more individuals need this type of differentiation, the more distance they create between themselves and others (Gudykunst et al., 2005).

#### *Status in Korea and the US*

There is a universal notion of status as the designation of an individual's position in a socially agreed-upon hierarchy (Lips, 1991). In Korea, besides the high-context behaviors, the role of status is central because it is rooted in Confucianism. According to Confucian values, there is a moral responsibility of those with lower status to respect those with higher status (e.g., parents, employers, teachers, or government officials) who, in turn, have reciprocal duties to protect those with lower status (Yang & Rosenblatt, 2001). This is partially why South Koreans use different levels of other-orientation depending on the status of the target (Ambady et al., 1996; Tasaki, Kim, & Miller, 1999).

In the US, however, individuals' social position is often determined by their ownership of what is valued by the society -- like money, education, job title, and good looks -- or position within a status hierarchy of relationships in a social unit (Andersen, Guerrero, & Jones, 2006). Thus, in the US, status is either achieved or ascribed. People's position within a stratification system can be determined by their either earning their social status by their own achievements or by placement in the stratification system by their inherited position. However, this conception is based on people as individual units. Modern South Korean culture has also come to focus on personal competence; in that case, the threat to the social bond would be reflected in being unemployed or disabled. Moreover, the status of acquiring material wealth by South Koreans is then attributed to his or her entire family.

Because modern society requires competition and accomplishment, these values have become important to South Koreans. On the one hand, South Koreans feel proud if they are successful. On the other hand, they experience a feeling of inferiority born of competition that is closely related to feelings of shame (Lee, 1999). Lee (1999) points out that the crucial factor generating a sense of shame in South Koreans has shifted from a failure of self-realization and injury of the family in a face-saving culture to personal incompetence in modern society. Though the South Korean sense of status and shame has changed, it appears that shame is still a prominent concern among South Koreans.

Choi and Kibum (2004) point out that formerly, self-inflicted shame resulting from one's reflection on his or her behavior was regarded more highly than shame inflicted from the outside. However, Korean experiences of shame in the past and today now include outward appearances such as being fat and status such as how much money a person does or doesn't have. Today, other elements of external shame include being unemployed, disabled, or poor. While all cultures tend to avoid face-threatening situations, given South Koreans' Confucian emphasis on shame and knowing one's place, the following hypothesis is posed:

H1: South Koreans will experience more shame than US Americans.

#### Low Context Communication and Intercultural Communication Apprehension

Members of low-context cultures, which are mostly Western, practice explicitness and directness in their communication style generally (Spear & Bacon, 2003). They approach communication without trepidation because the purpose and outcome of the communication takes precedence over the interpersonal relationships involved. This inattentiveness to the other person's face is threatening to members of high-context cultures. Furthermore, the direct communication style prevalent in low-context cultures (Hall, 1973) can come across to

individuals from high-context cultures as rude (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007) because direct communication can be face-threatening to them (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

*High-Context Confucianism, Face, and Intercultural Communication Apprehension*

In fact, South Koreans are known to have deeply-rooted Confucian values that include the use of indistinct high-context communication which allows for *all* participants in communication to save face if possible (Lim & Choi, 1996). For example, Ting-Toomey, Gao, Trubisky, Yang, Kim, Lin, & Nishida (1991) found that South Koreans report a higher degree of focus on others' face than US Americans; whereas US Americans show a higher degree of self-face than South Koreans. In addition, Kim et al., (1998) found South Koreans to be more confrontation-avoiding than their US American counterparts. In high-context cultures, substituting direct communication with indirect communication is considered to be an important way to help others save face. If a stand is not taken, then people do not have to stick out, which is a form of face threat in South Korean cultures (Lim & Choi, 1996).

Thus, communicating explicitly is shunned in Korea. As a result, avoiding communication is likely to be higher among South Koreans whose Confucian values underlie their communication (Klopf, 1984). For example, South Koreans are less willing to do self-disclosure than are US Americans (Ambady et al., 1996). Moreover, both Aune, Hunter, Kim, and Kim (2001) and Yook and Ahn (1999) found that South Korean students reported significantly higher communication apprehension scores than US American students. In another study, Hong (2003) found that South Korean students in intercultural conflict situations were considerably more communicatively apprehensive than US American students as well. On the other hand, conflicting results exist. In particular, Klopf and Cambra (1979) found that US Americans had a higher incidence of apprehension than South Koreans. Nevertheless, this finding could be dated. Likewise, given their anxiety about shame and taking the above findings together, the following hypothesis is tested:

H2: South Korean citizens are more likely to be interculturally apprehensive to communicate than their US American counterparts.

*Culture, Touch Avoidance, and Nonverbal Immediacy*

Andersen and Leibowitz (1978) found that communication apprehension is positively correlated to touch avoidance. Immediacy reflects an approach towards affiliation and positive feelings while communication apprehension is an avoidance of affiliation in favor of restraint. Hence, if South Koreans are communicatively apprehensive, they are also likely to be touch avoidant.

In general, the degree of touch avoidance that people sense varies by culture (Beaulieu, 2004; Hall, 1966; Remland & Jones, 1988). In fact, Hall (1966) designated societies on the basis of how much they avoid touching. At least in terms of public touch, Hall designated both Korea and the US, as being touch-avoidant cultures. However, McDaniel and Andersen's (1998) study found this not to be the case in that people from the US were among the most tactile cultures in their entire study. On the other hand, McDaniel and Andersen as well as Ruch (1989) fully supported Hall's characterization of Korea as a culture possessing a disinclination toward touch.

In addition to touching behavior, all public displays of emotion are embarrassing and avoided by South Koreans (Park, 1993). According to Kim (1977), South Korean couples avoid any outward displays of affection. This was corroborated by Park and Kim (1992) and Matsumoto, Takeuchi, Andayani, Kouznetsova, and Krupp (1998) who found that after Russians, South Koreans exert the highest control over their expressions, which is likely to be a reflection of the Confucian value of restraint. In addition, Matsumoto et al. (1998) found US Americans as having the least controlled emotions in their sample. Thus, it would be likely that US Americans are also more nonverbally immediate than South Koreans.

*Nonverbal immediacy* is related to the emotional distance communicated nonverbally between people. A close emotional distance would be communicated nonverbally by touching

and affection displays. In contrast, one who is less immediate would be more touch avoidant and less likely to display emotion outwardly. While South Koreans are likely to avoid public expressions of emotion, touch, and nonverbal immediacy and US Americans are likely to approach emotions in the opposite direction, the following hypothesis is posed:

H3: US Americans will be more nonverbally immediate than South Koreans.

In order to update and extend findings on differences in South Korean and US American communication, this study assessed where both cultures stand in terms of shame and their degrees of two divergent communication orientations (1) nonverbal immediacy as an approach orientation and (2) intercultural communication apprehension as an avoidance orientation. If there are differences, they will instruct potential interactions between US Americans and South Koreans in the future.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants were 263 junior or senior undergraduate students (those who reported their gender were 87 men and 168 women) enrolled in classes in a New York City University ( $n = 117$ ) or in a South Korean University ( $n = 146$ ). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 44 years ( $M = 22.25$ ,  $SD = 3.51$ ). Seventy-seven percent of participants reported their social class. From those who reported their class, 4% were lower class, 10% were working class, 51% were middle class, and 11% were upper class.

#### Instrumentation

This study operationalized shame with the Shame Perception Scale (SPS), a four-item dichotomous yes/no scale including separate items asking whether one would be ashamed if they were unemployed, fat, disabled, or poor ( $r = .79$ ). The principle components factor analysis conducted on the SPS instrument indicated one primary factor (eigenvalue = 16.82) accounting for 61% of the variance. The factor loadings were all very good, ranging from .66 to .85. The intercultural internal reliability of the SPS was also good (overall alpha = .78). Separate Cronbach alphas for the US ( $r = .70$ ) and Korea ( $r = .82$ ) were also satisfactory.

Intercultural communication apprehension was operationalized using Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997) Intercultural Communication Apprehension Scale (ICAS). The reliability of the ICAS was ( $r = .93$ ). Nonverbal immediacy ( $r = .82$ ) was measured using Richmond, McCroskey, and Johnson's (2003) Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS). The ICAS and NIS items both consisted of Likert-type questions. Participants were asked to self-report their use of communication using response options ranging from 1 (almost never true) to 5 (almost always true). Social class was measured with the following question: "What is your social class? \_\_\_\_\_ lower \_\_\_\_\_ working \_\_\_\_\_ middle \_\_\_\_\_ upper"

#### Procedures

Instructors gave students self-report questionnaire instruments to fill out in their spare time on a volunteer basis. After students returned the questionnaire, instructors input and analyzed the data. In this study H1 was tested using a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) design with country as the independent variable and shame as the dependent variable. To test H2-H3, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) design with country as the independent variable and intercultural communication apprehension, nonverbal immediacy as the dependent variables was carried out.

### Results

To test H1 to see whether there are cross-cultural differences in shame, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out with country as the independent variable and shame as the dependent variable. Internal consistency reliabilities obtained for the shame scale were acceptable ( $r = .79$ ). The one-way ANOVA revealed that shame scores differed significantly as a function of country ( $F(1, 199) = 3.77$ ,  $p = .05$ ). The shame mean for South Koreans was much higher ( $M = 2.42$ ;  $SD = 1.57$ ) than the shame mean for US Americans ( $M =$

1.99;  $SD = 1.41$ ), indicating that Korea is more of a shame culture than the US. Thus, H1 was supported.

Results showed that multivariate analysis was warranted for H2-H3 because the multivariate main effect for country was significant (Wilk's  $\lambda = .78$ ,  $F(2, 244) = 34.64$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .22$ ). There were significant univariate effects for intercultural communication apprehension ( $F(1, 245) = 62.10$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .20$ ), and intercultural nonverbal immediacy ( $F(1, 245) = 21.27$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ). Internal consistency reliabilities obtained for both the US and Korea together were acceptable for ICAS ( $r = .94$ ) and NIS ( $r = .82$ ). The exact means and standard deviations can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Communication Means and Standard Deviations**

Communication Traits	South Koreans	US Americans
<b>Intercultural Communication Apprehension</b>		
<i>M</i>	37.21	27.79
<i>SD</i>	(9.34)	(9.70)
<b>Nonverbal Immediacy</b>		
<i>M</i>	56.14	59.73
<i>SD</i>	(6.23)	(5.33)
<b>Shame</b>		
<i>M</i>	2.42	1.99
<i>SD</i>	(1.57)	(1.41)

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation.

In general, the ICAS mean in Korea was higher than the mean in the US. This result substantiated H2, that South Korean citizens are more likely to be more communicatively apprehensive than their US American counterparts. H3, that US Americans will be more nonverbally immediate than South Koreans was also supported because the mean for NIS was lower for South Koreans than the mean for US Americans.

Scales had adequate power and an adequate sample size for this test because when this scale was factor analyzed, all samples warranted multivariate analysis given that all of the tested samples had Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) scores that were greater than the usual criterion of .66 (i.e., US/Korea KMO = .844; Korea KMO = .743; and the US KMO = .836).

#### Discussion

##### Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine cross-cultural differences in shame and communication behavior associated with shame to capture a present view of modern-day South Korean communication and its relationship to shame. On the whole it appears that despite widespread global influences, Confucian values and low/high-context communication are reflected in present-day South Korean and US American shame perceptions and communication. Thus, this study's results corroborate Inglehart & Baker's (2000) observation that despite sometimes dramatic economic, political, and social change, the impact of a society's cultural heritage persists in shaping values and beliefs.

Although the forces of globalization appear to be strong, so are Confucian traditions and so are shame perceptions. These findings add to the literature on Korean/US communication by answering the question as to whether things have changed and by extending communication findings by showing that modern day Koreans do actually perceive more shame than US Americans due to modern-day factors such as their appearance, employment status, and economic status. While this study tested US Americans, the primary focus was on South Korean

communication which seemed more likely to change, given this country's changing status as a global trading partner. However, it appears that communication patterns in the US have remained constant as well, at least in the communication traits tested in this study.

In particular, the results supporting H1 show that external factors that reflect on a person's face (such as employment status, appearance, and economic status) matter a great deal to the modern South Korean psyche. Thus, mentioning a weakness relating to a possibly lowered status would be likely to cause South Koreans to experience a loss of face that leads to shame. Causing South Koreans to experience shame could possibly destroy potential relationships. Thus, while low-context US Americans, who are instrumental in their communication, see nothing wrong with communicating directly to save face (e.g., explaining why things are the ways they are, or making a joke about the way things are), this same communication could have devastating effects on the more shame-prone South Koreans who use high-context communication to avoid sticking out. Thus, Hall's (1966) high-low context schema still applies to South Korean and US communication.

The high-context South Koreans need to obscure meanings to militate against shame helps to explain this study's support for H2, that South Korean citizens are more likely to be communicatively apprehensive about intercultural interactions than their US American counterparts. This is because shame is attributed to communication itself. There is a profound high-context distrust of communication itself which leads South Koreans to avoid explicit intercultural communication. If a message's meaning is unclear, the shame cannot be realized. Thus, it is likely that the nervousness that accompanies their fear of shame could be expressed through a heightened intercultural communication apprehension.

Another side of the cultural clash between the South Korean Confucian value of not-sticking-out and the US practice of touching and public display of emotions is the restraint and stoic controlling of emotions that still appears to be practiced by South Koreans. H3, that US Americans will be more nonverbally immediate than South Koreans, still appears to be the case; and the cultural implications are many. This is because the possibility of misunderstanding communicated on the nonverbal level is on the one hand more subtle, yet, on the other hand, more powerful. People's implicit responses to nonverbal messages cannot necessarily be understood because it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint what exactly is wrong. Unwanted touching, for example, can be perceived as a major violation by people when it implies a lowering of their status which could lead to shaming. Thus, differences in nonverbal immediacy between the US and South Korea should be noted by businesses and social concerns that have intercultural contact between US Americans and South Koreans.

All in all, these findings support assertions that in low-context cultures (e.g., American culture) the content of communication is extremely important: clarity, direct communication and precision are valued, and relationships are based to a greater extent on equality rather than hierarchy (Spear & Bacon, 2003). In high-context cultures (e.g., Korean culture), however, the hierarchical status context rather than the content of the message per se conveys meaning (Hofstede, 2001). In South Korea, individual identity is interrelated with socially defined roles. Therefore, contextual factors such as group membership and the hierarchical position of the target and speaker are used in conveying and interpreting meaning. These concerns need to be addressed in modern-day intercultural communication between US Americans and South Koreans.

#### Strengths and Limitations

One of this study's strengths was that the data was collected in the native cultures of both Korea and the US. This allowed for a more representative sample of viewpoints than for example, foreign students who might have been more readily available. One of the limitations of this study is that the information presented here is based on self-report data; and while the

sample was reasonably large and had statistical adequacy and power for the tests carried out, it was not truly random; thus, caution should be exercised in interpreting the findings.

Another limitation of this study was the use of college students. On the one hand, the use of college students is not truly representative of an entire population. On the other hand, the use of college students in both samples allowed for psychological matching to be carried out, as suggested by Hofstede (2001). The demographic variance present in more random populations can be controlled for in college populations because both populations were matched on socioeconomic variables. These caveats notwithstanding, it was clear from the present analyses that South Korean and US communication has been relatively stable over time. Furthermore, highlights on the composition of shame and its impact has moved the literature on South Korean communication forward.

#### Future Directions for Research

Future research should explore the impact on shame and other communication such as face-saving strategies and conflict resolution strategies. The present research has provided updated findings to previous research on cultures carried out more than a decade ago. Though the conclusions of this study were, for the most part, consistent with past research, this may not be the case with other theoretical conclusions about culture in the literature of the past. The consequences of intercultural interactions are more vital than ever. Given the rise of terrorism, the outsourcing of work, and the increasing markets abroad, it is important for scholars to update cultural studies to assess whether or not past conclusions still stand or whether communication has changed to make sure that dire communication mishaps do not occur. Then, constructive outcomes are more likely to be reached by using the appropriate intercultural communication in the future.

## References

- Ambady, N., Koo, J., & Lee, F. (1996). More than words: Linguistic and nonlinguistic politeness in two cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 996-1011.
- Andersen, J. F. (1979). Teacher immediacy: A predictor of teaching effectiveness. In D. Nimmo (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 3* (pp. 543-559). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Andersen, P. A., Guerrero, S. A., & Jones, S. M. (2006). Nonverbal behavior in intimate interactions and intimate relationships. In V. Manusov and M. L. Patterson (Eds.) *The sage handbook of nonverbal communication* (pp. 279-297). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Andersen P. A. & Leibowitz K. (1978). The development and nature of the construct touch avoidance. *Environmental Psychology and Nonverbal Behavior, 3*, 89-106.
- Aune, M-SKKS., Hunter, J. E., Kim, H-J., & Kim, J-S. (2001). The effect of culture and self-construals on predispositions toward verbal communication. *Human Communication Research, 27*, 382-408.
- Bailey, B. (1997). Communication of respect in interethnic service encounters. *Language in Society, 26*, 327-356.
- Beaulieu, C. (2004) Intercultural Study of Personal Space: A Case Study. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 34*, 794-805.
- Boyacigiller, N., & Adler, N. J. (1991). The parochial dinosaur: The organizational sciences in a global context. *Academy of Management Review, 16*, 1-32.
- Boyacigiller, N.A., Kleinberg, J., Phillips, M. E., & Sackman, S. A. (2004). Conceptualizing Culture: Elucidating the streams of research in intercultural management cross-cultural management. In B. J. Punnett & O. Shenkar (Eds.) *Handbook for International Management Research* (pp. 99-167).
- Chen, M. & Bargh, J. (1999). Consequences of automatic evaluation: Immediate behavioral predispositions due to approach or avoid the stimulus. *Personality and Social Psychology Journal, 25*, 215-223
- Chesebro, J. L. & McCroskey, J. C. (2001). The relationship of teacher clarity and immediacy with student state receiver apprehension, affect, and cognitive learning. *Communication Education, 50*, 59-68.
- Cho, B., Kwon, U., Gentry, J.W., Jun, S. & Kropp, F. (1999) Cultural values reflected in theme and execution: a comparative study of US and South Korean television commercials. *Journal of Advertising, 28*, 59-73.
- Choi S-C. & Kibum, K. (2004). Chemyeon--Social Face in South Korean Culture. *South Korean Journal, 44*, 30-51.
- Conlee, C., & Olvera, J. (2002). The relationships among physician nonverbal immediacy and measures of patient satisfaction with physician care, *Communication Reports, 6*, 25-34.
- Doise, W. & Mapstone, E. (1986). Levels of explanation in social psychology. *European monographs in social psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Erez, M., & Earley, P. C. (1993). *Culture, self-identity and work*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gudykunst, W. B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self-construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research, 22*, 510-543.
- Gudykunst, W. B., Lee, C. M., Nishida, T. & Ogawa, N. (2005). Theorizing about intercultural communication. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.) *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 1-33). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hall, E. T. (1966). A system of the notation of proxemic behavior. *US American Anthropologist, 65*, 1003-1026.
- Hall, E.T. (1973). *The Silent Language*. New York: Anchor Books.

- Hall, E. T. (1983). *The dance of life*. New York: Anchor/ Doubleday Books.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hong, J. (2003). A cross-cultural comparison of the relationship between ICA, ICMS and assertiveness/cooperativeness tendencies. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, San Diego, CA.
- Hulbert, J. E. (1994). Overcoming intercultural communication barriers. *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication*, 57, 41-44.
- Hunt, J. M. & Weintraub, J. R. (2007). *The coaching organization: A strategy for developing leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc,
- Hynson, L. M. (1990). *Doing business with South Korea: A handbook for executives in the public and private sectors*. New York: Quorum.
- Inglehart, R. & Baker, W. E. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. *American Sociological Review*, 65, 19-51.
- Kim, K. (1977). Misunderstanding in nonverbal communication: America and Korea. *Papers in Linguistics*, 10, 1-22.
- Kim, M-S. (1993). Culture-based interactant constraints in explaining intercultural strategic competence. In R. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 132-152). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kim, D., Pan, Y. & Park, H. (1998). High- versus low-context culture: a comparison of Chinese, South Korean, and US American cultures. *Psychology and Marketing*, 15, 507-521.
- Klopf, D. W., (1984). Cross-cultural apprehension research: A summary of Pacific Rim studies. In J. Daly & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Avoiding communication: Shyness, reticence, and communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Klopf, D. W., & Cambra, R. E. (1979). Communication apprehension among college students in America, Australia, Japan, and Korea. *Journal of Psychology*, 102, 27-31.
- Koermer, C. D. (2008). Physician sociality communication and its effect on patient satisfaction. *Communication Quarterly*, 56, 69 – 86.
- Lee, Z-N. (1999). South Korean Culture and Sense of Shame. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 36, 181-195.
- Lewin, K. (1935). *A dynamic theory of personality*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lim, T-S. & Choi, S-H. (1996). Interpersonal relationships in Korea. In W. B. Gudykunst, S. Ting-Toomey, & T. Nishida (Eds.), *Communication in personal relationships across cultures* (pp. 122-136). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lips, H. M. (1991). *Women, men, and power*. Mountainview, CA: Mayfield.
- Loveless, M., Powers, W. G., & Jordan, W. (2008). Dating Partner Communication Apprehension, Self Disclosure, and the First Big Fight. *Preview Human Communication*, 11, 231-239,
- Lydon, T. & Wasik, J. (2008). Prentice Hall. *iMoney: Profitable Exchange-Traded Fund Strategies for Every Investor*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253.
- Matsumoto, D., Takeuchi, S., Andayani, S., Kouznetsova, N., & Krupp, D. (1998). The contribution of individualism-collectivism to cross-national differences in display rules. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 1, 147-165.
- McClelland, D. (1951). *Personality*. New York: The Dryden Press.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1977). Oral Communication Apprehension: A Summary of Recent Theory and Research. *Human Communication Research*, 4, 78-96.
- McDaniel, E. & Andersen, P. A. (1998). International patterns of interpersonal tactile communication: a field study. *Journal of Nonverbal Communication*, 22, 59-75.

- Mehrabian, A. (1969). Attitudes inferred from non-immediacy of verbal communication. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 6, 294–295.
- Neuliep, J. W. & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The development of intercultural and interethnic communication apprehension scales. *Communication Research Reports*, 14, 145-156.
- Noland, M. & Pack, H. (2002). *Industrial policy in an era of globalization: Lessons from Asia*. Washington D. C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics
- Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128, 3-72.
- Park, M-S. (1993). *Communication styles in two different cultures: South Korean and US American*. Seoul, Korea: Han Shin Publishing Company.
- Park, M-S. & Kim, M-S. (1992). Communication practices in Korea. *Communication Quarterly*, 40, 398-404.
- Remland, M. S. & Jones, T. S. (1988). Cultural and sex differences in touch avoidance. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 67, 544-546.
- Retzinger, S. (1991). *Violent Emotions: Shame and Rage in Marital Quarrels*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc
- Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Johnson, A. D. (2003). Development of the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS): Measures of self- and other-perceived nonverbal immediacy. *Communication Quarterly*, 51, 502-515.
- Ruch, W. V. (1989). *International handbook of corporate communication*. Jefferson, NC:
- Salk, J. E. & Brannen, M. Y. (2000). National culture, networks, and individual influence in a multinational management team. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 191-203.
- Scheff, T. J. & Retzinger, S.. (1991) *Emotions and violence: shame and rage in destructive conflicts*. Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books
- Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shenkar, O., & Zeira, Y. (1992). Role conflict and role ambiguity of chief executive officers in international joint ventures. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 23, 55-75.
- Spear, T. R. & Bacon, K. I. (2003) *Adaptive Coaching: The Art and Practice of a Client-Centered Approach to Performance Improvement*. Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.
- Stipek, D. (1998). Differences between US Americans and Chinese in the circumstances evoking pride, shame, and guilt. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29, 616-629.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. 1986. The social identity theory of group behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Tasaki, K., Kim, M-S, & Miller, M. D. (1999). The Effects of Social Status on Cognitive Elaboration and Post-Message Attitude: Focusing on Self-Construals. *Communication Quarterly*, 47, 196-214.
- Thomas, J. (1998). Contexting South Koreans: Does the High/Low Model Work? *Business Communication Quarterly*, 61, 9-22.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). Intercultural conflict styles. In Y. Y. Kim & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Theories in intercultural communication* (pp. 213-235). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1993). Communication resourcefulness: An identity negotiation theory. In R. L. Wiseman and J. Koester (Eds.) *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 72-111). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ting-Toomey, S., Gao, G., Trubisky, P., Yang, Z., Kim, H-S, Lin, S-L., & Nishida, T. (1991) Culture, face maintenance, and styles of handling interpersonal conflict: A study in five cultures. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 2, 275 – 296

- Triandis, H. (1989). Cross-cultural studies of individualism and collectivism. In J. Berman (Ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation* (pp. 41-133). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Turner, J. C. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Van Maanen, J., & Schein, E. H. (1979). Toward a theory of organizational socialization. In B. Staw (Ed.), *Research in organizational behavior, 1*, 209- 264. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Yang, S. & Rosenblatt, P. C. (2001). Shame in South Korean Families. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 32, 361-375
- Yook, E. L. & Ahn, B. L. (1999). Comparison of apprehension in communication between South Koreans and US Americans. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 89, 161-164.
- Yoon, T. R. (1994). The South Koreans: their culture and personality. In G. Yoon & S. C. Choi (Eds.) *Psychology and the South Korean people: Individualism and collectivism*. Seoul: Dong-A.